Cross-Community Working Group - Framework for use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs (CWG - UCTN)

{Strawman} Options Paper

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## Purpose of this Options Paper

The purpose of this draft options paper is to lay out the core issues that the Cross-Community Working Group - Framework for use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs (CWG-UCTN) is addressing in carrying out its Charter (<http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-framework-charter-27mar14-en.pdf>). It also provides a starting point in the identification of options around a consistent framework for the treatment of country and territory names as top-level Internet domains (TLDs).

It is anticipated that this document will serve as a working document that both sets a road map for the CWG’s work in fulfilling its Charter, and records the CWG’s discussions and work in that process. This document should therefore inform the CWG’s drafting of an Initial Report, which shall contain, consistent with the CWG’s Charter, “a review and analysis of the [CWG’s] objective, a draft Recommendation and its rationale.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Background on Country Names in the DNS[[2]](#footnote-2)

Early Days

In the earlier days there was just the ARPA net, and after the TCP/IP protocols got introduced, multiple coexistent networks where possible and the Internet was born. The use of the domain system instead of a fixed file, was first mentioned in RFC 881 (November 1983, The Domain Names Plan and Schedule) and it also proposes the split of ARPANET and MILNET. RFC 882 and RFC 882 gives a description of an early form of DNS. An update of the implementation schedule can be found in RFC 897.

A refinement of this plan is published in RFC 920 (October 1984) and defines not only the ARPA, GOV, EDU, COM, MIL, and ORG domains, but also mentions that for country domains the ISO 3166 standards should be used. It also proposes a category “Multiorganizations" which looks like the start of the INT domain. There is an implementation schedule in RFC 921. Actual delegations of ccTLDs have happened since 1985. It was mainly done by academic institutions.

RFC 1032 (November 1987) "DOMAIN ADMINISTRATORS GUIDE" sets some policies for the way how domains should be administrated. It sets a policy for the use of ISO 3166 for country names. It is worth to that it mentions the use of alpha-3 codes in case they collide with codes use for states by the U.S. Postal Services. As far as I know, this idea never got implemented. Governments where not interested in the Internet and where more interested in the OSI protocols and the X.400 and X.500 addressees (RFC 1484, 1617).

Post IANA

Meanwhile the internet was growing, IANA got established and that led to RFC 1591 explaining the practice at that time (March 1994). Do note the date. In the seven years there has been quite some development in the way the (top level-) domains got administrated. Details of this process are not publicly documented as far as I know. In the late nineties the interest into the Internet and the Domain System exploded culminating into creation of ICANN and the current policies.

Some more RFCs which deal with delegations have been produced such as RFC 2606 (June 1999, Reserved Top Level DNS Names). Others deal with policies inside TLDs. As an example RFCs 1386, 1480, 1811, 1816, and 2146 talk about the structure of the .US and .GOV domains emphasizing the hierarchical character of the domain system. The hierarchical structure is also discussed RFC 2352 "A Convention For Using LegalNames as Domain Names (May 1998).

The "Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Technical Work of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority" [MOU], RFC 2860 (June 2000), notably section 4.3 (March 2000) formally ends the role of IETF in the policy process for top level domains. There are a couple of RFCs which talk about domains, such as RFC 3071 (Reflections on the DNS, RFC 1591, and Categories of Domains, (February 2001). The reclassification of the .ARPA into the "Address and Routing Parameter Area Domain" is documented in RFC 3172 (September 2001). This domain became also the home for the IPv6 reversed domains (RFC 3152, August 2001; RFC 4159 August 2005).

More recently RFC 6761 (February 2013, Reserved Top Level DNS Names). The latter one (proposed as standard) establishes an IANA registry for special TLD names which are not meant as domain names but to be used in non-dns related protocol. Whether this will indeed become standard is still to be seen.

## Background on the ccNSO Study Group

The formation of this CWG is a result of the ccNSO Study Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names, which was established in May 2011 and tasked with the aim of delivering the following outcomes:[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. *An overview of current and proposed policies, guidelines and procedures for allocation and delegation of strings currently used or proposed to be used as TLDs that are either associated with Countries and Territories (i.e., by inclusion on the ISO 3166-1 list) and/or are otherwise considered representations of the names of Countries and Territories.*
2. *A comprehensive overview of the types and categories of strings currently used or proposed to be used as TLDs that are either associated with Countries and Territories (i.e., by inclusion on the ISO 3166-1 list) and/or are otherwise considered representations of Country and Territory names.*
3. *A comprehensive overview of issues arising (or likely to arise) in connection with applying the current and proposed policies, guidelines and procedures for allocation to types and categories of strings currently used or proposed to be used as TLDs that are either associated with Countries and Territories (i.e., by inclusion on the ISO 3166-1 list) and/or are otherwise considered representations of Country and Territory names.*

In its Final Report,[[4]](#footnote-4) the Study Group recommended that a Cross-Community Working Group be established to:

* *Further review the current status of representations of country and territory names, as they exist under current ICANN polices, guidelines and procedures;*
* *Provide advice regarding the feasibility of developing a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SO’s [sic] and AC’s [sic]; and*
* *Should such a framework be deemed feasible, provide detailed advice as to the content of the framework.*

The Study Group considered that such a framework would inform future ICANN policies and procedures as to how names of country and territory could be used as TLDs:

*That is, which policy or procedure is applied to a country or territory name as TLD, determines the applicable governance framework, the structure of relationships between the relevant stakeholders (including end-users) and their respective roles and responsibilities. This is not just relevant for the selection or delegation stage, but also for subsequent stages, once a country or territory name Top Level Domain is operational.*

## Background on this CWG-UCTN

This CWG was formed in March, 2014. Members of the CWG are identified on the CWG’s web page, which is linked to the ccNSO’s web page.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Throughout the remainder of 2014, the CWG focused on the first mandate under its Charter, being “further review [of] the current status of representations of country and territory names, as they exist under current ICANN policies, guidelines and procedures.” The CWG confirmed the findings of the ccNSO Study Group as set out in its Final Report while noting particular examples from the implementation of the Applicant Guidebook (AGB)[[6]](#footnote-6) in the 2012 new gTLD expansion round.

At the face-to-face meeting of the CWG at ICANN52 in Singapore, the CWG met and agreed to use and continue to develop a strawman options paper drafted by the CWG co-chairs[[7]](#footnote-7) and GNSO and ccNSO supporting ICANN staff. The strawman options paper was drafted to provide the CWG with a starting point in undertaking its remaining chartered responsibilities, namely consideration of the feasibility of developing a consistent and uniform framework respecting the use of country and territory names as TLDs and provision of advice in relation to the content of such a framework.

The strawman options paper tabled at ICANN52 set out starting points to address each of these points. CWG members agreed at ICANN52 to adopt the approach proposed in the strawman options paper. This working document is therefore based upon the strawman options paper, to which the CWG’s ongoing work has been, and will continue to be, added as the CWG’s work progresses.

Lastly, in recognition of the frequent use of acronyms in the ICANN environment, the complexity of this topic and the value of consistent use of terminology in this paper, given its intended outcome of informing a consistent policy framework, a “Definitions” section is included. Relevant terms will be defined within the text in their first usage and included in the “Definitions” section. Some defined terms may, for improved readability, be shortened or identified subsequently by an acronym; where this practice is used, the shortened form or acronym will appear in parentheses immediately following its first use as well as in the “Definitions” section.

## Methodology

As noted above, the CWG-UCTN was established to further develop the results of the work of the ccNSO Study Group on Country and Territory Names. A notable finding of the Study Group in its Final Report is the complexity of defining “country and territory names”.[[8]](#footnote-8) To facilitate its work, the Study Group identified various categories of representations of country and territory names that could be used as top-level domains (TLDs).

Building upon this existing work, this CWG will explore the potential for the development of a “consistent and uniform definitional framework” in top-level domain policy (across the ccTLD and gTLD namespaces) of the following two high-level categories of use:

1. Country codes; and
2. Country and territory names.

For each category, the CWG should consider:

* The scope of the category (in other words, the definition of “country codes” and “country and territory names” such that the names falling within this category are identifiable);
* The status quo of ICANN policy respecting such use, including any recorded reasons or justifications for such policy;
* Issues arising in relation to developing a “consistent and uniform definitional [policy] framework”; and
* Possible framework options, including an analysis of the benefits and burdens of each option.

## Definitions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Country and Territory Names | the expressions “country names” and “names of States” have been used interchangeably  *“the expression ‘names of States’ is meant to cover the short name of the State or the name that is in common use, which may or may not be the official name, the formal name used in an official diplomatic context, the historical name, translation and transliteration of the name as well as use of the name in abbreviated form and as adjective”.*  **WIPO Study on Country Names**, SCT/29/5 REV.  ORIGINAL: ENGLISH  DATE: JULY 8, 2013 |
| Country Codes | Standard (i.e. ISO) lists of 2 and 3 letter abbreviation of country names |
| CWG | Cross-Community Working Group - Framework for use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs |
| Chartering Organizations | Chartering Organizations of the CWG, together the ccNSO and GNSO |
| ISO 3166-1 List |  |
| Study Group | ccNSO Study Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names |
| AGB | The new gTLD Applicant Guidebook published 4 June 2012 |
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## Framework on the Use of Country and Territory Names: Analysis and Options

### Country Codes under ISO 3166

The ISO 3166 Part 1 has multiple lists. What is general called the ISO3166 alpha-2 list (or a variation of this phrase) is actually Section 9, "List one: Alphabetical list of country names in English and their code elements". The list has various fields. If there is interest I offer to write a similar note like this one to discuss the standard and this list. The official home of page for the ISO 3166 standard can be found at

<<http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes.htm>>. This page has a link to the alpha-2 list of codes

<<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#search/code/>>. This is gives a list of all country 657 country codes of which only 249 are assigned. This link does lists also the status of the most non-assigned codes.

#### Two-letter Country Codes

##### Scope

This category of usage comprises two-letter country codes, which have to this point been reserved under ICANN TLD policy for use as ccTLDs (as is explained in greater detail in 1.1.2 “Status Quo”, below).

##### Status Quo

* :

##### Reasons/Justification

* alpha 2-

##### Issues

* ISO 3166-1 is not a closed, static list. As new countries and territories are formed/founded and other cease to exist, the ISO List is amended accordingly.
* What about two-letter strings in other scripts than ASCII – e.g. two-letter Chinese characters; two letter Cyrilic or Greek TLDs (note the close resemblance of characters in Cyrilic, Greek, Latin and ASCII scripts) ?

##### Potential Options

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Benefits** | **Burdens/Risks** |
| Maintain status quo: exclude two-letter gTLD strings in ASCII ~~and other scripts~~ other than through the ISO 3166-1 list as cc-TLDs. | Avoids conflicts with future countries and territories added to ISO 3166-1 list | Continued reliance on access to ISO 3166-1 list; risk that ISO runs out of available two-letter codes for countries & territories |
| Permit registration of two-letter ASCII gTLD strings not on the ISO 3166-1 list. |  | Potentially limits the use of ISO 3166-1 as basis for ccTLDs, effectively infringing the current policy for creation of ccTLDs and removes the possibility for new countries to be included in the ccTLD system.  If it is permitted as gTLDs this will create confusion for the users since there is another policy for gTLDs than for ccTLDs. |
| Unrestricted use of two-letter names as gTLDs. |  | Would be counter to GAC Principles/prior GAC advice, removes options for new countries and will create confusion |
| Restrict use of all to letter/symbol domains – whether ASCII or other script |  | Potentially Western centric. |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

#### Three-letter Country Codes

##### Status Quo

##### Reasons/Justification

##### Issues

##### Potential Options

### Country and Territory Names

1. CWG Charter, at <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-framework-charter-27mar14-en.pdf>, at 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Disclaimer by Jaap: this is not pretending to be a complete history of how the current policy of came into existence. Based on what is published in the IETF RFCs, it goes back to the early days (early 80’s) when (cc)TLDs where established and their relation with ISO 3166. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ccNSO SG Statement of Purpose, at <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/use-of-names-statement-of-purpose-31jan10-en.pdf>, at 2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Final Report: <http://ccnso.icann.org/node/42227> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The ccNSO Study Group online resources were set up and managed by the ccNSO. For administrative ease and convenience, these existing resources were relied upon when setting up an online site for the CWG. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Heather Forrest (GNSO), Annebeth Lange (ccNSO), Carlos Raul-Gutierrez (GNSO) and Paul Szyndler (ccNSO). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See also WIPO Study on Country Names, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)