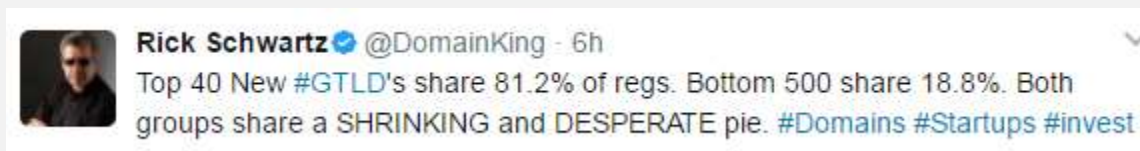


John Poole, domain names registrant and editor, DomainMondo.com, [comments in line \(red\)](#) below to questions on which the PDP WG seeks input (the *Community Comment 2 Questionnaire* [PDF, 342 KB] document)

“The subjects that the PDP WG's four work tracks are considering at this stage are listed below. Each subject and specific questions on which the PDP WG seeks your input are included in the [Community Comment 2 Questionnaire](#) [PDF, 342 KB][**below**] document.”—[ICANN Public Comment Notice](#)

### Reality check 22 May 2017:



### Annex A - Work Track Subjects

## Work Track 1 - Overall Process, Support, and Outreach

### 1.1 (Registry Service Provider) Accreditation Programs (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/KT2AAw>)

Context: GNSO Recommendation 7 stated, “Applicants must be able to demonstrate their technical capability to run a registry operation for the purpose that the applicant sets out.” To support this policy recommendation the Applicant Guidebook contained a number of technical and operational questions (24 – 44) designed to help ICANN evaluate the ability of the applicant to operate a Top-Level Domain (TLD) registry.

Through the evaluation process, it became evident that the answers to the technical questions supplied by the applicants were prepared by a small number of Registry Service Providers (RSP) (ICANN estimated in their Program Implementation Review that 90% of the 1,930 applications received use one of 13 technical infrastructures). Despite the answers being identical, ICANN was required to evaluate each application individually. On passing the theoretical evaluation, each registry operator was required to undertake Pre-Delegation Testing (PDT), resulting in a small group of RSPs being required to repeatedly undertake the same test for each registry operation.

The working group believes that this is an area where a number of process efficiencies could be gained by providing the applicant with a number of options to respond to the technical component of the application including the ability to select from a list of pre-approved (or accredited) RSPs. This approach would also provide applicants with a level of comfort in their choice of RSP and may also enhance the security and stability of the Domain Name System (DNS) by requiring minimum standards for redundancy, capacity, monitoring, reaction time to threats, reporting and statistical process controls. Pre-approvals could possibly enhance competition and choice in the RSP market and allow for increased diversity for new RSPs in developing areas that meet well-defined criteria to become an RSP and could allow for a more streamlined process for registries switching from one RSP to another. On the other hand, if the bar for approval was set too high, it could diminish competition and choice in the RSP market by creating approval/accreditation barriers to entry and favoring the current group of RSPs over new entrants. Some have also said that in setting minimum technical requirements, it creates a ‘race to the bottom’ in terms of technical capabilities.

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As currently envisioned by the WG, such a program would be on a voluntary basis and would not preclude the approval of a Registry Operator's acting as its own RSP or the approval of additional new RSPs. 1.1.1 - Benefits and risks have been identified by the WG as provided above in the Context section. What additional benefits or risks do you see in implementing such a program? Are there other considerations that need to be considered? 1.1.2 - If an RSP program is established for new gTLDs, do you have any suggestions for some of the details or requirements of the program? For instance, how would the scalability of the RSP be measured across a variable numbers of registries? 1.1.3 - Who should be responsible for evaluating whether an RSP meets the requirements of the program? 1.1.4 - Should there be any continuing obligations for approved RSPs, such as high-level requirements for accreditation? Should the requirements be variable based on the types of TLDs the RSP intends to serve or other factors? Please explain. 1.1.5 - Should there be an Agreement between an RSP and ICANN? **YES**. If so, what enforcement mechanisms should be made available to ICANN in the event that such an Agreement is breached? **Loss of Accreditation of RSP**. 1.1.6 - What, if any, are the potential impacts (both positive and negative) of an RSP Program on ICANN- Accredited Registrars? If there are any negative impacts, what are ways in which those impacts can be mitigated? 1.1.7 - Should there be a process to reassess RSPs on a periodic basis? If so, how often should an assessment be conducted and what would the process be for a re-approval? 1.1.8 - If there is an RSP Program, how far in advance should such a Program be launched prior to the opening of the next application window? **12 months unless ICANN needs longer**. 1.1.9 - Should there be an RSP application "cut-off" date to allow sufficient time for an RSP seeking approval to receive approval in order for their application to be approved before the opening of an application window? **Yes** 1.1.10 - If there is a list of pre-approved RSPs in any RSP Program, should there be a provision granted to organizations that act as an RSP to an existing delegated TLD? If yes, how would such a provision work? If not, could ICANN use an RSP's existing performance to satisfy any of the technical requirements and/or tests used in the approval process? **That's up to ICANN technical**. 1.1.11 - If an RSP program is established, how should it be funded? **Application and renewal fee charged to apply and renew RSP accreditation**. For instance, should registries pay into the program which will reduce related ICANN evaluation fees (and associated application fees)? **No**

## **1.2 Applicant Support (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/NT2AAw>)**

1.2.1 - Some have suggested it could be beneficial to expand the scope of the Applicant Support (AS) program by: **No, do not expand, if anything eliminate "applicant support." Registrants don't want or need "needy" unqualified applicants. We have too many of those already and too many unwanted, unneeded new gTLDs.**

1. Broadening support to IDNs or other criteria **NO** 2. Allowing the Applicant Support program to include the "middle applicant", defined as struggling **NO**

### **Page 2**

regions that are further along in their development compared to underserved or underdeveloped regions. **NO** The "middle applicant" is intended to be an expansion and NOT intended to be at the exclusion from applicants in underserved or underdeveloped regions. The "middle applicant" provides a balance between opportunities while considering the economic and developmental realities and priorities for potential applicants. Do you believe there is value in the above suggestions? Do you feel there are other areas in which the Applicant Support program could be extended to benefit other regions? **NO** 1.2.2 - The Applicant Support Program for the 2012 round was mainly focused on financial support and application submission. Should funding be extended to other areas of the process or for ongoing operational costs? Are there other support mechanisms that should be explored? **Eliminate all support—see answers above**. 1.2.3 - Do you have any suggestions for improving publicity and outreach to potential applicants who would benefit from the Applicant Support program? **Eliminate all support—see answers above**. Do

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you have any suggestions on how to improve the process to apply for support? **Eliminate all support—see answers above.** 1.2.4 - The WG has noted that even if the Applicant Support program is well-funded, well-communicated and comprehensively implemented, potential applicants may still choose not to apply for a gTLD. What other metrics could be used to evaluate the success of Applicant Support initiatives beyond the volume of applications? **Eliminate all support—see answers above.** A study conducted by AMGlobal Consulting, ‘New gTLDs and the Global South’ determined that there was limited awareness of the New gTLD Program and the benefits in applying amongst potential applicants; Would additional metrics on future Applicant Support program(s) and its ability to raise awareness be helpful? **NO** Do you have any other metrics that would be helpful measuring the success of the program? **NO the program was wasteful and unneeded, see my answers above.** 1.2.5 - Do you have any other general recommendations for improving the Applicant Support program? **Yes, eliminate the program in its entirety. This is ridiculous—if an applicant does not have sufficient capabilities they should not be applying in the first place. Registrants do not need unqualified, “needy” registry operators. There are plenty of qualified registry operators already.**

### 1.3 Clarity of Application Process (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/JT2AAw>)

1.3.1 - The WG noted that there were a number of changes to the gTLD program after the release of the Applicant Guidebook, including the processes for change requests, customer support, application prioritization, Registry Agreement, etc. Many applicants have stated that the changes impacted their TLD applications throughout the application process both before submission and after the applications were submitted resulting in confusion, additional work and overall dissatisfaction. For instance, the final version of the Applicant Guidebook was released in June of 2012, which was nearly half a year after the application submission period started. Another example would be the difficulty in reaching a common understanding on the requirements for procuring a Continuing Operations Instrument (COI). How should changes to the Applicant Guidebook and/or the new gTLD Program be handled in subsequent application windows? **1) Ideally there would be no more application windows since the last one was such a disaster. 2) If there is another “window” the Applicant Guidebook should be “trashed”—ICANN needs to start over and do it right this time.**

### 1.4 Application Fees (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/LT2AAw>)

1.4.1 - The application fee of \$185,000 USD for the 2012 round of the New gTLD Program was established on the principle of breaking even whereby the program’s total revenues are equal to all

Page 3

related expenses. In addition, the fee should ensure the program is fully funded and not subsidized by any other sources of revenue. Should another mechanism be considered? **Yes, each applicant must post a deposit of \$1,000,000 in order to qualify to bid to operate a new gTLD—bidding for each new gTLD per [the recommendations](#) of the U.S. Department of Justice Antitrust Division.** For example, cost plus reasonable return, fixed plus variable, volume discounts, or other? **See my previous Answer above.** 1.4.2 - Although the 2012 round is not complete, there is currently a surplus of fees collected relative to costs incurred. As such, do you believe that the principle of breaking even was implemented effectively? **Who cares? The 2012 round was a disaster.** Do you believe \$185,000 was a reasonable fee? **No, require a \$1,000,000 deposit—see my answer above.** Is it still a reasonable fee? **Who cares? See answers above.** Should the basic structure of the application fee (e.g., approximately one third of the fee was allocated for (i) the cost recovery of historical development costs, (ii) operations and (iii) legal and other contingencies) be reassessed or restructured? **Yes see my answer above.** Is it too early to make this assessment? **Yes because there should not be another round until sometime after 2020, based on the horrible results from the 2012 round.** With the experience gained from the 2012 round, do you think that a

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break-even model can be more accurately implemented for future applications? **Who cares at this point? Who's in the big hurry to have another round with all the failing new gTLDs in the marketplace? This is insane!** Do you have suggestions on how to minimize any surpluses or shortfalls? **No.** 1.4.3 - Should the concept of break-even be strictly adhered to or should other aspects be considered? **Require a \$1 million deposit to participate in the bidding—see my previous answer above.** Some WG members have noted concerns about the responsibility required to run a registry which could be negatively impacted by a fee that is “too low.” **True.** Others have noted that the fee is potentially too high and could create barriers to entry in some underserved regions. **They are underserved because there is NO DEMAND there for new gTLDs. These are poor areas that need help with affordable internet connectivity etc. Establishing a new gTLD is an endeavor doomed to failure—instead, support the existing ccTLDs serving such areas.** As such, should there be a cost floor (minimum) or cost ceiling (maximum) threshold that the application fee should not go below/above despite costs estimates? **No floor, no subsidies, no assistance or support—require a one million cash deposit to bid per my answer above.** If so, do you have suggestions in how the cost floor and ceiling amounts should be set? **I just told you.** 1.4.4—~~If there is a price floor, how should the excess funds resulting from floor costs less the actual costs be justified? Conversely, how would shortages be recovered if the ceiling costs are below actual costs?~~ 1.4.5—~~Should the WG seek to establish more clarity in how the excess or deficiency of funds are utilized/recovered?~~ If so, do you have any suggestions for establishing that clarity? **Yes, do NOT waste more time on this subject, go with bidding per the US Department of Justice Antitrust Division (see above).**

## 1.5 Variable Fees (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Oz2AAw>)

1.5.1 - Should the New gTLD application fee vary depending on the type of application? **NO, NO, NO.** ~~For instance, open versus closed registries, multiple identical applications or other factors? The 2012 round had “one fee fits all,” and there seems to be support within the WG for continuing that approach provided that the variance between the different types of applications is not significantly different—do you agree? If not, how much of a variance would be required in order to change your support for a one fee for any type of application approach?~~ 1.5.2—~~The WG believes costing information on the different types of applications should be attained and evaluated once the different types of applications are defined. What are the implications of having different costs by type of application and how could they impact future budgeting efforts? How could they impact competition and choice?~~ 1.5.3—~~Should the application fee be variable based on the volume of applications received from a single applicant? If so, how should the fee be adjusted and what are the potential impacts from doing so?~~ **NO, NO, NO.**

Page 4

## 1.6 Application Submission Period (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Mz2AAw>)

1.6.1 - One of the overarching questions in Community Comment 1 focused on whether applications should be accepted during defined windows of time (also known as “rounds”). If the WG determines that a system of rounds is the right approach, is three (3) months an appropriate length of time to accept applications? What considerations should be taken into account when determining the length of the application window? 1.6.2 - If we have a few next ‘rounds’ followed by a continuous application process, how should the application submission period be handled in the lead-up rounds? 1.6.3 - Do you think the length of the submission period will impact Applicant Support and what factors do you think should be considered in determining an appropriate length of time? **Forget about application rounds—have a 12 month period of accepting from any source “nominations” for new gTLD “strings”. Have a CCWG evaluate the nominated strings and make a recommendation to the ICANN Board of Directors of those “strings” selected to be opened for “bids.”. Potential operators would then bid for the right to operate the new gTLD by submitting as their bid the maximum fee schedule to be charged (wholesale price per domain name) for**

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each year of the 10 year period they would operate the new gTLD registry. Lowest qualified bidder wins. At the end of the 10 year period, the gTLD would be put up for bid again. Wash, rinse, repeat. No more of this nonsense about private casino-like auctions like in the 2012 round—that just drives up costs which the operators have to recover by charging higher wholesale fees which registrants then have to bear. That auction system used in the 2012 round was corrupt and contrary to the advice given by the US DOJ Antitrust Division in 2008 cited above!

### 1.7 Application Queuing (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/MT2AAw>)

1.7.1 – The WG believes that the process for establishing the evaluation processing order for applications should be similar to the prioritization draw from the 2012 round. **THIS IS A MISTAKE. THE WG IS WRONG.** This is, in fact contrary to the first submitted first processed/evaluated guidance provided in the 2007 Final Report. Do you agree that a process similar to the prioritization draw should be used in the future? **NO!** If rounds are not used, would this method still be appropriate? **NO!** Would a prioritization draw, or similar method, work for a continuous application period or would it be better to base processing/evaluation on order of receipt? **No, no, no. See my answers above re: US DOJ Antitrust Division recommendations.** 1.7.2 - Should certain subgroups of applicants/application types be prioritized over others? **No.** For instance, from the 2012 prioritization draw, IDNs were moved to the front of the queue for application processing. If you think IDNs or some other category of applications (e.g., Brands, communities, etc.) should be prioritized, do you have suggestions on how to determine the prioritization? **There should be no brand gTLDs as the concept is violative of [RFC 1591](#).** Corporations (and similar organizations) and trademarks (“brands”) are established only by the laws of sovereign governmental authorities, as is cancellation of the “marks” or “brands” and statutory and judicial dissolution of the corporate legal entity. Recognition of trademarks (“brands”) is also governed by laws and treaties between governments. Any corporate (or similar) entity that wants its “brand” to be a new TLD should be required to apply as a ccTLD of the nation where it is jurisdictionally domiciled. ICANN exceeded its authority in establishing “brand” gTLDs in the 2012 round and those that were granted should not be renewed. They can reapply in accordance with the procedures for new ccTLDs in the nation where they are jurisdictionally headquartered or domiciled. **TLDs are NOT private property.** However, ICANN has been remiss in not providing a means and method for globally recognized marks to file a “block” and prevent their “brand” from being used as a TLD. ICANN should not be allowed to engage in extortionate issuance of “defensive” new gTLDs. That does not serve the global public interest though it may enrich certain “contracted parties” and other “special interests” within ICANN and the GNSO.

#### **RFC 1591:**

... 2) These designated authorities [TLD registry operators] are trustees for the delegated domain, and have a duty to serve the community.

The designated manager [TLD registry operator] is the trustee of the top-level domain for both the nation, in the case of a country code, and the global Internet community.

Postel

[Page 4]

RFC 1591

Domain Name System Structure and Delegation

March 1994

**Concerns about "rights" and "ownership" of domains are inappropriate.** It is appropriate to be concerned about "responsibilities" and "service" to the community.

3) **The designated manager must be equitable to all groups in the**

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**domain that request domain names.**

This means that the same rules are applied to all requests, all requests must be processed in a non-discriminatory fashion, and academic and commercial (and other) users are treated on an equal basis. No bias shall be shown regarding requests that may come from customers of some other business related to the manager -- e.g., no preferential service for customers of a particular data network provider...

IDNs should be encouraged as ccTLDs where possible, particularly where the language is predominately used only within one nation. This is consistent with the intent expressed in RFC 1591. **The inept 2012 round for new gTLDs should not be used as a guide for future rounds. See my [CCT-RT comment](#).**

Likewise, intranational geographic indicators (e.g., .LONDON and .PARIS) should always be ccTLDs.

## 1.8 Systems (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Kz2AAw>)

1.8.1 - The WG considers this subject to be mainly implementation focused, but nevertheless, has identified areas for improvement. For instance, security and stability should be improved, more robust user testing (e.g., potential applicants) should be incorporated, systems should be better integrated, adequate time for system development should be afforded, etc. Do you have suggestions on additional areas for improvement? 1.8.2 - The WG also noted that ICANN should expand its system capabilities to include the ability to send invoices to organizations who require documentation in order to process payments for any fees related to their application. Do you agree that this would be beneficial? **Yes. No new gTLDs should be delegated that have any “Universal Acceptance” (UA) or “collision” issues unless ICANN and the registry operator agree to post (and require all accredited registrars to post) notices and warnings to consumers (registrants) about the known UA and collision issues. This is called “consumer (registrant) protection”—a novel concept within ICANN and its GNSO.**

## 1.9 Communications (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Lz2AAw>)

1.9.1 - The WG considers this subject to be mainly implementation focused, but nevertheless, has

Page 5

identified areas for improvement. For instance, the knowledge base could be made more timely and searchable, applicant advisories could be better communicated (e.g., create some sort of subscription service), program information could be consolidated into a single site, ICANN’s Global Stakeholder Engagement team could be leveraged to promote global awareness, etc. Do you have suggestions on additional areas for improvement? 1.9.2 - Metrics to understand the level of success for communications were not established - do you have suggestions on what success looks like? **Revamp the whole program per my answers above.**

## 1.10 Applicant Guidebook (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Iz2AAw>)

1.10.1 - The Applicant Guidebook served as the roadmap for applicants, but also all other participants to the program. As such, there is a mixture of historical and practical information, some of which is relevant to only certain parties. Do you think it makes sense to partition the Applicant Guidebook into different audience-driven sections or by type of application? **The Guidebook needs to be rewritten per my answers above.**

Page 6

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## Work Track 2 - Legal, Regulatory, and Contractual Requirements

### 2.1 Base Registry Agreement (<https://community.icann.org/x/Pz2AAw>)

2.1.1 - The question of whether or not a single Registry Agreement is suitable is tied into the subject of different TLD categories. Throughout the working group's discussions, there has been support for a model similar to what is currently in place: a single Registry Agreement with exemptions that allow for TLDs with different operational models (e.g., Specification 13 for Brand TLDs or Specification 12 for Community TLDs). **There shouldn't be any "Brand gTLDs"—see my answer above regarding "brand gTLDs."** Likewise there would be no need for a specification 12 for "Community gTLDs" since any qualified entity (community or otherwise) meeting the financial and other qualifications, could submit their bid (which consists of the highest maximum wholesale fees to be charged (per domain name) to operate the gTLD during the 10 year period of the RA. There is also support for different Registry Agreements for different TLD categories **NO!**, centered around a common, core base set of contractual requirements. Which of these models do you think would be most effective for recognizing the different operational requirements of different TLDs? **1 Base Registry Agreement for ALL new gTLDs.** Which of these models do you think would be most efficient in terms of development, implementation, and operational execution (e.g., contracting, contractual compliance, etc.)? **1 Base Registry Agreement for ALL new gTLDs.** Do you think there are any alternative options that could effectively facilitate TLDs with different operational requirements? **1 Base Registry Agreement for ALL new gTLDs.**

2.1.2 - Should further restrictions pertaining to sunrise periods, landrush, or other registry activities be developed? **YES.** If so, do you have suggestions on attributes of these restrictions? **YES—no warehousing, no gTLD registry operator can operate a registrar, no gTLD registry operator or any of its "affiliates" can purchase through registrars more than a total of 1000 domain names under the new gTLD for the first 12 months of general availability, and there can be no "premium pricing"—the same fee for each domain name in the gTLD.** Should they be incorporated into the base agreement? **YES.** **Should there be any restrictions established on registry pricing? Yes. See my previous answers.**

2.1.3 - Should the entire application be incorporated into the signed Registry Agreement? **Yes as necessary.** Should portions of the application, explicitly identified, be incorporated into the signed Registry Agreement? If changes are made between applying and executing the Registry Agreement, how should this be handled? **Yes as necessary.** If changes are made after executing the Registry Agreement, how should this be handled? **What kind of changes? It depends.** If changes like these are contemplated, how can the needs of the community to properly consider the contents of an application be weighed against an applicant's need to make either minor adjustments or fundamental changes to their registry? **One Base Registry Agreement. Changes requested by a registry operator, unless agreed to as a "universal" change in the Base Registry Agreement, would require ICANN to give notice, and allow any other registry operator to offer to take over the gTLD and continue operating the gTLD registry on the original terms. If no other operator was interested, changes would either be approved or denied by the ICANN Board in the global public interest, and if the registry operator did not accept the Board's decision, the registry operator's operation of the gTLD would terminate at ICANN's earliest convenience.**

### 2.2 Reserved Names (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/PT2AAw>)

2.2.1 - Do you believe any changes are needed to the String Requirements at the top level as defined in section 2.2.1.3.2 of the Applicant Guidebook (<https://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb/guidebook-full-04jun12-en.pdf>)? Please explain. **Possibly based on "collisions" and Universal Acceptance issues in order to protect**

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**Registrants from Domain Names that ICANN knows or has reason to believe will fail to work as expected on the internet. ICANN failed to act as a responsible steward of the global DNS in the 2012 round and cannot shirk its responsibility to the global internet community by relying on “feasibility testing” by registry operator applicants.**

2.2.2 - Do you believe any changes are needed to the list of Reserved Names at the top level as defined in section 2.2.1.2.1 of the Applicant Guidebook **Yes, changes are needed**

(<https://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb/guidebook-full-04jun12-en.pdf>? Please explain. **Trademark blocks, etc.** 2.2.3 - Special Use Domain Names

## Page 7

Context: Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) RFC 6761 (<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc6761>) was issued after publication of the Applicant Guidebook. The RFC describes what it means to say that a domain name is reserved for special use by the IETF, when reserving such a name is appropriate, and the procedure for doing so. It establishes an IANA registry for such domain names, and seeds it with entries for some of the already established special domain names. As a result of the RFC, ICANN must not assign Special Use Domain Names to any third-party registry.

For example, the IETF recently approved .onion as a Special Use Domain Name and IANA added .onion to use Special-Use Domain Name registry (See <http://www.iana.org/assignments/special-use-domain-names/special-use-domain-names.xhtml#special-use-domain>), thereby ensuring that ICANN could not delegate .onion as a gTLD in the future.

Do you think Special Use Domain Names should be added to the Applicant Guidebook section on reserved names at the top level to prevent applicants applying for such labels? **Yes** 2.2.4 - Specification 5 of the Registry Agreement allows the Registry Operator to reserve and use up to 100 names at the second level for the operation and/or promotion of the TLD. In addition, the Registry Operator is permitted to reserve an unlimited amount of other domain names which may only be released through an ICANN-Accredited Registrar for registration by third parties. Do you believe that any changes are needed to a Registry Operator’s right to reserve domain name? **Yes**. If yes, what changes are needed and why? **Registry operators have abused these provisions—NO reservations should be allowed except 100 names. See my answers above about other limitations on registry operators.** If not, why not?

## 2.3 Registrant Protections (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/QT2AAw>)

2.3.1 - ICANN has included the following programs to protect registrants: an Emergency Back-End Registry Operator (EBERO), Continued Operations Instrument (COI), Data Escrow requirements, and Registry Performance Specifications in Specification 10 of the base registry agreement? Such programs are required regardless of the type of TLD. Are there any types of registries that should be exempt from such programs? **NO!** If so, why? Do the above programs still serve their intended purposes? What changes, if any, might be needed to these programs if an RSP pre-approval program, discussed in section 1.1.1., were to be developed? **Registrant Protections are PATHETIC need to be greatly expanded—this is one of the BIG failings of ICANN and the 2012 Round.** 2.3.2 - In the working group discussions, it became clear that the EBERO funding model requires review and potential modification. The current COI model is one that has proven to be difficult to implement for many registries, ICANN and even financial institutions. Are there other mechanisms of funding EBERO providers other than through Letters of Credit and/or other Continuing Operations Instruments? **As I already answered previously, each bidder for a new gTLD would be required to deposit \$1,000,000. If the bidder was awarded rights to operate the new gTLD for a 10 year term, ICANN would hold the \$1,000,000 as a guarantee of performance subject to charges for any breach or costs incurred by ICANN during the term of the RA. At the end of the term the balance of the \$1,000,000 would be refunded or applied against the deposit required if the registry operator wanted to bid again to**



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**operate the gTLD.** 2.3.3 - ICANN staff, in its Program Implementation Review Report, identified a number of challenges in performing background screening, particularly because there were many different types of entities to screen (e.g., ranging from top twenty five exchanges to newly formed entities with no operating history) and because it is difficult to access information to conduct background screenings in some jurisdictions/countries. Do you think that the criteria, requirements, and/or the extent to which background screenings are carried out require any modifications? **No, other than make much stricter.** Should there be any additional criteria

Page 8

added to future background screenings? **Yes.** For example, should the previous breach by the Registry Operator, and/or any of its affiliates of a Registry Agreement or Registrar Accreditation Agreement be grounds for ICANN to reject a subsequent application for a TLD by that same entity and/or its affiliates? Why or why not? **Of course. Under the bid system recommended by US DOJ Antitrust Division, bidders would have to pre-qualified by passing the background screening, etc.** What other modifications would you suggest? Should background screening be performed at application time or just before contract-signing time? Or at both times? Please explain. **Unless new facts emerge or more than 2 years have passed since the applicant last qualified, why screen twice?**

## 2.4 Closed Generics (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/UT2AAw>)

2.4.1 - In the 2012 round, the operation of a TLD where the string was considered “generic” could not be closed to only the Registry Operator and/or its Affiliates. Originating from GAC Advice on the subject, this rule was promulgated by ICANN’s New gTLD Program Committee of the ICANN Board, but was never adopted as a policy by the GNSO. This rule was subject to public comment and input from the community. Should this rule be enforced for subsequent application windows? **Yes.** Why or why not? **I’ve already answered this above, in regard to RFC 1591, gTLDs, and “brand gTLDs.”** 2.4.2 - Do you have suggestions on how to define “generic” in the context of new gTLDs? **Yes.** A “generic string” is currently defined in the Registry Agreement under Specification 11.3.d as meaning, “a string consisting of a word or term that denominates or describes a general class of goods, services, group, organization or things, as opposed to distinguishing a specific brand of goods, services, groups, organizations or things from those of others.” Are any modifications needed to the definition? If so, what changes? **Yes there are changes that should be made dealing with collisions, Universal Acceptance issues, trademarks and service marks, perhaps others.** If the exclusion of closed generic TLDs is to be maintained, are there any circumstances in which an exemption to the rule should be granted? **No.**

## 2.5 Applicant Terms and Conditions

2.5.1 - The following language appears in Section 3 of the Applicant Terms and Conditions:

“Applicant acknowledges and agrees that ICANN has the right to determine not to proceed with any and all applications for new gTLDs, and that there is no assurance that any additional gTLDs will be created. The decision to review, consider and approve an application to establish one or more gTLDs and to delegate new gTLDs after such approval is entirely at ICANN’s discretion. ICANN reserves the right to reject any application that ICANN is prohibited from considering under applicable law or policy, in which case any fees submitted in connection with such application will be returned to the applicant.”

Do you believe that this paragraph gives ICANN an absolute right to reject any application for any reason including a reason that contradicts the Applicant Guidebook, or any law or policy? **Yes.** If yes, should such an unrestricted right appear in any modifications to the Guidebook? **Yes.** If no, please list the other documents that you believe should be read in conjunction with this paragraph, e.g. GNSO Policy on new gTLDs, ICANN Bylaws, other portions of the Guidebook, California implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing, etc. 2.5.2 - According to

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Section 6 of the Applicant Terms and Conditions, the “covenant not to sue ICANN”, an applicant foregoes any right to sue ICANN once an application is submitted for any reason. Currently, an applicant can only appeal an ICANN decision through the accountability mechanisms, which have a

Page 9

limited ability to address the substance of the ICANN decision. If ICANN had an effective appeals process ((as asked about in Question 3.5.2 below) for an applicant to challenge the decisions of the ICANN staff, board and/or any entities delegated decision making authority over the assignment, contracting and delegation of new gTLDs, would a covenant not to sue be more acceptable? Please explain. **More acceptable for whom? For contracted parties or the global internet community—SORRY, the global internet community, who ICANN is SUPPOSED to be representing, trumps the self-centered and selfish special interests of registry operators**. 2.5.3 - According to Section 14 of the Applicant Terms and Conditions, ICANN has the ability to make changes to the Applicant Guidebook. One task of this Working Group is to address the issue of predictability in future rounds, including with respect to the AGB. Do you think that ICANN should be limited in its ability to make changes to the Applicant Guidebook after an application procedure has been initiated? **NO**. Please explain. **TLDs are not private property**. 2.5.4 - Do you believe that any changes are needed in the Terms & Conditions in Module 6 of the Applicant Guidebook? **No**. If so, what are those changes and what is the basis or rationale for needing to do so?

## **2.6 Registrar Non Discrimination & Registry / Registrar Separation (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/RT2AAw>)**

2.6.1 - The Working Group has not yet deliberated the issues of Registrar Non-discrimination or Registry/Registrar Separation (also known as Vertical Integration). However, now that we have several years of operations of vertically integrated registries and registrars, what issues, if any, have you noticed with vertically integrated Registries? 2.6.2 - Specification 13 grants an exception to the Registry Code of Conduct (i.e., Specification 9 in the Registry Agreement) and specifically from the vertical integration restrictions. In addition, Registry Operators may seek an exemption from the Code of Conduct if the TLD string is not a generic term and if it meets three (3) other specified criteria set forth in Specification 9 of the Registry Agreement. Are there any other circumstances where exemptions to the Code of Conduct should be granted? 2.6.3 - Some have argued that although we allow Registries to serve as both as a registry and as a registrar, the rules contained within section 2.9 of the Registry Agreement and in the Code of Conduct prohibit the integrated registry/registrar from achieving the economic efficiencies of such integration by not allowing a registry to discriminate in favor of its own registrar. Do those arguments have merit? If yes, what can be done to address those claimed inefficiencies? If not, please explain. What safeguards might be required? **Registry operators should not be allowed to operate registrars. There's already been abuse. Registrars can, and should be, a check on Registry operator malfeasance. Vertical integration negates that, and there are many other reasons vertical integration should be disallowed.**

## **2.7 TLD Rollout (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Rz2AAw>)**

2.7.1 The Applicant Guidebook specified timelines by which applicants had to complete the contracting (9 months) and delegation (12 months) steps of the process. However, this requirement only means that the contract needs to be executed and nic.TLD be delegated. Are these timeframes reasonable? **Yes**. Is there still a need for these requirements? **Yes**. Please explain. **ALL gTLDs are supposed to be for the benefit of registrants and the global internet community, not registry operators (I know that comes as a surprise to the GNSO, the GDD (Global Domains Division), and others within ICANN. A registry operator that fails to timely operate the registry should be terminated.**

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Page 10

## **2.8 Contractual Compliance (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Qz2AAw>)**

2.8.1 - Noting that the role of Contractual Compliance is to enforce the registry agreement and any changes to that role are beyond the scope of this PDP, the WG is not anticipating policy development related to this topic. The WG expects that any new contractual requirements would be made enforceable by inclusion in the base agreement. Do you agree with this approach? **It depends. So far ICANN contractual compliance has been a “joke” as far as registrants are concerned.**

## **2.9 Global Public Interest (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/TT2AAw>)**

2.9.1 - The Final Issue Report suggested that in considering the public interest the WG think about concerns raised in GAC Advice on safeguards, the integration of Public Interest Commitments (PICs), and other questions around contractual commitments. Have PICs served their intended purpose? If not, what other mechanisms should be employed to serve the public interest? Please explain and provide supporting documentation to the extent possible. **Additional mechanisms are needed, and due consideration of concerns raised in GAC advice and elsewhere need to be addressed and incorporated as appropriate in the registry agreements, terms and conditions, and elsewhere as appropriate.**

Page 11

# **Work Track 3 - String Contention Objections and Disputes**

**Since I only support complete revision of the new gTLDs program in accordance with the 2008 recommendations of the US DOJ Antitrust Division (see my answers hereinabove, the subject of this work track would need to be completely revised and is irrelevant).**

## **3.1 Objections (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Vz2AAw>)**

3.1.1—Do you think that the policy recommendations (Recommendations 2, 3, 6, and 20) require any modifications? If so, what would you suggest? 3.1.2—Do you believe that those recommendations (which led to the establishment of the String Confusion, Legal Rights, Limited Public Interest, and Community Objections grounds) were implemented effectively and in the spirit of the original policy recommendations? If no, please provide examples. 3.1.3—Do you believe there were any issues with standing requirements as defined in the Applicant Guidebook (AGB), or as carried out by the providers? Please explain. 3.1.4—Do you believe there is evidence of decisions made by objection dispute panels that were inconsistent with other similar objections, the original policy recommendations, and/or the AGB? Please explain. 3.1.5—Are you aware of any instances where any party or parties attempted to ‘game’ the Objection procedures in the 2012 round? If so, please provide examples and any evidence you may have available. 3.1.6—Do you believe that the use of an Independent Objector (IO) is warranted in future application processes? If not, then why? If yes, then would you propose any restrictions or modifications be placed on the IO in future rounds? 3.1.7—Do you believe that parties to disputes should be able to choose between 1 and 3 member panels and should the costs of objections reflect that choice? 3.1.8.—Is clearer guidance needed in regards to consolidation of objections? Please explain. 3.1.9—Many community members have highlighted the high costs of objections. Do you believe that the costs of objections created a negative impact on their usage? If so, do you have suggestions for improving this issue? Are there issues beyond cost that might impact access, by various parties, to objections? 3.1.10—Do you feel that GAC Early Warnings were helpful in identifying

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potential concerns with applications? Do you have suggestions on how to mitigate concerns identified in GAC Early Warnings? 3.1.11—What improvements and clarifications should be made to GAC Advice procedures? What mitigation mechanisms are needed to respond to GAC Advice? How can timelines be made more precise?

### **3.2 New gTLD Applicant Freedom of Expression (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Uz2AAw>)**

3.2.1 Noting that the 2007 Final Report on new gTLDs tried to balance the rights of applicants (e.g.,  
Page 12

Principle G) and rights holders (Recommendation 3), do you believe that the program was successful in doing so? If not, do you have examples of where either an applicant's freedom of expression or a person or entity's legal rights were infringed?

### **3.3 Community Applications and Community Priority Evaluations (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Wz2AAw>)**

3.3.1—As indicated in the Implementation Guidance of the 2007 Final Report, the claim by an applicant to support a community was intended to be taken on trust unless the applied for TLD is in contention with one or more TLDs or is the respondent in an objection. As a result, the claim to support a community was only evaluated in Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) and Community Objections. Do you believe that the implementation and delivery of CPE were consistent with the policy recommendations and implementation guidance provided by the GNSO? If no, do you have suggested improvements to either the policy/implementation guidance or implementation? 3.3.2 There is a general sentiment amongst many in the community that the CPE process did not provide consistency and predictability in the 2012 round. Do you believe this was the case and if so, do you have examples or evidence of these issues? 3.3.3—CPE was the one instance in the New gTLD Program where there was an element of a comparative evaluation and as such, there were inherently winners and losers created. Do you believe there is a need for community priority, or a similar mechanism, in subsequent procedures? Do you believe that it can be designed in such a fashion as to produce results that are predictable, consistent, and acceptable to all parties to CPE? The GNSO policy recommendations left the issue of a method for resolving contention for community claimed names to Board and the implementation. Do you believe that a priority evaluation is the right way to handle name contention with community applicants? Should different options be explored? If so which options should be explored and why? 3.3.4—Were the rights of communities (e.g., freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of religion, and principle of non-discrimination) infringed by the New gTLD Program? Please provide specific examples. 3.3.5—Besides CPE, are there other aspects of the New gTLD Program related to communities that should be considered in a more holistic fashion? For instance, in the 2012 round, the claim to support a community is largely only relevant when resolving string contention. Do you think community applications should be structured and/or evaluated differently than other applications?

### **3.4 String Similarity (Evaluations) (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/VT2AAw>)**

3.4.1—There was a perception that consistency and predictability of the string similarity evaluation needs to be improved. Do you have examples or evidence of issues? If so, do you have suggested changes to the policy recommendations or implementation that may lead to improvement? For instance, should the standard of string confusion that the evaluation panel used be updated or refined in any way?

Page 13

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~~3.4.2— Should the approach for string similarity in gTLDs be harmonized with the way in which they are handled in ccTLDs (ccNSO IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process is described here: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fast-track-2012-02-25-en>)? 3.4.3— The WG and the wider community have raised concerns specifically related to singles and plurals of the same word. Do you have suggestions on how to develop guidance on singles and plurals that will lead to predictable outcomes? Would providing for more predictability of outcomes unfairly prejudice the rights of applicants or others? 3.4.4— Do you believe that there should be some sort of mechanism to allow for a change of applied for TLD when it is determined to be in contention with one or more other strings? If so, do you have suggestions on a workable mechanism? 3.4.5— Do you feel that the contention resolution mechanisms from the 2012 round (i.e., CPE and last resort auctions) met the needs of the community in a sufficient manner? Please explain. 3.4.6— Do you believe that private auctions (i.e., NOT the auctions of last resort provided by ICANN) resulted in any harm? Could they lead to speculative applications seeking to participate in a private auction in future application processes? Should they be allowed or otherwise restricted in the future?~~

### ~~3.5 Accountability Mechanisms (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/WT2AAw>)~~

~~3.5.1— Do you believe that the existing accountability mechanisms (Request for Reconsideration, Independent Review Process, and the Ombudsman) are adequate avenues to address issues encountered in the New gTLD Program? 3.5.2— Should there be appeal mechanisms, specific to the New gTLD Program, introduced into the program? If yes, for what areas of the program (e.g., evaluations, objections, CPE)? Do you have suggestions for high-level requirements (e.g., if the appeal should be limited to procedural and/or substantive issues, who conducts the review, who is the final arbiter, safeguards against abuse, etc.).~~

Page 14

## Work Track 4 - Internationalized Domains Names and Technical & Operations

### 4.1 Internationalized Domain Names (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/XT2AAw>)

4.1.1 - Do you agree or disagree with allowing 1-char IDN TLDs, in specific combinations of scripts and languages where a single character can mean a whole idea or a whole word (ideograms or ideographs)? **Disagree**. 4.1.2 - Do you have any general guidance or would you like to flag an issue requiring policy work for subsequent procedures regarding IDNs? **IDNs should be primarily ccTLDs when they concern a language predominantly limited to a single nation (see RFC 1591)**. 4.1.3 - How do you envision the policy and process to allow IDN Variant TLDs to be delegated and operated? Possible options include but are not limited to bundling (allowing but requiring procedures similar to .ngo/.ong where only the same registrant can register a name across TLDs), disallowing (as it was in the 2012-round) or allowing without restrictions. Must there be a solution established prior to launching subsequent procedures? **Yes**. 4.1.4 - Should the process of allowing 1-char IDN TLDs and IDN Variant TLDs be coordinated and/or harmonized with ccTLDs? **Yes**. If so, to what extent? **IDNs should primarily be ccTLDs where possible, but consistent policy affecting both ccTLDs and gTLDs is appropriate**.

### 4.2 Universal Acceptance (UA) (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/XT2AAw>)

4.2.1 - Do you see any UA issue that would warrant policy development work, noting that there is extensive coordination work already being done by the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (<https://uasg.tech/>) ? **As I've already answered hereinabove there are many unresolved UA issues and ICANN cannot shirk its duty owed to the global internet community including registrants, by relying on §1.2 of the RA. Needed: a process to disqualify**

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gTLDs or strings, and require ICANN to post on its homepage and require all accredited registrars to post on their homepages a notice like this:

**"Important Notice to Registrants:** Please note that annual registration renewal fees charged by new gTLD registry operators and registrars for new gTLD domain names can vary based on the domain and in some cases may be significantly higher than those fees charged for domains under legacy gTLDs such as .COM domain names. Also note that some new gTLDs' domain names may have experienced universal acceptance or collision issues. For more information go to [ICANN webpage dedicated to explaining new gTLDs' pricing, universal acceptance, and collision issues, to registrants]."

See my [CCT-RT comment](#) for more.

### 4.3 Application Evaluation (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/YT2AAw>)

4.3.1 Technical Evaluation 4.3.1.1 - Do you believe that technical capability should be demonstrated at application time, or could be demonstrated at, or just before, contract-signing time? Or at both times? Please explain. 4.3.1.2 - Do you believe that technical evaluation should be done per application, per cluster of similar technical infrastructure of a single applicant entity/group, or per cluster of similar infrastructure among all applicants in a procedure (e.g. consolidate as much as possible)? 4.3.1.2.1 - If consolidated, should the aggregate requirements of applied-for TLDs and currently operated TLDs be taken in consideration for evaluation? **None of these questions are relevant under the suggested changes to the new gTLDs program I've outlined above.**

#### 4.3.2 Financial Evaluation

##### Page 15

It is generally agreed that financial stability of a gTLD operator is necessary to ensure the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet. 4.3.2.1 - ICANN sought detailed financial information as it pertains to an applicant's proposed business model, projected revenue, and operating expenses. However, it required such information be provided through a static template rather than allowing applicants to provide their own financial models. Did this present any issues in the 2012 round? Please explain. 4.3.2.2 - Can financial capability be demonstrated with less detail, in a different manner, or via a different mechanism? Are there details or levels of detail that are unnecessary? 4.3.2.3 - In the prior round, detailed business plans were provided, but not evaluated; they were however used to provide context to evaluators in scoring applicant responses. Do you believe that this information needs to be collected in order to evaluate an applicant's financial capabilities? Please explain? How should changes in business plans during the application process be handled? 4.3.2.4 - Some have argued that for Brand TLDs that do not rely on the distribution of domains, an evaluation of the business model unnecessary. Do you agree with this assertion? Please explain. Are there any other types of TLDs for which the collection of business models may be unnecessary? Please explain. 4.3.2.5 - Do you believe that financial capability should be demonstrated at application time, or could it be demonstrated at, or just before, contract-signing time? Or at both times? Please explain. 4.3.2.6 - Do you believe that financial evaluation should be done per application or per possible registry family assuming all applied-for strings are won? 4.3.2.7 - Given the international nature of ICANN and its outreach to less developed areas, is the one size fits all approach to financial evaluation appropriate? **None of these questions are relevant under the suggested changes to the new gTLDs program I've outlined above.**

4.3.3 General Questions 4.3.3.1 - What suggestions do you have for improving the application evaluation process

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that you would like the community to consider?

#### 4.4 Name Collision (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Yz2AAw>)

4.4.1 - What general guidance for namespace collisions would you like the community to consider for subsequent procedures, and why? 4.4.2 - Were there non-applied for strings that would fall into a high risk category that you would suggest not be allowed in subsequent procedures? **Of course there are such strings-- DO NOT ALLOW ANY** If yes, which ones and why? Should a Name Collision based evaluation be incorporated into the process for subsequent procedures? **OF COURSE – this is common sense—you need a survey to ask this question?** What data sources could/should be used for analyzing namespace collisions for subsequent procedures? **If GNSO is clueless, then don't add ANY more new gTLDs to the mess we already have** 4.4.3 - Based on data from the first round, can the controlled interruption period be reduced in future rounds? **No.** 4.4.4 - Should any measures be suggested or requested from TLDs that already ended or will end their emergency readiness after two years of delegation? Are any measures needed for gTLDs delegated prior to the 2012 round? **None of these questions are relevant under the suggested changes to the new gTLDs program I've outlined above.**

Page 16

#### 4.5 Security and Stability (Wiki page: <https://community.icann.org/x/Xz2AAw>)

4.5.1 Considering that, different from the 2012-round, we now have Top-Level Label Generation Rules available for most, if not all, scripts and languages, does the per-label security and stability review still makes sense? **Yes.**

4.5.2 Considering the already published CDAR study and comments to that study, do you have any comments regarding root zone scaling? **CDAR study hardly reassuring.**

Page 17

## Additional Questions

1. The topics above, and the corresponding questions, are all related to the scope of work as determined in this WG's charter. Do you feel that all topics must be fully resolved before any subsequent new gTLD procedures can take place? **YES, YES, YES.** If not, do you believe that there is a critical path of issues that **MUST** be considered and addressed? Alternatively, do you believe that there are certain challenging issues where an existing solution may be present (e.g., in the Applicant Guidebook), which can serve as an interim solution, while debate can continue in parallel with the launch of subsequent new gTLD procedures? **No interim solutions—ICANN has created one big mess in the global DNS. Revamp the whole program. GNSO needs a reality check and everyone needs to slow down and reassess by looking at the wreckage the GNSO and ICANN wrought with the 2012 round.**
2. Many in the community have noted the length of time from the close of the application submission period (i.e., June of 2012) to the informal projections for the beginning of subsequent new gTLD procedures (e.g., 2020). Do you have any suggestions on how to shorten that timeline, either now in the event of future rounds or other procedures? **No, why would anyone looking at the new gTLDs now failing want to shorten the timeline?**
3. Do you feel that there are additional issues or subjects that the WG should be considering? **Yes, see my [CCT-RT comment](#) and [my questions to ICANN](#).** If you want a copy of the answers when received from ICANN, let me know.

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4. Do you have any suggestions for data points, analysis, studies, etc. that might benefit the work of this PDP in any of its areas of work? **Yes, see my [CCT-RT comment](#) and [my questions to ICANN](#). If you want a copy of the answers when received from ICANN, let me know.**

Page 18