

Dear Gordon Chillcott :

Thankyou. I am glad that my comments are eliciting some substantive responses, particularly your own. Allow me to add a few clarifications.

First I would make the general point that the Work Track concerned has not undertaken a thorough analysis of all the options. That is more than an oversight. Thus my primary recommendation is that "The RFP options should be thoroughly explored and codified...".

Secondly, I have drawn a clear distinction between Geographical TLDs and 'vanilla' Generic TLDs. Auctions for geo-TLDs conducted by ICANN would quite clearly be out of the question not least for political reasons, except and unless the authorities in the geography concerned explicitly requested such assistance from ICANN.

Thirdly, it would not be difficult for ICANN.org to construct procedural guidelines for RFPs for new TLDs, since there is significant international experience in this area, thus reducing the costs for each application. (I am not proposing to do this myself 'on a Saturday afternoon' in view of the amount of time that the Work Track has already spent on producing what I regard as an unworkable proposal!) Furthermore, in some jurisdictions, this is likely to fall under public procurement policies, and that would also have to be taken into account.

Returning to your specific comments:

1. Costs: The evaluation of applications for new TLDs will be expensive under all options. It should be. I agree with your third paragraph. I am not a fan of the outcome of the 2012 Round, partly because evaluation was clearly superficial, under time pressure, ignoring economic and financial considerations.

We must do better next time

2. The Time Required: The evaluation of applications for new TLDs will be time consuming under all options. The time required may be reduced by ICANN's technical and procedural assistance and by encouraging transparency through the RFP and up-stream policies, including Change Requests.

More generally, I am well aware of the desirability of expeditious procedures, but I am also aware of the time it has taken to implement the 2012 Round and the time it is taking to complete Subsequent Procedures. I think that we have got the time to get it right this time.

With many thanks for your comments and Best Regards

Christopher Wilkinson

PS: This Reply addresses only Gordon's response to Olivier's initial questions. It is without prejudice to the other comments included in my original paper dated 8 November 2012, including particularly my concerns about the effects of Cross Ownership/Vertical integration on 'Registrar support for new TLDs'.