Cross-Community Working Group - Framework for use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs

(CWG - UCTN)

DRAFT INTERIM PAPER[1]

Version: 01

25 October 2016

[1] The term FINAL Report has a specific meaning under the charter of this WG. The WG is not at that stage. The Interim Paper is the document to seek public comment. See charter.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary....3
Readers Guide....5

1. Background on use of Country and Territory Names in the Domain Nems System....6

2. Background on the ccNSO Study Group....13

3. Background on the ccNSO-GNSO CWG-UCTN....14

4. Methodology....16

5. Framework on the Use of Country and Territory Names: Analysis and Options for Country Codes Under ISO 3166....18

6. CWG-UCTN Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Work....26

Frame 1: The ISO procedure for determining which entities should be and should not be on the ISO 3166 list. 10

Frame 2: Details on the ISO 3166 Standard 11

ANNEX A Defintions....33

ANNEX B Evolution of policy and its implementation on use of names of countries and territories under the new gTLD Program 35

ANNEX C Working Group Members 42

ANNEX D Overview of Responses on 3-character codes – Question 1-4 45

Executive Summary

This report sets out the core issues that the Cross-Community Working Group: Framework for Use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs (CWG-UCTN) addressed in carrying out its Charter (http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-framework-charter-27mar14-en.pdf) since its inception I 2014. It records the CWG-UCTN's discussions regarding options around a consistent framework for the treatment of country and territory names as top-level Internet domains (TLDs). This document, consistent with the CWG-UCTN's Charter, provides "a review and analysis of the [CWG-UCTN's] objective, a draft Recommendation and its rationale."[2]

According to the CWG-UCTN's Charter,[3] the objective of the CWG-UCTN is to draw upon the collective expertise of the participating SOs and ACs and others, to:

- Further review the current status of representations of country and territory names, as they exist under current ICANN policies, 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 and AC's; and
- Should such a framework be deemed feasible, provide detailed advice as to the content of the framework.

Since the adoption of its Charter in March, 2014, the CWG has met regularly through telephone conferences and at ICANN public meetings. It has provided regular updates to the communities, including the ccNSO, GAC and GNSO Council. Throughout its deliberations, the CWG has observed a high level of complexity associated with any attempt to come up with a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SO's and AC's defining rules guiding the use of country and territory names as top level domains that, ideally, can be applied objectively to alpha-2 and alpha-3 ISO 3166-1 codes as well as full country and territory names.

Despite the importance of country and territory names to a wide range of stakeholders, and despite the fact that all involved made strong efforts to find a solution, the WG concludes after carefull deliberations that, within its limited chartered mandate, this WG does NOT consider it feasible to develop a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SOs and ACs defining rules guiding the use of country and territory names as top level domains.

---

[2] CWG-UCTN Charter, at http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-framework-charter-27mar14-en.pdf, at 3.
[3] CWG-UCTN Charter, at http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-framework-charter-27mar14-en.pdf, at 2.

At the same time the members of the wg recognize that despite the complexity of the issue at hand, the aforementioned inconsistencies between various ICANN policies, and the limited mandate of the CCWG, further work is needed and warranted, however differently structured and embedded. The chatering organisations are therefore recommended:

1. To close this CCWG in accordance with and as foreseen in the charter.
2. The CWG unanimously recommends that the ICANN community consolidate all policy efforts relating to geographic names (as that term has traditionally very broadly been defined in the ICANN environment to this point) to enable in-depth analyses and discussions on all aspects related to all geographic-related names at all levels of the DNS. This is the only way, in our view, to determine whether a harmonized framework is truly achievable.

3. The CWG could not agree unanimously on any of the alternatives for Recommendation 3. Based on a survey poll the majority of the members/ participants in the CWG who participated in the poll (13), expressed support for Alternative C. However, this should be interpreted than anything else then a sense of the direction of travel by the limited number of members that participated in the poll. For this reason, all alternatives are included.

Recommendation 3 Alternative A

Future work should take place with the authority of a policy development process under ICANN's Bylaws, with a clearly drafted Charter or scope of works that sets out how conclusions and recommendations will inform that policy development process. This addresses a key deficiency of this CWG, as it has not been made clear how the group's work can or will be incorporated in policy-making pursuant to ICANN's Bylaws.

Some members of the WG raised the concern that issues that are in scope of both the ccNSO and GNSO policy development processes, for example how full names of countries and territories other than Latin scripts are dealt with, should be addressed through a coordinated effort under both processes.

Recommendation 3 Alternative B

To ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of a CWG will at one point have the authority of a policy developed through the relevant processes under ICANN's Bylaws, future work should take place with a clear view on how this work at some point will reach the authority of a policy developed as or relates to and provides input to formal policy development processes. With regard to the subject matter, the use of country and territory names as TLDs the CWG notes that this should be defined with respect to both the ccNSO and GNSO Policy development processes. Due to the overlapping definitions used under existing policies, additional policy developed by one group, impact and has an effect upon the policy developed for another group. This may

be achieved through a clearly drafted Charter or scope of works that sets out how these policy development processes will be informed. This addresses a key deficiency this CWG has encountered, as it has not been made clear how the group's work can or will be incorporated in policy-making pursuant to ICANN's Bylaws.

Recommendation 3 Alternative C
Future work should clearly align with ICANN policy development processes, and should have a clearly drafted Charter or scope of works that sets out how conclusions and recommendations will inform ICANN policy development.

Finally, the CWG unanimously recommends:

4. that future policy development work must facilitate an all-inclusive dialogue to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate. Again, we believe that this is the only way to determine whether a harmonized framework is truly achievable.

Readers Guide

This report is structured to record the progress of the CWG-UCTN with respect to these objectives. The first three sections provide background on the use of country and territory names in the Domain Name System (DNS), with a focus on use of the country codes in the formative years of the DNS (section 1.2), RFC 1591 (1. 3) and post RFC 1591 (1. 4). Section 4 also contains a more in depth description of ISO 3166 and the related role of the ISO3166 Maintenance Agency in the procedures in assigning codes to represent the name of countries, dependency, or other area of particular geopolitical interest. As Given the omplexity of the topic and cross-community aspects of it, Furhter and again related, Annex B of this paper contains a description of the evolution of the defintion of country and territory names leading up to the first round of the new gTLD process.

The ccNSO Study Group, and the CWG-UCTN are briefly introduced in Section 2 and 3 and this paper.and section 4 contains a discussion of the CWG-UCTN's methodology.

Section 5 provides a summary of the work completed by the CWG on 2-letter country codes and 3-letter country codes.

Finally, the CCWG offers its observations, conclusions and recomemdnations to the chartering organisations in section 6.

1. Background on Use of Country and Territory Names in the Domain Name System (DNS)[4]

1.1. Formative Years

Initially, the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), a United States Department of Defense research project, implemented the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) and Internet Protocol (IP), to enable the consistent identification of computers connected to the ARPANET, termed 'hosts', by assigning to each host a unique numerical address, termed an 'Internet Protocol' address. While the IP address facilitated communication between computers, long strings of numbers are less intuitive to human users. Therefore it was recommended that hosts also would be given short, unique, mnemonic names and a master list, called the "hosts.txt file", was developed that contained IP addresses of all hosts in the network and listed the related names.

The use of the domain system was first mentioned by Jon Postel in RFC 881.[5] RFC 882 additionally provides a description of an early form of the DNS. An update of the implementation schedule can be found in RFC 897. One of the core evolutionary aspects was apportioning responsibilities; no longer would a single fixed file needed to be maintained (a task, which grew larger as the network grew), but rather the network would be structured into 'domains'. An entity with authority over a domain would be responsible for keeping track of all of the hosts connected to that domain.[6]

The next phase of the formation and structuring of the DNS was documented in RFC 920,[7] which defined the Top Level Domains (TLDs). ARPA, GOV, EDU, COM, MIL, and ORG, and country code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs). This document includes a reference to ISO 3166-1 as a list of 'English country names and code elements' (the 'ISO 3166-1 list of the ISO 3166 standard')[8]. Actual delegations of two letter country code TLDs started in 1985, initially, to local academic institutions.

---

[4] This is not intended to be a complete history of how the current framework of policies of came into existence. It is intended to provide some historical context around the current policies framework. This part goes back to the early days (early 80's) when (cc)TLDs where established and their relation with ISO 3166 and is based on publicly available documentation, in particular the IETF RFCs.

[5] J. Postel, RFC 881: "The Domain Names Plan and Schedule", Nov. 1983, https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc881
[6] David D. Clark, RFC 814: "Name, Addresses, Ports and Routes", Jul. 1982, https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc814
[7] J. Postel and J. Reynolds, RFC 920: "Domain Requirements", Oct. 1984, https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc920
[8] ISO, *Country Codes: ISO 3166*, http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes.htm#2012_iso3166_MA

In November 1987 RFC 1032 '(titled Domain Administrators Guide') was published. This RFC documented the evolution of ideas since set RFC 920, in particular and relevant in this context, policies for the establishment and administration of domains, including the use of ISO 3166 as the standard list for two-letter country codes assigned to countries, . According to, RFC 1032:

> *Countries that wish to be registered as top-level domains are required to name themselves after the two-letter country code listed in the international standard ISO-3166. In some cases, however, the two-letter ISO country code is identical to a state code used by the U.S. Postal Service. Requests made by countries to use the three-letter form of country code specified in the ISO-3166 standard will be considered in such cases so as to prevent possible conflicts and confusion.*

The CWG-UCTN is not aware of any request to use the three-letter form of country code.

1.2. RFC 1591

In March 1994 RFC 1591[9] was published, setting out the naming practice at that time. Amongst other items, RFC 1591 reflects the significant amount of work that had transpired in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Critically for the context of country names as Top Level Domains, RFC 1591 identified and preserved the link between ccTLDs and the ISO 3166-1 list and established two significant, fundamental principles:

> *The IANA is not in the business of deciding what is and what is not a country.*

And

> *The selection of the ISO 3166 list as a basis for country code top-level domain names was made with the knowledge that ISO has a procedure for determining which entities should be and should not be on that list.*

To date these two principles are still at the core of the policy for allocation and delegation of ccTLDs (and IDN ccTLDs).

1.3. Evolution of Policies on Use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs Since RFC 1591

1.3.1. The evolution since RFC 1591

[9] ISO, *Country Codes: ISO 3166*, http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes.htm#2012_iso3166_MA

In the early 1990s, responsibility for maintaining the ARPANET project shifted away from the United States Department of Defense to the National Science Foundation. In 1997, responsibility was again shifted, this time from the National Science Foundation to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), a division of the United States Department of Commerce.[10] At this time, the US government faced increasing pressure to divest its control of the internet. ICANN has its origins in then-US President Clinton's direction to the NTIA to address these growing concerns.

The policy on use of two-letter codes as source for ccTLDs and as documented in RFC 1591, is still valid. This has been recently re-confirmed by the ICANN Board of Directors by adoption of the Framework on Interpretation and most recently in the (proposed) IANA Naming Functions Agreement. At its core it relies on the ISO 3166 and its processes and procedures to determine whether a geopolitical entity should be considered a country, and, hence ultimately if a ccTLD code should be assigned to that entity. The process and procedures for inclusion of a geopolitical entity and assignment of coded representations the name of that geopolitical entity are defined in the ISO 3166 Standard itself.

[10] Committee on Internet Navigation and the Domain Name System: Technical Alternatives and Policy Implications, *Signposts in Cyberspace: The Domain Name System and Internet Navigation* (National Academies Press, 2005) at 76-77.

The ISO procedure for determining which entities should be and should not be on the ISO 3166 list.

ISO 3166 provides universally applicable coded representations of names of countries (current and non-current), dependencies, and other areas of particular geopolitical interest and their subdivisions. The codes are used for a wide variety of purposes, such as other code systems like ISO 4127 tCodes for the representation of currencies", travel documents, postal sorting systems etc. and as ccTLDs.

The ISO body responsible for the standard 3166 is the Technical Committee 46, systems etc. and as non-current), dependencies, and other areas of particular geopolitical inte(ISO/TC 46/WG2). Minor changes to the standard and updates to the code tables in the standard to reflect changes in country names and subdivisions are the responsibility of a dedicated Maintenance Agency (ISO3166/MA). The 3166/MA consists currently of 10 voting members and around 25 non-voting members which have an advisory role. The ISO Secretary-General defines terms of reference, working procedures and guidelines for the ISO 3166/MA.

The major role of the 3166/MA is to assign letter codes to countries, their subdivisions and keep this and other information about the codes up to date. The standard itself describes the eligibility for inclusion of countries, their sub-divisions etc. New members of the UN are routinely added to the standard. Names changes for countries appearing in the UNTERM database or the UN Statistical Division list M49 are followed.

Other areas of particular geopolitical interest, autonomous regions and sometimes physically separated areas from parent countries can be eligible under special circumstances i.e. when an interchange requirement exists. A request for such an inclusion shall originate from the competent office of the national government or from an ISO Member Body in the country holding sovereignty over the area.

The 3166 MA also maintains codes reserved for special use such as (UN) travel documents, financial securities etc., not directly related to geographic areas.

Details on the ISO 3166 Standard

ISO codes are intended to be used in any application requiring the expression of current country names in coded form[11]. The term 'Country Names' is defined in section 3.4. A country name is defined as a "name of country, dependency, or other area of particular geopolitical interest". That is why the term "Countries and territories" is used as a reminder that it is not just about countries, hence, for example the name of this CCWG.

The standard consists of three parts:

- ISO 3166-1 (Part 1: Country codes);
- ISO 3166-2 (Part 2: Country subdivisions code);
- ISO 3166-3 (Part 3: Code for formerly used names of countries).

The edition (version) of a Part is identified by the year of its publication. Therefore the full reference to the current (third) Edition of ISO 3166 Part 1 is: ISO 3166-1:2013.

The ISO codes only use the ASCII letters (A-Z) and numbers (0-9) and (in ISO 3166-2 only) hyphens (-).

ISO codes are structured as follows:

- ISO3166-1 uses two letter codes (alpha-2), three letter codes (alpha-3) and numerical codes;
- ISO 3166-2 uses codes starting with an ISO 3166 alpha-2 code followed by a hyphen and one or more letters or numbers;
- ISO 3166-3 uses 4 letter codes. Often codes in ISO 3166-3 contain the original obsoleted (alpha-2) codes.

The alpha-2 and 3 codes can have various classifications such as:

- Assigned by ISO 3166/MA,
- Unassigned, and
- Reserved (Exceptionally, Transitionally, and indeterminately).

[11] See Section 1 ISO 3166-1 latest edition (2013)

For additional details, see also:
http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/country_codes/country_codes_glossary.htm.

The authoritative source for these terms is, of course, the Standard itself. The official home of page for the ISO 3166 standard can be found at: http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes. This page includes a link[12] to the alpha-2 list of codes of all 657 country codes, of which only 249 are assigned. Listed are also the status of non-assigned codes.

There is not just a single list. Rather, the term is often used colloquially to denote the list with the Country Code Assignments in Section 9 of ISO 3166-1. People tend to use the term 'ISO Code List' imprecisely. They often use the term to include the Reserved Codes. Similarly confusing is the use of the term 'the ISO 3166-2 list' while not meaning Part 2 of the ISO 3166 standard at all, but referring instead to the list of the (alpha-2) codes in Part 1.

Note that when the term 'ISO 3166-2 list' is misused in this way it is often undefined whether all possible codes are meant (i.e., both the Assigned and the Reserved Codes, or just the Assigned Codes).

1.3.2 Country and Territory names in "proof of concept" new gTLDs (2001 and 2003)

Two 'proof of concept' new gTLD expansion inititiatives, the first in 2000[13] and the second in 2003[14], together added fifteen new gTLDs to the DNS. Nearly all of these gTLDs utilize terms of a generic, categorical nature; none could be interpreted as identifying a 'country name', as that term is commonly understood[15][16].

---

[12] https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#search/code/
[13] ICANN, New TLD Program Application Process Archive, http://archive.icann.org/en/tlds/app-index.htm
[14] ICANN, Information page for Sponsored Top-Level Domains, http://archive.icann.org/en/tlds/stld-apps-19mar04/
[15] As a result of the 2003 proof of concept round the following geography related names were introduced as TLDs: .CAT (for Catalunya) and .ASIA. These TLDs as well as the others from this round were considered sponsored TLDs. According to the RFP for the 2003 round: "The proposed sTLD must address the needs and interests of a clearly defined community" and "The proposed new sTLD must create a new and clearly differentiated space, and satisfy needs that cannot be readily met through the existing TLDs." This would clearly distinguish them from country or ccTLDs. http://archive.icann.org/en/tlds/new-stld-rfp/new-stld-application-parta-15dec03.htm
[16] A comprehensive evaluation of these initial expansion efforts is documented in Heather Ann Forrest, *The Protection of Geographic Names in International Law and Domain Name System Policy* (Wolters Kluwer, 2013)

1.3.3 Country and territory names in the new gTLD process (2012 AGB)

The use of names of country and territory as a gTLD string became again a policy issue as part of the 2012 new gTLD process. As part of the implementation, a definition of 'geographic names' appeared in the second version of the gTLD Applicant Guidebook[17]. With subsequent versions of the gTLD Applicant Guidebook, the proposed way on how to deal with use "country and territory names" as new gTLD evolved.

The most significant changes were:

- Up and until the third version of the Applicant Guidebook (Ocotber 2008) "country and territory names could in principle be applied for if support by a rerlevant government was documented. As of the fourth version all country and territory names are excluded from th 1st round of new gTLD.
- The definition of what should be considered a "country or territory" changed over time. Initially (up and until the second version of the draft AGB it contained a reference to the "meaningful representation or abbreviation of the name of a country or territory. As of the thrid version (October 2009) the description was made more specific to ensure predictability.
-

The Board approved version of the AGB, which is applied during the first round of new gTLD applications, the following basic rules applied:

- All two-letter codes applications were excluded
- All strings representing country and territory names in all languages were excluded from the 1st round of new gTLD, whereby

- A string shall be considered to be a country or territory name if:

  - it is an alpha-3 code listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard
  - it is a long-form name listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard, or a translation of the long-form name in any language
  - it is a short-form name listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard, or a translation of the short-form name in any language
  - it is the short- or long-form name association with a code that has been designated as "exceptionally reserved" by the ISO 3166 Maintenance Agency
  - it is a separable component of a country name designated on the "Separable Country Names List," or is a translation of a name appearing on the list, in any language. See the Annex at the end of this module.

[17] https://archive.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/draft-rfp-clean-18feb09-en.pdf , section 2.1.1.4.1 page 2-10

- it is a permutation or transposition of any of the names included in items (i) through (v). Permutations include removal of spaces, insertion of punctuation, and addition or removal of grammatical articles like "the". A transposition is considered a change in the sequence of the long or short-form name, for example, "RepublicCzech" or "IslandsCayman".
- it is a name by which a country is commonly known, as demonstrated by evidence that the country is recognized by that name by an intergovernmental or treaty organization."[18]

A comprehensive description of the evolution of policy and its implementation on use of names of countries and territories under the new gTLD Program is included in Annex B.

2. Background on the ccNSO Study Group (2011)

The formation of the CWG-UCTN is a recommendation of the earlier 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:[19]

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,[20] the Study Group recommended that a Cross-Community Working Group be established to:

---

[18] gTLD Applicant Guidebook Version 9 (11 January 2012), Module 2, Section 2.2.1.4.1, Treatment of Country or Territory Names, at http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/about/historical-documentation/matrix-agb-v9.

[19] ccNSO SG Statement of Purpose, at http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/use-of-names-statement-of-purpose-31jan10-en.pdf, at 2-3.

[20] Final Report: http://ccnso.icann.org/node/42227

- *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.*

3. Background on the ccNSO-GNSO CWG-UCTN (2014)

This CWG-UCTN 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.[21]

Throughout the remainder of 2014, the CWG-UCTN focused on its first Charter mandate, namely to '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 AGB[22] in the 2012 new gTLD expansion round.

At the face-to-face meeting of the CWG-UCTN at ICANN52 in Singapore, the CWG agreed to use and continue to develop a strawman options paper drafted by the CWG co-chairs[23] 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

---

[21] 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.
[22] The final version of the gTLD Applicant Guidebook is version 10, dated 4 June 2012, accessible at http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb (hereinafter, 'AGB').
[23] Heather Forrest (GNSO), Annebeth Lange (ccNSO), Carlos Raul-Gutierrez (GNSO) and Paul Szyndler (ccNSO).

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.

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 purpose of informing a consistent policy framework, a Definitions section was included. It's intention is to define relevant terms will be defined within the text in their first usage and also for easy refrence are included in Annex {Appropiriate Annex} of this report. in the Definitions in Annex A. In practice, the CWG-UCTN found it agreeing upon precise definitional language challenging; to prevent the group's progress from stalling, work progressed without settling on precise definitions.

4. 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. It was tasked to:

- Further review the current status of representations of country and territory names, as they exist under current ICANN policies, 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 and AC's; and
- Should such a framework be deemed feasible, provide detailed advice as to the content of the framework.

As a first step the WG ensured that the relevant policies and practices pertaining to the use of of country and territory names as TLDs have not changed. The CWG-UCTN notes that since the final report of the Study Group was published in Ocotber 2013, the ccNSO Framework of Interpretation WG report on interpretation of RFC 1591 was adopted[24], however this did not affect the object of this CWG.

A notable finding of the Study Group in its Final Report was the complexity of defining 'country and territory names'.[25] 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, the CWG explored the feasibility and potential for the development of a 'consistent and uniform definitional framework' in top-level domain policy (across the ccTLD and gTLD namespaces):

1. Country codes
    a. Two- letter codes listed in Part 1: ISO 3166
    b. Three letter codes; and
2. Long and short name of country and territories listed in ISO 3166 Part 1

For each category, the CWG considered:

- 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);
- Issues arising out of potential applicability of multiple policies
- Issues and feasability of developing a framework to resolve the issues identified, including the rationale for the proposed resolution.

[24] https://ccnso.icann.org/node/46895
[25] See also WIPO Study on Country Names, 2013

- Possible framework options, including an analysis of the benefits and burdens of each option.

To assist the CWG-UCTN in understanding the views and intersts of the broader community, the CWG decided to question the different stakeholder groups, by sending out a set of questions to relevant stakeholder groups. Intially on the two-letter codes[26] and then on three-letter codes[27]. The results of this survey are in included in Annex (number) of this report.

Taking into account the results from the questionnaire and after long and intensive discussions the findings CWG came up with a set of findings with respect to the two and three letter codes. These findings are presented below in Section 5.

[26] Insert date and overview of questions fro two-letter codes

[27] Letter from co-chairs to SO/AC chairs 9 September 2016.
Questions are:
Questions by the CWG-UCTN on 3-character codes with regard to the use of country and territory names as top-level domains

1. In future, should all three-character top-level domains be reserved as ccTLDs only and be ineligible for use as gTLDs? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?
2. In future, should all three-character top-level domains be eligible for use as gTLDs as long as they are not in conflict with the existing alpha-3 codes from the ISO 3166-1 list; i.e. the three-character version of the same ISO list that is the basis for current ccTLD allocation? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?
3. In future, should three-character strings be eligible for use as gTLDs if they are not in conflict with existing alpha-3 codes form the ISO 3166-1 list and they have received documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant government or public authority? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?
4. In future, should there be unrestricted use of three-character strings as gTLDs if they are not conflicting with any applicable string similarity rules? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of s uch a policy?
5. In future, should all IDN three-character strings be reserved exclusively as ccTLDs and be ineligible as IDN gTLDs? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?
6. In future, should there be unrestricted use of IDN three-character strings if they are not in conflict with existing TLDs or any applicable string similarity rules? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?
7. Do you have any additional comments that may help the CWG-UCTN in its discussion on three-character strings as top-level domains?

5. Framework on the Use of Country and Territory Names: Analysis and Options for Country Codes Under ISO 3166

Two-Letter Country Codes

5.1.1. Scope

This category of usage comprises two-letter country codes as identified in ISO 3166- Part 1.

5.1.2. Status Quo

Module 2 Section 2.2.1.3.2, String Requirements in the Applicant Guidebook, provides in relevant part:

5.1 Applied-for gTLD strings in ASCII must be composed of three or more visually distinct characters. Two character ASCII strings are not permitted, to avoid conflicting with current and future country codes based on the ISO 3166-1 standard.

5.2 Applied-for gTLD strings in IDN scripts must be composed of two or more visually distinct characters in the script, as appropriate. Note, however, that a two-character IDN string will not be approved if:

3.2.1 It is visually similar to any one-character label (in any script); or

3.2.2 It is visually similar to any possible two-character ASCII combination.

The justification for deeming two-character ASCII ineligible is clearly stated in Section 2.2.1.3.2 as excerpted above: "to avoid conflicting with current and future country codes based on the ISO 3166-1 standard."

5.1.3. Current Issues

- ISO 3166-1 is not a static reference. As new countries and territories are formed/founded and other cease to exist, the standard is amended accordingly.
- Two-letter strings in IDN scripts have already been added to the root through the New gTLD Program.

5.1.4. Potential Options

Option	Application
1. All two-character strings reserved for use as ccTLD only, ineligible for use as gTLD	ASCII
2. (Version 2a: Two-character strings eligible for use as gTLD if not in conflict with ISO 3166-1.) (Version 2b: Two-character strings eligible for use as gTLD if not in conflict with [ISO 3166-1 and/or other standard/list].)	ASCII
3. Unrestricted use of two-character strings if not in conflict with an existing ccTLD or any applicable string similarity rules.	ASCII
4. Future two-character strings reserved for use as IDN ccTLD only, ineligible for use as gTLD	IDN
5. Unrestricted use of two-character strings if not in conflict with an existing TLD or any applicable string similarity rules or [other conflict conditions to be discussed, for example, visually similar to any one-character label (in any script) or visually similar to any possible two-character ASCII combination]	IDN

5.1.5. Discussion

Members of the Cross Community Working Group noted that the status quo protects two-character ASCII codes as existing or potential future country code top-level domains. A change in this policy could have a significant impact on the domain name system and members discussed in detail the advantages and disadvantages of potentially altering existing policy guidelines. The outcome of this debate can be summarized as follows:

Risks – that changing the protective status of two-letter codes (in ASCII) might carry:

- Increased user confusion because it would blur the current clear distinction between country code and generic top-level domains because two letter codes have historically

represented the recognition of the importance of the sovereignty of the respective nations in cyberspace

- New countries or territories might not have 'their' two-letter code available
- ISO code-based of ccTLDs might become effectively obsolete and create confusion beyond the DNS
- Risk of consumer confusion if a 2-char TLD is used by a multinational brand but it is also an acronym/brand of a local one. (ex. BA = British Airlines but also Banco Atlántico)
- ccNSO community put a lot of effort in last 30 years, to establish 'ccTLD brands', which would depreciate if two letter code TLDs be sold as gTLDs

Benefits – that changing the protective status of two-letter codes (in ASCII) might bring:

- Possibility to sell more new gTLD strings and achieve full commercial potential of all two-letter codes
- Two-character brands (VW, AA, BA etc.) would be able to register their brands as top-level domains
- If brands can obtain top-level domains the risk of confusion would be minimal due to the content of brand-operated TLDs
- Some ccTLDs have effectively sold their domain to private usage meaning the lines between ccTLD and gTLD are already blurred
- Providing equal treatment with IDN two character strings

However, the key argument that has impacted on the Group's thinking is that the current policy of reserving all two-charter ASCII codes for current and future allocation as country code top level domains – in accordance with the ISO 3166 list – has provided stable and predictable policy up to now. Members noted that neither IANA nor ICANN - community or staff - are in a position to determine what is and is not a state, country, or territory. The ISO standard has served the ICANN community well in this respect, as it's an external standard that pre-dates ICANN and is widely used in other contexts. It is a tried and tested administrative standard, an alteration of which could bring considerable disturbance and inconsistencies within the DNS. In this context, the WG attributed significant weight to RFC 1591, which in relevant part provides:

> *"The IANA is not in the business of deciding what is and what is not a country. The selection of the [ISO 3166-1] list as a basis for country code top-level domain names was made with the knowledge that ISO has a procedure for determining which entities should be and should not be on that list."*

5.1.6. Preliminary Recommendation on 2-letter ASCII Codes

The WG recommends that the existing ICANN policy of reserving 2-letter codes for ccTLDs should be maintained, primarily on the basis of the reliance of this policy, consistent with RFC 1591, on a standard established and maintained independently of and external to ICANN and widely adopted in contexts outside of the DNS (ISO 3166-1).

5.2. Three-Letter Country Codes

5.2.1. Scope

This category of usage comprises three-letter country codes as identified in ISO 3166-1 – also referred to as alpha-3 codes.

5.2.2. Status Quo

Historically, three character ~~codes~~ combinations have always been permitted in the DNS.

5.2.3. Issues

- Historically, the DNS has been divided between country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) comprised of two characters and generic top-level domains (gTLDs) comprised of three or more characters.
- The AGB prevented most allocated ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes from being applied for as **new** gTLDs. Note that the codes freely to be assigned by users and the reserved alpa-3 code were not considered
- The AGB does not address the precedent of why .com is part of the DNS, but all other ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes are defined as reserved.
- Countries and territories do not have legal rights with regard to the ISO or any other country code list (of which there are many). Also note that that ISO doesn't claim any legal status of standards. In is up to the users to define that.

5.2.4. Potential Options as per SOs/ACs Survey

To facilitate the Group's discussion and also to gather different viewpoints from the wider Community, the CWG decided to develop and distribute an informal survey to ICANN's Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees. This survey presented a range of options for such a policy framework on ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes.[28]

In summary, the Community feedback can largely be divided into three preferences:

1) support for opening all ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes to eligiblity as gTLDs;
2) support for the status quo (i.e., ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes entirely excluded from eligibility as gTLDs); and
3) support for the allocation of ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes to their respective, existing ccTLD operators to run as a second country code TLD, should the providers wish to do so.

Various members of the CWG supported the different options, and there was no clear consensus among the contributors to the CWG's request for input. GNSO submissions were most homogenous as they all supported the opening of eligibility for all 3-character codes as gTLDs and thus the removal of ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes from the gTLD-reserved list for future new gTLD rounds. Submissions supporting this point of view included responses from the GNSO Registry Stakeholder Group and the GNSO Intellectual Property Constituency, as well as individual responses from Brian Winterfeldt & Griffin Barnett, Partridge and Garcia PC, Yuri Takamatsu, and .de. A second group of responses supported maintaining the status quo with respect to the use of three-character top-level domains. These comments included a submission from the GAC as well as individual comments from GAC Afghanistan, GAC Finland, GAC Norway, .ar, .be, .fi, .no, and .pl. A third group of responses supported extension of ccTLDs to 3-letter ISO lists. Submissions in support of this position came from .cr, .hk, .hn, .pa, .tn, and .sv. The response from GAC Switzerland did not neatly fall into these categories, but supported a hybrid of options two and three.

In addition to these inputs, the Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries (Centr) conducted a survey of its members on the topics included in the questionnaire. A summary of the survey results is available in Annex { }.

5.2.5. Discussion of the pros and cons of the options discussed in the Survey

[28] Questions and a full overview of responses can be found in Annex [TBC]

In the Community feedback[29], supporting arguments were brought forward for each of the three options listed in the previous section:

Supporting to open all 3-character codes as gTLDs

- There is no sovereign or other ownership right of governments in country or territory names, including ISO 3166-1 codes, so there is no legal basis for government veto power on allocation of these codes as gTLDs
- RFC-1591 – on which the allocation of 2-character codes as ccTLDs is based – does not refer to 3-letter codes as ccTLDs, so there is no basis in existing practice or policy for 3-character codes being used as or reserved for use as ccTLDs
- Precedent of .com/Comoros
- gTLD space was built initially on 3-character codes
- Banning 3 character codes would have impact on e-commerce and consumer choice
- Adding ISO-3 list as ccTLDs would blur the line between ccTLDs (so far exclusively 2 characters and gTLDs (so far 3+ characters)

Supporting the status quo

- Ensures governments can protect 'their country's' ISO code
- Avoid user confusion in differentiating which TLD represents a country and which is generic; i.e., whether .no is a ccTLD and .nor is a gTLD
- Allocation of 3-character codes to ccTLDs might lead to cannibalization of the 2-character ccTLDs
- Interests of a country's ccTLD provider and its government (in case of non-objection requirement) are not always aligned

Supporting extension of ccTLDs to 3-letter ISO lists

- Providing new business streams for ccTLD providers, especially smaller ones or those that have so far run 'their' ccTLD as an effective gTLD
- There are other reference lists for country codes - they should/could be taken into consideration when protecting governments and countries
- Protection of ccTLDs, especially smaller ones, in a continuously growing TLD market,

[29] At this stage the CWG will not go into the merits of any of the claims or assertions made

in which gTLDs have an almost unlimited choice of options to offer registrants

5.2.6. Additional supporting arguments for each potential option were raised in discussions among working group members:

Supporting extension of ccTLDs to 3-letter ISO lists

ccTLDs have had exclusive access to two-letter top-level domains since the inception of the DNS, and the preliminary recommendations of this CWG seeks not only to continue this existing practice and policy standard, but to preserve all two-letter combinations, not merely those provided for in the ISO-3166-1 alpha-2 standard. It might, therefore, not come as a surprise that six of the ten largest TLDs in the DNS are country codes.[30]

Supporting an extension of allocating ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes to ccTLD providers or local government agencies, as suggested by a number of responses (see above), is not consistent with or supported by the simple and long-standing principle that 2-character codes are ccTLDs and 3+-character codes are gTLDs. This distinction has served the DNS well by preventing user confusion, providing consumer certainty, and ensuring fair competition.

Supporting the status quo

The status quo, based on the AGB, prevents all ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes from use as TLDs. The rationale for this is to quarantine country and territory names, of which three character codes are a representation, for detailed consideration by a working group such as CWG.

Moreover, one of the principles applied for the CWG's decision on maintaining the status quo on ISO-3166-1 alpha-2 codes, namely to exclude all two-character codes from allocation as gTLDs, was to assure that any newly-recognized country or territory should have assurance that its ISO-3166-1 alpha-2 code is available. Yet the fact that 153 three-character top-level domains are already in operation,[31] including the single largest legacy generic gTLD .com (the ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 code for the Comoros Islands), means that protection of ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes for future countries is not and will not be feasible.

[30] http://www.verisign.com/assets/infographic-dnib-Q32015.pdf.
[31] https://www.tldwatch.com/tld-summary-table/

Supporting availability of all 3-character codes as gTLDs

The strongest argument against free availability of all 3-character strings in the next gTLD round is the possibility of user confusion. For example, .nl is a country but .nld would not be. This could be potentially aggravated by gTLD registries trying to run/market a gTLD as a country code, e.g.: register yourname.can the new domain space for Canada! Although there are arguments to be made about a free market, it must be acknowledged that the DNS from its earliest days has recognized a space for domestic two-letter ccTLDs, and that the use of these codes has had a positive impact on the development of a healthy and productive DNS sector, especially in countries were the domain name system is still in its infancy – of which there are many, especially in Africa, Central and Latin America, as well as parts of Asia. A change in the system that could potentially undermine ccTLD markets, especially in under-served regions, cannot be in the interest of the ICANN community.

That said, while the DNS has recognized a space for domestic two-letter ccTLDs, in both policy and practice this has manifested through adoption of the externally developed and maintained ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 standard, which has been adopted in many other contexts outside of the DNS. This is of course one of the most consistent and transparent rules of DNS: two-character TLD codes are country codes and three-character (or more) TLD codes are generic – a principle that was invoked by this CWG when agreeing to maintain the status quo for ISO-3166-1 alpha-2 codes as well as all other 2-character codes.

Given this CWG's mandate to evaluate the feasibility of a consistent standard applying to the use of country and territory names as TLDs, it is relevant here to point out this CWG's recommendations in relation to the use of ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 codes. This CWG's recommendation, to preserve such codes for use as ccTLDs, is based upon principles of transparency, predictability and the preservation of a clearly demarcated space for ccTLDs. To recommend that ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 codes are likewise preserved generates an obvious inconsistency with that earlier recommendation, as it erodes the predictability and clear demarcation of a ccTLD space and lacks transparency, as the ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 code has not previously been adopted for use in the DNS. Further, the .com/Comoros precedent and the increasing number of 3-character gTLDs introduced through the 2012 New gTLD Program make this an impracticable position.

Making available all three-character codes, which currently are not designated ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 codes, in future new gTLDs rounds risks the possibility of conflict with future recognition of countries. This could equally be construed as an argument to simply exclude all three-character combinations from future allocation, yet, with already 153 three character

codes in the DNS, this seems an unreasonable position to take.

5.3. Preliminary Recommendation on 3-letter ASCII Codes

The working group was unable to reach a consensus opinion regarding 3-letter ASCII codes, therefore no recommendation has been put forward on this issue.

6. CWG-UCTN Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Work

Two-letter representations of country or territory names in the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) 3166-1 alpha-2 standard

In October 2015[32], following having conducted an informal survey of the ICANN community on the current use and expectations in relation to 2-letter codes, the CWG reached a preliminary conclusion that the existing ICANN policy of reserving 2-letter codes for ccTLDs should be maintained. This preliminary conclusion was primarily on the basis of the reliance of this policy, consistent with RFC 1591, on a standard established and maintained independently of and external to ICANN and widely adopted in contexts outside of the DNS. RFC 1591 in relevant part provides: "The IANA is not in the business of deciding what is and what is not a country. The selection of the [ISO 3166-1] list as a basis for country code top-level domain names was made with the knowledge that ISO has a procedure for determining which entities should be and should not be on that list." The CWG expressly did not base its preliminary conclusion on any claims to legal or other rights or interests in 2-letter country codes or to confusion-related concerns.

Three-letter representations of country or territory names in the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) 3166-1 alpha-3 standard

Having reached a preliminary conclusion on alpha-2 letter country codes, the CWG turned its attention in late 2015 to 3-letter codes. It was immediately noted by the group that, while two-letter codes have a long-standing role in DNS policy and procedure originating with RFC 1591, ICANN had not consistently extended the same protections and definitions to three-letter codes. It was further noted that TLDs and the ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 standard have coexisted, with

---

[32] Cross-Community Working Group - Framework for use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs (CWG - UCTN). straw man options paper. version 21 September 2015
https://community.icann.org/display/CWGOUCNT/Output+and+Draft+Documents?preview=/49354211/56143211/Options%20Paper%2015%20October%202015%20.doc

occasional intersections, for many years with no significant policy-based conflicts. Notably, the final version of the New gTLD Applicant Guidebook removed ISO 3166-1 three-letter codes from eligibility without reserving these codes for potential use as ccTLDs or for any other use.[33]

The following examples illustrate the outcome of inconsistencies:

- ISO-related strings that could be of interest to potential new gTLD applicants (such as .BRB, .CAN or .GEO) are currently protected and are ineligible to become new gTLDs.
- ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 country codes that could be of interest to countries to use for the local community or for purposes related to the country or territory identified are currently protected and are not available for delegation.
- Some three-letter codes, such as ".com," already exist as TLDs. .com is the largest gTLD and also the ISO3166-1 alpha-3 code for Comoros. This duality has existed since January 1985, when the TLD was first implemented. At the time, there were simply no policy protections in place for country names. However, ".com" has thrived as the most populous gTLD to date. Any attempt at retrospective application of protectionist policies for three-letter codes would provide an undesirable policy conflict and a destabilizing, unenforceable influence.
- Existing Reserved Names restrictions operate to prevent the use as TLDs of certain three-letter codes on the ISO list (such as .NIC).[34]
- And yet other three-letter codes – most notably those IDNs involved in the fast track process – are required to meet an entirely different set of eligibility criteria.
- Current ICANN policies, particularly with regard to the current new gTLD process, provide an inconsistent framework for treatment of three-letter country representations. Rigid application of the current range of ICANN policies and procedures, plus ongoing overlapping efforts across the ICANN community relating to future policy on geographic names more broadly, could potentially lead to an inconsistent treatment of country and territory names. That is, certain representations could be prohibited from use as new gTLDs by the Applicant Guidebook, while others could be considered IDNs, and yet others could be prohibited from use as an IDN ccTLD given current "one per official/designated language" provisions of the fast track process[35] and future IDN ccTLD policy.

---

[33] New gTLD Applicant Guidebook clause 2.2.1.4.1(i), at https://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb.

[34] The code "NIC" is explicitly included on the "Top-Level Domains Reserved List" in the Applicant Guidebook as a representation of "Network Information Center" and is yet also an ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 code representation for Nicaragua

[35] IDN Fast Track Process https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/idn-cctld-implementation-plan-05nov13-en.pdf

With the input of and guidance from experts familiar with ISO processes, it was noted that the 3166-Part 1 (both alpha-2 and 2 letter codes) itself is **dynamic** , that is entries in the list come and go to reflect geo-political changes. The creation of new countries and the dissolution of others means that not even this most fundamental guideline in the context of the use of country an dteriory names as TLDs is not stable, which will cause its own complexities and challenges.

SO/AC survey

Replicating its approach to considering the issue of alpha-2 letter codes, to facilitate the group's discussion and to gather different viewpoints from the wider community, the CWG developed and distributed an informal survey to ICANN's Supporting Organisations and Advisory Committees. This survey presented a range of options for a potential future policy framework on ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 codes. The views expressed by respondents were highly divergent, and there was no clear consensus among the contributors to the CWG's request for input. On analyzing the survey results, the CWG found it difficult to reconcile competing views and interests and the varying level of detail and rationale in responses; a 'strawwoman' document was circulated but not agreed upon by the CWG.[36] The survey results can be found on the WG wiki space.[37]

Cross-community session ICANN56

The CCWG is also aware of other discussions relating to geographic names in the ICANN community. These include discussions amongst members of the GAC regarding the treatment of geographic names at the top level and regarding country names and 2-letter country/territory codes at the second level[38]; and the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP.

---

[36] CCWG on the use of country and territory names as TLDs - Straw Man Paper on 3 character codes as TLDs.https://community.icann.org/display/CWGOUCNT/Output+and+Draft+Documents?preview=/49354211/59640250/StrawWoman_3charactercodes_v0.5-ColinsComments.pdf

[37] CWG wiki space https://community.icann.org/display/CWGOUCNT/Output+and+Draft+Documents

[38] The recent GAC-Helsinki communiqué, https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/Governmental+Advisory+Committee?preview=/27132037/43712811/20160630_GAC%20ICANN%2056%20Communique_FINAL%20%5B1%5D.pdf, refers to discussed plans within the GAC on the subject of 2-letter country/territory codes *at the second level*: The GAC discussed plans proposed by Registry Operators to mitigate the risk of confusion between country codes and 2-letter second level domains under new gTLDs. Some countries and territories stated they require no notification for the release of their 2-letter codes for use at the second level. The GAC considers that, in the event that no preference has been stated, a lack of response should not be considered consent.

With this and other ongoing activities in mind, the CWG seized the opportunity presented by ICANN's first "policy forum" public meeting, ICANN56 in Helsinki, to have a broader, cross-community discussion on topics relating to the use of country and other geographic names to better gauge whether a harmonized framework would be feasible. . The purpose of this cross-community session, referred to as the "country and other geographic names forum", was to solicit views from the community on the different issues related to the use of country and other geographic names and the feasibility of a harmonized framework that could inform and enhance policy efforts around the use of these names as TLDs. Once again, the WG noted diverging interests and opinions across all communities.

Since that time, the CWG has additionally noted the recent GAC-Helsinki communiqué,[39] which advises the ICANN Board, on the topic of 3-letter codes in the ISO 3166 list as gTLDs in future rounds, "*i. to encourage the community to continue in depth analyses and discussions on all aspects related to a potential use of 3-letter codes in the ISO-3166 list as gTLDs in future rounds. […] ii.* To keep current protections in place […]".

Conclusion around feasibility to develop a consistent and uniform definitional framework

Comments and observations

- Despite several efforts to engage the wider community, the CWG was mainly driven by ccNSO and GNSO. Lower or inconsistent levels of involvement by other segments of the ICANN community have made it difficult to pursue community-wide solutions, yet the cross-community session in Helsinki clearly evidenced a broader, community-wide interest in this topic.
- The treatment of country and territory names as top-level domains is a topic that has been discussed by the ccNSO, GAC, GNSO, ALAC and the ICANN Board for a number of years. Issues regarding the treatment of representations of country and territory names have arisen in a wide range of ICANN policy processes, including the IDN Fast Track, the GAC Working Group to Examine the Protection of Geographic Names in any Future Expansion of gTLDs,[40] the IDN ccPDP. References to country and territory names and their

[39] GAC Communiqué ICANN56, Helsinki, Finland
https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/Governmental+Advisory+Committee?preview=/27132037/43712811/20160630_GAC%20ICANN%2056%20Communique_FINAL%20%5B1%5D.pdf

[40] Wiki GAC Geographic Names Working Group
https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+Working+Group+to+Examine+the+Protection+of+Geographic+Names+in+any+Future+Expansion+of+gTLDs

use are also present in guidelines such as the GAC's "Principles and Guidelines for the Delegation and Administration of Country Code Top Level Domains" and "Principles regarding new gTLDs", foundation documents such as RFC1591 and administrative procedures such as those followed by IANA, in accordance with ISO3166-1, in the delegation and redelegation of ccTLDs. More details can be found in the final report [41] of the ccNSO Study Group which pre-dated the formation of this CWG.[42]

- In addition to these existing work streams, new discussions are commencing in two GNSO PDPs launched earlier this year, the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP,[43] and the Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in all gTLDs PDP.[44] In Helsinki, the CWG co-chairs liaised with the co-chairs of the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP to discuss the PDP's scope, which notably includes policy on reserved names and recognition of legal rights in names.
- Current ICANN policies, particularly with regard to the current new gTLD process, provide an inconsistent framework for treatment of three-letter country representations. Rigid application of the current range of ICANN policies and procedures could potentially lead to an inconsistent treatment of country and territory names. Further, assuming a harmonized framework for just the use of country and territory names would be developed, the community would most likely face issues between rules flowing from such a framework and rules and procedures around other geographic names.

Conclusion

Since the adoption of its Charter in March, 2014, the CWG has met regularly through telephone conferences and at ICANN public meetings. It has provided regular updates to the communities, including the ccNSO, GAC and GNSO Council. Throughout its deliberations, the CWG has observed a high level of complexity associated with any attempt to come up with a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SO's and AC's defining rules guiding the use of country and territory names as top level domains that, ideally, can be applied objectively to alpha-2 and alpha-3 ISO 3166-1 codes as well as full country and territory names.

---

41 ccNSO study Group on the use of country and territory names: final report

http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-final-02jul13-en.pdf

43 WG charter New GTLD subsequent procedures https://gnso.icann.org/en/issues/new-gtlds/subsequent-procedures-charter-21jan16-en.pdf

44 Annex C –Draft Charter for a PDP WG on a Next-Generation gTLD Registration Directory Service (RDS) to Replace WHOIS http://gnso.icann.org/en/drafts/whois-ng-gtld-rds-charter-07oct15-en.pdf

Despite the importance of country and territory names to a wide range of stakeholders, and despite the fact that all involved made strong efforts to find a solution, the WG concludes that, as its work overlaps with other community efforts, continuing its work is not conducive to achieving the harmonized framework its Charter seeks. After careful deliberations, the Cross Community Working Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names as Top-Level Domains, deems that it is not feasible within its limited mandate to develop a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SOs and ACs defining rules guiding the use of country and territory names as top level domains.

A. Recommendations

In light of the need for further work, the complexity of the issue at hand, the aforementioned inconsistencies between various ICANN policies, and the limited mandate of the CWG on the use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs, the CWG makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

To close this CCWG in accordance with and as foreseen in the charter.

Recommendation 2

The CWG unanimously recommends that the ICANN community consolidate all policy efforts relating to geographic names (as that term has traditionally very broadly been defined in the ICANN environment to this point) to enable in-depth analyses and discussions on all aspects related to all geographic-related names at all levels of the DNS. This is the only way, in our view, to determine whether a harmonized framework is truly achievable.

Recommendation 3

The CWG could not agree unanimously on any of the alternatives for Recommendation 2. Based on a survey poll the majority of the members/ participants in the CWG who participated in the poll (13), expressed support for Alternative C. However, this should be interpreted than anything else then a sense of the direction of travel by the limited number of members that participated in the poll. For this reason, all alternatives are included.

Recommendation 3 Alternative A

Future work should take place with the authority of a policy development process under ICANN's Bylaws, with a clearly drafted Charter or scope of works that sets out how conclusions and recommendations will inform that policy development process. This addresses a key deficiency of this CWG, as it has not been made clear how the group's work can or will be incorporated in policy-making pursuant to ICANN's Bylaws.

Some members of the WG raised the concern that issues that are in scope of both the ccNSO and GNSO policy development processes, for example how full names of countries and territories other than Latin scripts are dealt with, should be addressed through a coordinated effort under both processes.

Recommendation 3 Alternative B

To ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of a CWG will at one point have the authority of a policy developed through the relevant processes under ICANN's Bylaws, future work should take place with a clear view on how this work at some point will reach the authority of a policy developed as or relates to and provides input to formal policy development processes. With regard to the subject matter, the use of country and territory names as TLDs the CWG notes that this should be defined with respect to both the ccNSO and GNSO Policy development processes. Due to the overlapping definitions used under existing policies, additional policy developed by one group, impact and has an effect upon the policy developed for another group. This may be achieved through a clearly drafted Charter or scope of works that sets out how these policy development processes will be informed. This addresses a key deficiency this CWG has encountered, as it has not been made clear how the group's work can or will be incorporated in policy-making pursuant to ICANN's Bylaws.

Recommendation 3 Alternative C

Future work should clearly align with ICANN policy development processes, and should have a clearly drafted Charter or scope of works that sets out how conclusions and recommendations will inform ICANN policy development.

Recommendation 4

Future policy development work must facilitate an all-inclusive dialogue to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate. Again, we believe that this is the only way to determine whether a harmonized framework is truly achievable.

ANNEX A

Definitions

Country and Territory Names	Context to this definition is provided above in the section "Background on Country and Territory Names in the DNS". The term "country or territory names" was defined in Module 2, Section 2.2.4.1 of the AGB, as set out on page X, above. The term "country or territory names" has not elsewhere been defined in policy adopted by ICANN's Board of Directors. This CWG-UCTN adopts the following definition for the purposes of its work: [For discussion: *"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] Note that territory does not refer to regions or other sub-state entities of federal countries or similar. E.g. Australia's 'Northern Territory' is a federal state and not considered a territory under this definition. Rather 'territory' refers to British oversea territories, such as the Cayman Islands, Australia's external territories, such as the Christmas Islands, self-governing territories of the Danish Realm such as the Faroe Islands, or the Bouvet Island, a dependent territory of Norway.
Country Codes	These codes are understood as representations and/or identification of countries and territories for the purpose of the DNS Context to this definition is provided above in the section 'Background on Country and Territory Names in the DNS. Prior to the New gTLD Program, country codes have been based

	upon the ISO 3166-1 standard. This CWG-UCTN adopts the following definition for the purposes of its work: [For discussion: *Standard (i.e. ISO) lists of 2 and 3 letter abbreviation of country names*.]
CWG-UCTN	Cross-Community Working Group - Framework for Use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs
Chartering Organizations	Chartering Organizations of the CWG-UCTN, together the ccNSO and GNSO
ISO 3166-1	Context to this definition is provided above in the section "Background on Country and Territory Names in the DNS". This CWG-UCTN adopts the following definition for the purposes of its work: [For discussion: The international standard developed by the International Standards Organization (ISO), and as maintained from time to time by ISO.]
Study Group	ccNSO Study Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names
AGB	The new gTLD Applicant Guidebook published 4 June 2012 See: https://newgtlds.icann.org/en/APPLICANTS/AGB

ANNEX B Evolution of policy and its implementation on use of names of countries and territories under the new gTLD Program

B. 1. Reserved Names Working Group

The GNSO, the body responsible under ICANN's Bylaws for making policy with respect to gTLDs,[45] had convened, prior to the ICANN Board's decision in 2008 to proceed with further gTLD expansion, a Working Group to review existing practice and make recommendations on the future use of reserved names ("Reserved Names Working Group" or "RN-WG"). The 2007 RN-WG's Report[46] recommended that the following work be conducted in relation to 'geographical & geopolitical names':

a. Review the GAC Principles for New gTLDs with regard to geographical and geopolitical names
b. Consult with WIPO experts regarding geographical and geopolitical names and IGO names
c. Consult with the GAC as possible
d. Reference the treaty [INSERT] instead of the Guidelines and identify underlying laws if different than a treaty
e. Consider restricting the second and third level recommendations to unsponsored gTLDs only
f. Restate recommendations in RN-WG report for possible use in the New gTLD evaluation process, not as reserved name
    i. Describe process flow
    ii. Provide examples as possible
    iii. Incorporate any relevant comments from the IDN-WG report
g. Provide a brief rationale in support of the recommendations, referring to the role of the category as applicable
h. Edit other text of the individual subgroup report as applicable to conform with the fact that geographical and geopolitical names will not be considered reserved names
i. Finalize guidelines for additional work as necessary

Helpfully, the Final Report of the RN-WG, dated 23 May 2007, identifies the then-status quo of "Reserved Names Requirements" as follows:

Category of Names	TLD Level(s)	Reserved Names	Applicable gTLDs
Geographic & Geopolitical	second level, and third level (if applicable)	All geographic & geopolitical names in the ISO 3166-1 list (e.g.,	.asia, .cat, .jobs, .mobi, .tel and .travel

[45] ICANN, Bylaws for Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a California Nonprofit Public-Benefit Corporation (as amended 30 July 2014) https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en

[46] GNSO Reserved Name Working Group Report, http://gnso.icann.org/en/drafts/rn-wg-fr19mar07.pdf

		Portugal, India, Brazil, China, Canada) and names of territories, distinct geographic locations (or economies), and other geographic and geopolitical names as ICANN may direct from time to time	

The roles of these names were reported as follows:

> *Protection afforded to Geographic indicators is an evolving area of international law in which a one-size fits all approach is not currently viable. The proposed recommendations in this report are designed to ensure that registry operators comply with the national laws for which they are legally incorporated/organized.*

Several of the RN-WG's recommendations are relevant to the use of country names in the DNS and the current work of this CWG-UCTN:

Recommendation 5 – Single and Two Character IDNs of IDNA-valid strings at all levels: Single and two-character U-labels on the top-level and second-level of a domain name should not be restricted in general. At the top level, requested strings should be analyzed on a case-by-case basis in the new gTLD process, depending on the script and language used in order to determine whether the string should be granted for allocation in the DNS. Single and two character labels at the second level and the third level if applicable should be available for registration, provided they are consistent with the IDN Guidelines.
Examples of IDNs include .酒, 東京.com, تونس.icom.museum.

Recommendation 10 – Two Letters (Top Level): We recommend that the current practice of allowing two letter names at the top level, only for ccTLDs, remain at this time.
Examples include .AU, .DE, .UK

Recommendation 20 – Geographic and geopolitical names at Top Level, ASCII and IDN: There should be no geographical reserved names (i.e., no exclusionary list, no presumptive right of registration, no separate administrative procedure, etc.). The proposed challenge mechanisms currently being proposed in the draft new gTLD process would allow national or local governments to initiate a challenge, therefore no additional protection mechanisms are needed. Potential applicants for a new TLD need to represent that the use of the proposed string is not in violation of the national laws in which the applicant is incorporated.

However, new TLD applicants interested in applying for a TLD that incorporates a country, territory, or place name should be advised of the GAC principles, and the advisory role vested to it under the ICANN bylaws. Additionally, a summary overview of the obstacles encountered by previous applicants involving similar TLDs should be provided to allow an applicant to make an informed decision. Potential applicants should also be advised that the failure of the GAC, or an individual GAC member, to file a challenge

during the TLD application process, does not constitute a waiver of the authority vested to the GAC under the ICANN bylaws.

Recommendation 21 – Geographic and geopolitical names at all levels, ASCII and IDN: The term 'geopolitical names' should be avoided until such time that a useful definition can be adopted. The basis for this recommendation is founded on the potential ambiguity regarding the definition of the term, and the lack of any specific definition of it in the WIPO Second Report on Domain Names or GAC recommendations.

Recommendation 22 – Geographic and geopolitical names at Second Level & Third Level if applicable, ASCII and IDN: The consensus view of the working group is given the lack of any established international law on the subject, conflicting legal opinions, and conflicting recommendations emerging from various governmental fora, the current geographical reservation provision contained in the gTLD contracts during the 2004 Round should be removed, and harmonized with the more recently executed .COM, .NET, .ORG, .BIZ and .INFO registry contracts. The only exception to this consensus recommendation is those registries incorporated/organized under countries that require additional protection for geographical identifiers. In this instance, the registry would have to incorporate appropriate mechanisms to comply with their national/local laws.

For those registries incorporated/organized under the laws of those countries that have expressly supported the guidelines of the WIPO Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications as adopted by the WIPO General Assembly, it is strongly recommended (but not mandated) that these registries take appropriate action to promptly implement protections that are in line with these WIPO guidelines and are in accordance with the relevant national laws of the applicable Member State.

B.2. GAC Principles regarding use of "country and territory names" as new gTLDs

In March 2007, the Governmental Advisory Committee presented the GAC Principles regarding new gTLDs[47]. In the document a set of general public policy principles were identified related to the introduction, delegation and operation of new generic top level domains. The principles were intended to inform the ICANN Board of the view of the GAC on issues relevant to the GAC concerning the new gTLDs. One of the principles related to the use of country and territory names as new gTLDs. According to section 2.2 of the document:
"ICANN should avoid country, territory or place names, and country, territory or regional language or people descriptions, unless in agreement with the relevant governments or public authorities."

In 2008, at the Paris meeting, the GAC expressed its concern that the proposals until then re new gTLDs did not include provisions that reflected, among others, the GAC principle around the use of country and

[47] https://gacweb.icann.org/display/GACADV/2007-03-28-gTLD-3?preview=/28278820/41943560/gac-principles-regarding-new-gtlds-28mar07-en.pdf

territory names as new gTLD[48]. At the time the GAC felt that "*these are particularly important provisions that need to be incorporated into any ICANN policy for introducing new gTLDs[49]".*

In response to the concerns raised, the ICANN Board directed staff*" .. to continue to further develop and complete its detailed implementation…." . .. areas of concern that the GAC had referred to , namely paragraphs 2.2, …of the GAC principles regarding new gTLDs (GAC principles) were still being considered by staff in the development of the implementation plan."* [50]

B.3. Country and Territory names in the Applicant Guidebook

In October 2008 ICANN published its first Draft Applicant Guidebook for public comment[51]. Under this version the following requirements were included with respect to Geographical names, including "country and territory names".

The basic Policy requirement included in this version was that all applied for strings must be composed of three(3) or more visually distinct letters or characters in the script as appropriate. This ensured that all two-letter codes, including those listed in the ISO 3166-1 (in whatever category see Chapter 1 of this report) were excluded from the new gTLD program.

Secondly, the following requirements were included with respect to country and territory names:

> *2.1.1.4 Geographical Names*
>
> ICANN will review all applied-for strings to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the interests of governments or public authorities in country or territory names, as well as certain other types of sub-national place names. The requirements and procedure ICANN will follow is described in the following paragraphs.
>
> *2.1.1.4.1 Requirements for Strings Intended to Represent Geographical Entities*
>
> The following types of applications must be accompanied by documents of support or non-objection from the relevant government(s) or public authority(ies).
>
> - Applications for any string that is a **meaningful representation of a *country or territory name* listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard** (emphasis added) (see http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes/iso_3166_databases.htm). This includes a representation of the country or territory name in any of the six official United Nations

[48] https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+32+Meeting+Paris%2C+France+21-26+June+2008?preview=/27131940/27198791/GAC_32_Paris_Communique.pdf
[49] Ibidem note 30

[50] https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/twomey-to-karklins-08aug08-en.pdf .
[51] http://archive.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/draft-rfp-24oct08-en.pdf

languages (French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian and English) and the country or territory's local language.

Note that this definition was derived and looked at the definition of strings to be eligible under the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Methodology, which was adopted by the ICANN Board of Directors in June 2008[52] . According to the Fast Track Process, a "selected string" has to be a meaningful representation of the name of the country or territory (for a full definition see the IDNC WG Board Proposal and all versions of the Fast Track Implementation Plan[53], section 3.3) i.e. the string or close to the definition included in the of "country and territory names".

Following an extensive public comment period, and analyses the 2nd draft version of the Applicant Guidebook[54] was published in February 2009. This version included, among others, updates around the requirements with respect to geographic names, including country and territory names. According to the 2nd Draft version, "country and territory names" could in principle be applied for if support by government was documented (similar as under first draft). Again two letter codes were generally excluded from application. However the description of "country and territory names" was changed. In version 2 of the Draft Applicant Guidebook they were defined as:

- At a minimum a string composed of 3 or more visually distinct characters in the script, as appropriate (general requirement) and
- **Meaningful representation** (emphasis added) of a country or territory name listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard, as updated from time to time. A meaningful representation includes a representation of the country or territory name in any language.
  A string is deemed meaningful representation of a country or territory name if it is:
  - The name of country or territory
  - A part of the name of country or territory denoting the country or territory
  - A short-form designation for the name of the country or territory that is recognizable and denotes the country or territory.

In March 2009, the GAC provided additional clarification with respect to section 2.2 of its principles.[55] In a letter to the ICANN board of directors. The GAC asserted that: *" Stings being meaningful representation or abbreviations of a country or territory name in any script should not be allowed in the gTLD space until the related IDN ccTLD policy development processes have been completed."* Note that this view was based on an analysis of the first Draft Applicant Guidebook.

---

[52] https://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/idnc-wg-board-proposal-25jun08.pdf

[53] Latest version from 2013: https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/idn-cctld-implementation-plan-05nov13-en.pdf

[54] https://archive.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/draft-rfp-clean-18feb09-en.pdf , section 2.1.1.4.1 page 2-10

[55] https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/karklins-to-dengate-thrush-10mar09-en.pdf

This position was re-affirmed in the letter from the GAC to Board from 18 August 2009 including other comments on version 2 of the Draft Applicant Guidebook. In that letter the GAC proposed to include a general statement that meaningful representations or abbreviations of a country or territory name should not be allowed in the gTLD space. (In addition it was also stated that the use of exhaustive listings (e.g.ISO 3166-1) will not always cover all the ccTLd-like applications envisaged by the GAC and ccNSO.

In its response to the 18 August 2009 letter, the Board stated in its letter (dated 22 September 2009) that the definition contained in version 2 of the draft Guidebook, in particular the reference to "meaningful representation" was ambiguous and could cause uncertainty with applicants. Already following board discussions in March 2009, the Board had directed staff to provide greater specificity to what should be regarded a representation of a country and territory name and further on the scope of protection a the top level domain. This greater specificity would be included in the 3rd draft version of the Applicant Guidebook, which was published on 4 October 2009[56]:

Country or territory names, meaning:

- an alpha-3 code listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard.
- a long- or short-form name listed in the ISO 316-1 standard, or a translation of the long- or short-form name in any language.
- a long- or short-form name associated with a code that has been designated as "exceptionally reserved" by the ISO 3166 Maintenance Agency.
- a "separable component of a country name" designated on a list based on the ISO 3166-1 standard.
- a "permutation or transposition" of any of the above, where "permutations include removal of spaces, insertion of punctuation, and addition or removal of grammatical articles like 'the.' A transposition is considered a change in the sequence of the long or short-form name, for example, 'RepublicCzech' or 'IslandsCayman'.

Furhter, under the 3rd version "country and territory names" could be applied for, however they had to be (MUST in terms of the 3rd version of draft Applicant Guidebook) be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relvant government or public authority.

Following the publication of version 3 of the draft Applicant Guidebook and after extensive discussions the ccNSO,urged the Board to exclude all country and territory names[57]. Furhter, in its letter to the

[56] https://archive.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/draft-rfp-clean-04oct09-en.pdf
[57] https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/disspain-to-dengate-thrush-21nov09-en.pdf

Board from 10 March 2010, the GAC re-affirmed its interpretation of section 2.2 of the GAC new gTLD principles[58].

In its letter to the GAC from August 2010 the ICANN Board of Directors[59] asserted that in version 4 of the Draft Applicant Guidebook country and territory names would not become available for delegation in the first round of the new gTLD application process.

Further, and in addition, with regard to the definition of country (and territory) names, the Board explained again that it sought to ensure clarity for applicants and safeguards for governments and the broader community. Following a discussion during the Mexico city meeting (March 2009), the Applicant Guidebook had to be adjusted.
As indicated above and relevant in the context of this report the major change was the description of what should be regarded as a representation of a country or territory name in the generic space. Although It was "*acknowledged that ICANN had initially used the concept of 'meaningful representation' of a country or territory in the context of the IDN ccTLD Fast Track. This reflects the objective of rapid initial deployment of IDNs and the associated need to remove as many potential obstacles as possible. There have always been particular sensitivities about geographic names where non--Latin scripts and a range of languages are involved"*. The Board continues by saying: *"It does not follow that these considerations should automatically apply to the broader ccTLD and gTLD spaces. It is reasonable that the criteria for including names (the Fast Track) could be different than the criteria for excluding names (gTLDs)."*

As of 4th version of the Applicant Guidebook country and territory names were excluded of the first round of new gTLD applications and the description of what should be considered the representation of the name of country or territory remained unchanged. The 11 January 2012 version of the gTLD Applicant Guidebook in place during the new gTLD applications period provided that "[a] string shall be considered to be a country or territory name if:

- it is an alpha-3 code listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard
- it is a long-form name listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard, or a translation of the long-form name in any language
- it is a short-form name listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard, or a translation of the short-form name in any language
- it is the short- or long-form name association with a code that has been designated as "exceptionally reserved" by the ISO 3166 Maintenance Agency
- it is a separable component of a country name designated on the "Separable Country Names List," or is a translation of a name appearing on the list, in any language. See the Annex at the end of this module.
- it is a permutation or transposition of any of the names included in items (i) through (v). Permutations include removal of spaces, insertion of punctuation, and addition or removal

[58] https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/karklins-to-dengate-thrush-10mar10-en.pdf
[59] https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/dengate-thrush-to-dryden-05aug10-en.pdf

of grammatical articles like “the”. A transposition is considered a change in the sequence of the long or short-form name, for example, “RepublicCzech” or “IslandsCayman”.

- it is a name by which a country is commonly known, as demonstrated by evidence that the country is recognized by that name by an intergovernmental or treaty organization.”[60]

ANNEX C

Working Group Members

ccNSO

- Lucila Abate, .ar
- Monica Capparelli, .ar
- Neil El Himam, .id
- Jordi Iparraguirre,
- Erick Iriarte Ahon, .pe
- Daniel Kalchev, .bg
- Annebeth Lange, .no (Co-Chair)
- Young-Eum Lee, .kr
- Han Liyun, .cn
- Carlos Marco Liuzzi, .ar
- Rosalía Morales, .cr
- Jacqueline Morris, .tt
- Sebastien Pensis, .eu
- Sanna Sahlman, .fi,
- Grigori Saghyan, .am
- Ron Sherwood, .vi
- Paul Szyndler, .au (Co-Chair)
- Mirjana Tasic, .rs
- Mary Uduma, .ng
- Timo Võhmar, .ee
- Laura Watkins, .uk

[60] gTLD Applicant Guidebook Version 9 (11 January 2012), Module 2, Section 2.2.1.4.1, Treatment of Country or Territory Names, at http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/about/historical-documentation/matrix-agb-v9.

GNSO

- Philip Adar, BC
- Benjamin Akinmoyeje, NCUC
- Maxim Alzoba, RySG
- Griffin Barnett, IPC
- Chris Chaplow, BC
- Ching Chiao, RySG (Co-Chair)
- Mason Cole, RySG
- Sonigitu Ekpe, NCUC
- Heather Forrest, IPC (Co-Chair)
- Robin Gross, NCSG
- Carlos Raul Gutierrez, Nomcom Appointee to the GNSO
- Scott Harlan, IPC
- Hector Manoff, IPC
- Osvaldo Novoa, IPC
- Ghislain Nyamfit Ngamba, individual
- Colin O'Brien, IPC
- Susan Payne, IPC
- Ganeswar Sahoo, NCUC
- Cintra Sooknanan, NPOC
- Marc Trachtenberg, IPC
- Brian Winterfeldt, IPC
- Alexander Schubert, RySG

ALAC

- Inam Ali, ALAC
- Fouad Bajwa, APRALO
- Cheryl Langdon-Orr, ALAC

GAC

- Olga Cavalli, Argentina
- Edmund Katiti, NEPAD (GAC Observer)
- Mzia Gogilashvili, Georgia
- Nigel Cassimire, Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU)
- Ornulf Storm, Norway
- Panagiotis Papaspiliopoulos, Greece
- Milagros Castanon Seoane, Peru
- Tracey Hind, observer from the GAC secretariat

Other

- Jaap Akkerhuis, Expert

Annex D

Overview of Responses on 3-character codes – Question 1-4 (as of 15 December 2015)

	1. In future, should all three-character top-level domains be reserved as ccTLDs only and be ineligible for use as gTLDs? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?	*2. In future, should all three-character top-level domains be eligible for use as gTLDs as long as they are not in conflict with the existing alpha-3 codes from the ISO 3166-1 list; i.e. the three-character version of the same ISO list that is the basis for current ccTLD allocation? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?*	*3. In future, should three-character strings be eligible for use as gTLDs if they are not in conflict with existing alpha-3 codes form the ISO 3166-1 list and they have received documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant government or public authority? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?*	*4. In future, should there be unrestricted use of three-character strings as gTLDs if they are not conflicting with any applicable string similarity rules? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?*
Registry Stakeholder Group	No. There is no basis under international law for all 3-character codes to be reserved for use only as ccTLDs and ineligible as gTLDs. Countries and country-code operators have no valid claim to sovereignty or ownership rights over 3-character codes. Whilst the RFC-1591 *Domain Name System Structure and Delegation* of March 1994 is considered by some to provide	We refer to our response to question 1. All 3-character codes should be eligible for use as gTLDs, regardless of whether they are listed as alpha-3 codes from the ISO 3166-1 list. It should be noted that "COM" is included on that list and thus there is precedent for such 3-letter codes to be allocated as gTLDs. It would only be	No. See responses for questions 1 and 2. Governments and public bodies have no sovereignty over these terms and should not be seeking to have control or veto over their use.	Yes, we consider that this would be the most appropriate approach for the future, except in cases where international law, or some other agreed-upon restriction (such as that on the use of "www") dictates otherwise. This would have the advantages of removing a restriction which lacks any basis in international law and

	a basis and historical justification for the continued reservation of 2-character codes for use as ccTLDs, it provides no such basis for reserving 3-character codes. Furthermore, we understand that it has been suggested by some that to allow 3-character codes to be used as gTLDs gives rise to a risk of confusion with the ccTLDs. This argument is unsupportable. There is no precedent for 3-character codes to be reserved as ccTLDs and ineligible for use as gTLDs. Quite the reverse, in fact. The RFC-1591 identified seven 3-letter gTLDs, and thus from at least as early as 1984 users of the internet have learned to recognise 3-character codes as such, and not as ccTLDs. Since that time, and particularly now as a result of the first round of new gTLDs, there are numerous examples of 3-character strings which have already been allocated as gTLDs. These include those legacy gTLDs including .com, .net, .org, and new gTLDs, including .app, .bbc, .bio, .cab, .cfd, .fox, .nyc, .rio.	acceptable to reserve alpha-3 codes where the use of these codes is restricted as a matter of international law. This is not the case: the ISO 3166 list is simply a standard and has no basis in international intellectual property or otherwise as establishing or confirming ownership rights or in prohibiting use.		making such strings available for registration by any applicant in a new gTLD round.

	Whilst the numbers of three-character strings already allocated are too numerous to list in full, it can be seen from this small snapshot that they include a range of gTLD types: brands, cities, open restricted, and open generic registries. If confusion were to occur, it would be by reserving 3-character codes for use as ccTLDs, when the public recognise these strings as being gTLDs, and ccTLDs as being 2-letter codes.			
Brian Winterfeldt, Griffin Barnett	This would prevent any future applications for three-character combinations as gTLDs. We oppose this option.	This would prevent any applications for three-character combinations as gTLDs that match any alpha-3 codes, reflecting the current status quo. Alpha-3 codes have never been used as active TLDs by any country or territory, even though they have been assigned. There is no legal basis for government ownership, control, or priority over these names. We oppose this option.	This would prevent any applications for three-character combinations as gTLDs that match any alpha-3 codes, without the relevant government's consent. There is no legal basis for requiring such consent, and no legal basis for government ownership, control, or priority over these names. Alpha-3 codes have never been used as active TLDs by any country or territory, even though they have been assigned. We oppose this option.	This would permit any gTLD applications so long as the string were not confusingly similar to another previously-delegated or applied-for string. This is the most logical and legally-sound option. We support this option.

GAC – Afghanistan	It only creates confusion between users for ccTLDs and gTLDs. ccTLD is driven by local law where the gTLD is driven by thr global law, this itself is a big confusion for users. If in the future there were any plan then it would be feasible to have 3 letters strings only for use in ccTLDs. A good example in our case is **AFG** which is the abbreviation for **Afg**hanistan but there are various companies like **A**merican **F**inancial **G**roup in USA, **A**ustralian **F**inancial **G**roup in Australia, **A**l **F**uttaim **G**roup in UAE, **A**dvent **F**ilm **G**roup that use the same abbreviation for their brand names, this would create serious issues between the government and private sector. Advantage is that there will be more sells for gTLDs and some brands might get their 3 letters TLD.	No, the use of 3 characters strings as gTLDs must receive no objection letter from the governments and other public authorities first. Advantage is: they will have open hand to register any string for their brads no matter it is in conflict with the ccTLD. Disadvantage is that governments and other public authorities will have no knowledge of the strings being registered for their businesses.	As long as it is not in conflict with existing alpha 3 codes from ISO 3166-1 list, they are good to proceed. The only advantage is that there will be consultation and no objection letter needed from the government that gives the government and other public authority to closely review the string Disadvantage would be the same (Confusion for users)	No, the use of 3 characters strings as gTLDs must receive no objection letter from the governments and other public authorities first. Advantage is: they will have open hand to register any string for their brads no matter it is in conflict with the ccTLD. Disadvantage is that governments and other public authorities will have no knowledge of the strings being registered for their businesses.

	Disadvantage is that it creates confusion for users			
GAC – Norway	The question is not asked correctly. We don't think 3-letter country codes should be used at all (unless for some instances of IDN ccTLDs and gTLDs. See answers below on Q5). They should not be reserved for ccTLDs neither should they be used for gTLDs. The reason for this is the 3-letter country code represent the same country or territory as the 2-letter country code. Therefore, using these 3-letter codes at allcould create end user confusion. Using the 3-letter country codes for ccTLDs could be a confusion for the end user since the 3-letter country codes has so strong association to the country and could therefore by the end user be mixed up with the existing ccTLD.	No. Certain 3-letter codes have already been used for gTLDs and there are actually some instances of them being on the 3-letter country code list. To use more 3-letter codes for new gTLDs will increase the risk for end user confusion, so our suggestion is to not use any new three letter code at all for new neither ccTLDs nor gTLDs.	No, the 3-letter codes should not be used at all. Again, end user confusion.	No. As stated before. We do not think it is a good idea to use more 3-letter codes for any new top level domains.
Intellectual	Three-character top-level domains should be eligible for	**A**ll three-character top-level	There should be no "support/non-	There should be unrestricted

Property Constituency	use as gTLDs and should not be reserved as potential ccTLDs. The IPC acknowledges the work of the CWG-UCTN to date and notes its findings in relation to RFC1591 and the historical, standardized practice relating to the use in the DNS of ISO 3166 alpha-2 2-letter codes arising from the adoption of that standard in the design of the DNS. There is no such practice in the DNS in relation to 3-letter codes. Further, ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 codes are three-letter country codes defined in ISO 3166-1, part of the ISO 3166 standard published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), to represent countries, dependent territories, and special areas of geographical interest based upon the alpha-2 codes (there is a third set of codes, which is numeric and hence offers no visual association). As such, the countries and geographic interests represented thereby are wholly represented in ISO 3166 alpha-2. In other words, reservation of 3 letter codes would be completely duplicative, redundant and serve no apparent purpose.	domains should be eligible for use as gTLDs regardless of whether they are "in conflict with" the existing alpha-3 codes from the ISO 3166-1 list. As explained in its response to Question 1, there is no existing, standardized practice in the DNS of using 3-letter codes to represent countries and territories. In fact, there is no such practice at all. The purpose of protecting countries and geographic interests is completely achieved by the reservation of the two letter codes contained in ISO 3166 alpha-2. There would be a vast increase in blocked names and words by increasing the prohibition from two letters to three, the IPC is greatly concerned over the impact that such a policy would have on the robust growth of the gTLD space, property rights, free speech and openness. No compelling and legally or technically	objection" process for governments and public authorities. As the IPC has highlighted in its previous comments in relation to geographic domain name policy, there is no basis in international law for a support or non-objection requirement. Such a requirement is *de facto* a veto. This introduces significant uncertainty for applicants, in direct contrast to the goals of top-level expansion. Such a process also implies that governments and public authorities have a legal or sovereign right to "their" ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 code. We know of no basis for such an assertion. To the extent that parties have legally recognized rights in 3-character strings, they should submit to binding arbitration in an internationally recognized forum in which objective and reasonable standards apply. The IPC does not support restricting the eligibility of 3-character TLDs on the basis of the ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 standard.	use of three-character strings as gTLDs if they are not conflicting with any applicable string similarity rules. The IPC supports unrestricted use of 3-character strings as gTLDs if they are not conflicting with applicable string similarity rules. It should be noted that string similarity rules have applied to strings of any length, so it is unclear why this question is being asked. We would assume that three-character applications would be subject to all of the same rules as any other string (and not to any "special" rules).

	Further, no perceived advantage or necessity has been identified by the technical or country code community for such an expansion, and the IPC has been unable to identify any advantage of such a policy. In contrast, there are extremely significant disadvantages to such a policy. The gTLD space has historically been built on three-character codes, such as .com, .net, and .org, and there is a high degree of consumer comfort and technical comfort with three-character gTLDs. This can be seen in the new gTLDs as well; for example, there were several applications for .web and .app, and a significant number of other applications new gTLDs adopted the traditional three-letter format. Such an expansion would (i) remove all three-letter words and acronyms from consideration as gTLDs (as well as all other three-character combinations), (ii) be impractical and effectively extinguish rights in	justified reason for such an exclusionary policy has been articulated.		

	existing 3-letter gTLDs, and (iii) would significantly impinge upon well-established, internationally-recognized private rights without justification, and (iv) remove other opportunities for appropriate and important gTLDs (e.g., .CAT). More specifically, placing restrictions on 3-character strings effectively results in the exclusion of over 17,000 potential new gTLDs from the DNS, many of which are commonly used words or famous or well-known trademarks. This is inconsistent with many of these countries'/states' own trademark laws and is a significant impediment to the ability of rights holders worldwide to participate in the DNS and engage in e-commerce. The IPC is opposed to the reservation of all 3-character			

	TLDs as potential ccTLDs.			
.pl Registry Operator	No, they should not, however all 3-character names listed in ISO tables are to be maintained in line with ISO rules and policy. This question is general one and somewhat misleading; my understanding of this project is that we are not in position to break down the ISO eligibility rules and create our own on Internet with regard the 3-character names.	Yes, they should, however we have to have in mind that the 3 – character names listed in ISO tables (not only limited to ISO 3166-1) relate to the names of currencies, the names of languages, etc. The eligibility should be maintained in line with ISO established policy. In general there is no need to design a policy which may limit Internet development.	It would be reasonable to answer shortly by saying yes, they should. I think, that would wise to keep in mind that many governments in fact are not in position to predict the future of its states; please refer for instance to the example of former Yugoslavia or Africa where we can see many new countries "born" in Africa, etc. What would be the value of the mentioned permission? For how long will it be valid? With that rule in mind, for sure, someone in the future would have to decide what is at higher value by weighting an commercial interest vs. the interest of a new nation for instance? Do we really consider, that our legitimate is sufficient? and could prevail the one by UN? As already mentioned, the " delegation (free) for assignment by ISO" 3-character names shall be handled by ISO. In addition, we can see that, there are many 3 –character names which most probably will be never used by ISO; and I do believe that	In order to be consistent with the rules and policies we have already got I would vote for the unrestricted use, however the definition of the meaning of " unrestricted" in this context has to be set first. Having in mind the understanding of intention presented above, I found this question as general one.

			ISO knows that and keeps the list. I think, that these 3-character names should be allowed in naming of the top level domains.	
.hk Registry Operator	Yes, all country and territory 3-character TLDs should be reserved as ccTLDs only and be ineligible for use as gTLDs. Otherwise, confusion and wrong perception will be caused to Internet users as to whether the 3-character TLD or the 2-character ccTLD is the true official representation of the country/territory. Also, the basic difference between ccTLD and gTLD is that a ccTLD represents country/territory and gTLDs are for generic terms with no geographic connotation.	Apart from the 3-character codes on the ISO 3166-1 list, there may be codes or strings which are 3-character or longer which are commonly accepted/used for specific countries or territories but not on the ISO list. These should be ineligible for use as gTLDs too. Otherwise gross misunderstanding and confusion will be caused on which ones of these are the ones truly representing the country/territory.	This is ok. But all ccTLDs should be consulted rather than only those which are thought to be relevant.	This is not sufficient. See answers to Q1, 2, 3 above.
Partridge and Garcia PC	Three-character top level domains should be eligible for use as gTLDs by any qualified party, and should not be reserved as potential ccTLDs. The countries and geographic interests represented in the ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 codes are	No, for the reasons listed above.	Yes, for the reasons listed above.	For the following reasons, Partridge & Garcia disagree with the points raised by Norway with regard to three-letter characters. Norway's only reasoning for

	wholly represented by the ISO 3166 alpha-2 codes that they are based upon. Therefore, reservation of 3 letter codes would be completely redundant and serve no apparent purpose. Since the gTLD space has historically been built on three-character codes, such as .com, .net, and .org, there is a high degree of consumer comfort favoring new three-character gTLDs. A reservation of all new three-character top-level domains would: a) Disallow all three-letter words, acronyms, and combinations from consideration as ***new*** gTLDs (see chart in response to question 2, below, for examples), severely hampering businesses right to enter into the technological space; b) Be impractical and effectively extinguish rights in ***existing*** 3-letter gTLDs; and c) Would significantly			the reservation of the 3-letter country codes from use as gTLDs is that doing so would create end user confusion. However, Norway does not provide any evidence that this confusion exists, or would exist in the future. There is no evidence of end user confusion existing between countries and similar current 3-letter gTLDs. For example, end users are not confused that .COM represents Comoros, that .BIZ represents Belize, or that .NET represents the Netherlands. These countries'—and all other countries with ISO 3166 alpha-2 codes—interests are currently completely protected by their 2-letter country codes (.CO, .BZ, and .NL, respectively). ICANN's gTLD Applicant Guidebook reasons how it would be unlikely for there

	impinge upon well-established, internationally-recognized private rights without justification. Any effort to eliminate any future use of three-character top-level domains should be rejected. This option is a solution in search of a problem which does not exist.			to be confusion between a 3-character string and a 3-letter country code, due to the high "probable" standard for String confusion to exist: String confusion exists where a string so nearly resembles another that it is likely to deceive or cause confusion. For a likelihood of confusion to exist, it must be probably, 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 to mine, is insufficient to find a likelihood of confusion. Guidebook, Section 3.5.1. Contrary to Norway's claim, it is not probable that all new

				three-letter gTLDs, or potential ccTLDs, will cause end user confusion. Furthermore, there is already a well-established, internationally-recognized forum that exists that is able to determine whether a gTLD application is likely to cause string confusion: ICANN String Confusion Dispute Panel. This body, rather than a blanket reservation of all three-letter country codes for gTLD use, is the best mechanism to examine potential user confusion on a case-by-case basis. A blanket ban on new three-character gTLDs is not a favorable policy due to the convenience of three-character gTLDs for Internet users and lack of proof that new codes will cause confusion. Presently, there are over 130 three-character gTLDs. These codes are easy

				for Internet users to remember and type. There is no proof that adding new three-character gTLDs will create end user confusion. A significant reason that potential three-letter gTLD codes should not be denied because they are the same as existing alpha-3 codes from the ISO 3166-1 list is it would prevent many private and public entities from entering into the technological space and asserting their intellectual property rights. There is no persuasive reason why this basic legal right should be hampered. The existing alpha-3 country codes would be in conflict with many companies and organizations that should have the right to be eligible for gTLDs. These codes serve as acronyms for large organizations, airport codes, names of companies, and

				words in the English language, as exemplified in the chart above. (there are undoubtedly numerous other acronyms based on non-English terms as well). It would exclude many companies and organizations from applying for gTLDs as a business strategy. The entities applying for a gTLD are not akin to a cybersquatters seeking to make a quick dollar off of consumer confusion. The new applicant's will not be frivolously occupying domain name space on the internet. Applying for a gTLD is a very robust, expensive process. Before application, a conscious organizational decision must be made, in advancement of a legitimate interest. Therefore, there should not be a blanket restriction on the use of three-letter domain names

				that identical to three-letter country codes.
GAC Finland	It would be extremely confusing, if all three-character top-level domains would be reserved as ccTLDs at this point. Many three-character gTLDs already exists (.com, .net, .xyz, .top, .win etc.). Can't and shouldn't be changed anymore.	This would be an equal and simple solution for all (both ccTLDs and gTLDs). It requires that ISO 3166-1 list must be "up-to-date" all the time.	This could theoretically work, but needs more clarification and it's hard to make it work in practice. Would be difficult to categorize, what is "relevant documentation" from relevant government or what is "relevant public authority". Difficult to categorize, which three-character strings would/might violate rights of governments or public authorities. Which bodies would make decisions in ICANN? There has already been this type of problems (.africa case).	This is the current situation. Easy, open and equal solution. "Let the market decide." Brand owners need to able to use their names as gTLDs.
GAC Switzerland[61]	Switzerland proposes to tackle the issue of the future use of three-character codes as TLD according to the following methodology: initially, it is essential to clearly delimit the three-character codes concerned by means of a protection mechanism. It would then be advisable to define the protection mechanism itself and, finally, to rule on the method of use of protected and non-protected codes.			

61

	1. Clear delimitation of the set of three-character codes which it would be useful to protect - Reference lists The three-letter codes submitted to any protection mechanism must be clearly determined. The use of official international lists seems to be a good solution. Other solutions based, among other things, on "string similarity rules" must be avoided as they would generate too many uncertainties and result in overly complex processes. In Switzerland's opinion, the ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 list represents a good starting point, but governments/public authorities should also be able to consider or invoke other lists in order to protect an abbreviation linked to their country. As a minimum, in addition to the ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 list, the following lists should be integrated: - ITU (International Telecommunication Union - link); - IOC (International Olympic Committee - link). Other lists could also be considered, but do not have priority: - ISO 4217 (currency codes - link); - IATA codes (cities, airport locations…). 2. Protection mechanism Governments/public authorities should be free to choose to protect all or some of the codes which are included in the reference lists and for which they are competent. It should be possible to do this using a simple notification system (opt-in) without governments/public authorities having to justify their choice or their decision.

	3, Use of three-character codes In principle it is possible to reserve the three-character codes protected by the mechanism defined above as ccTLD. Unprotected codes would be available as gTLD and ICANN would be able to deal with them freely. In our opinion it would also be essential to consider in the same way the three-character IDN codes (for example Cyrillic three-letter codes according to GOST 7.67 or ISO 3166-88 standard - link) as well as entirely numeric three-character codes (e.g. according to ITU-T E.212 or ISO 3166-1 numeric), in so far as entirely numeric labels are considered for the next rounds of gTLD. The position outlined above does not conform to any of the scenarios proposed in the CWG-UCTN questionnaire, but is positioned somewhere between scenarios 2 and 3.			
.be Registry	We don't consider this to be a good idea. The majority of three-character TLD combinations don't have any link with a specific country or territory and thus such a policy would be considered as contrary to the whole idea of introducing new gTLD's: offer new possibilities to potential registrants. Also, this would be very difficult to reconcile with the current reality where in each phase of adding new TLD's to the root, 3-character TLD's	Yes, that seems a fair policy. Advantage is that it is very close to the guidelines that have been followed in the earlier TLD rounds and especially in the current one. It provides a right balance between the rights of the ccTLD's (and their respective governments) and those of third parties wishing to open up the market for new possibilities. But I would add a condition that a 3-character TLD cannot be eligible if there	I can see the benefits of a scenario that is equal to the one described under 2 but with the notion that also support documentation or at least non objection from the relevant government is required. That could be a compromise in order to get support from the GAC. But we fail to see why governments should have a right to object against 3-character TLD strings that have nothing to do with existing alpha-3 codes? This would lead towards the situation where an applicant with an	Yes, that seems a fair policy as well but we would like to see it combined with the scenario under 2. It will protect the interests of ccTLD's, relevant governments or public authorities + existing other TLD's. In particular, such a policy would prevent confusion between already delegated and in use TLD's and new applications.

	were allowed. How would one be able to explain that .com, .net, .org & others were allowed in the early days but no new 3-character TLD's will be allowed in future rounds? How to explain that in the current round 3-character TLD's were possible but in future round they would be excluded?	is a string similarity issue.	interest in .pop would have to seek support from governments in order to get his TLD? And to which government he should turn in that case? Could it be that the question is ill posed and is to be read as follows: 3-character strings are eligible unless they are in conflict with existing alpha-3 codes and no documentation of support or a non-objection of the relevant government or public authority has been given?	
.tn Registry	Yes, three-character top-level domains be reserved as ccTLDs only and be ineligible for use as gTLD. It gives us the opportunity within the country to create an industry from our cctlds. For .tn case, .tun is also a cctld for Tunisia and we can make them grow together, enhancing the local content. In addition, we are studying the opportunity in the near future to liberate .tn for international registrars. We can keep .tun for local registrars to make their business locally. It's an opportunity for us to set up a	Yes, the advantage is to allow the countries to create an industry of these domain names that affects their local economy (create new business with new jobs and enhancing the local content).	No, Because as I said before we want to make a cctld industry. to be more clear for our case .tn we are preparing to liberate to international registrars some thing we will do it for .tun after many years, Gtlds have already a wide market and wide choices.	Yes, as I said before it's an opportunity for the countries to create a domain name industries that affects their economy.

	cctld industry.			
.cr Registry	Three-character top level domains should be reserved as ccTLDs ONLY assuming the existing ccTLDS will manage them. If this opens the possibility that a country may have two ccTLDs managing organizations this will bring about serious cannibalization and instability in the Internet policy and development of nations. Furthermore, it will seriously affect the cooperation and unity that has characterized the ccTLD community thought it´s history. Assuming only existing ccTLD will also be delegated three character top level domain together with the current two character TLDs, this may prove to be an important source of income in the short term (mostly due to trademark protection) but in the long term it might not prove to be a very successful product since it competes directly with the existing two character country code TLD and may just lead to	NIC .CR strongly opposes the use of 3 character top level domains for use as gTLDs when these refer to country or territory names. Three character top level domains that refer to countries or territories will have a direct negative impact on ccTLDs whether they are in the Iso 3166-1 list or not. This is a policy that will further limit the market of ccTLDs and as such can eventually lead to the closure of many, specially the ones in the developing nations that compete in smaller markets such as .cr. The fact that gTLDs brought about about 2,000 new gTLDs has has a strong impact in the ccTLD market, and many of these gTLDS include cities and locations. Adding three character top level domains for country and territory use will simple decrease even more the market share of ccTLDs. It is	No, three-character strings should not be eligible for use as gTLDs if they are not in conflict with existing alpha-3 codes form the ISO 3166-1 list and they have received documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant government or public authority. The same disadvantages mentioned in point 1 and 3 apply. NIC CR sees no advantages of such policy. In many countries, there is tension between a government and ccTLD since a ccTLD may contradict or question the Government´s stand in Internet issues. For example, a government may push for singing the WCIT in Dubai in 2012 and the ccTLD may oppose that position and support a free and open Internet (this among thousands of examples). With this reality in mind, it is very easy to obtain the government of public authority´s documentation to apply for a three character string for use a gTLDs since it is an excellent opportunity to crush	No, there should not be an unrestricted use o three character stings as gTLDs if they are not conflicting with applicable string similarity rules. The unrestricted use of more than three character stings as gTLDS (the new gTLD program) proved to be an enormous headache full of legal conflicts, many interested parties involved, governmental intervention and a very complicated technical and administrative execution. ICANN needs to learn from past mistakes. Doing the same for three character strings will become another long internal and external battle for ICANN which will take focus, resources and budget away from more important technical and Internet governance issues. Also all disadvantages mentioned on point 2 and 3 apply.

	cannibalization. As the current new gTLD program has proved, having too many TLDs creates a lot of noise in the domain market (everyone trying to sell domains at the same time to the same people) and its hard to define the differences and benefits or using one over the other. Furthermore, taking a more global perspective, expanding the root of the Internet even more does not bring any benefits to the growth, stability and resilience of the Internet. This policy is no way helping the technical and security concerns of the DNS, it´s seems to be only addressing financial interests. The failure of the gTLD program should serve as an example of the negative press, consequences and turmoil comes when ICANN only focuses on financial interests. As mentioned earlier, the only benefit of this policy would be a short term financial gain in sales for ccTLDs.	important to take into account that ccTLDs are not just in charge of managing their country top level domains but have a key role as ICANN´s representation of policies, technical advice and the multistakeholder model for a free and open Internet view across the globe. ccTLDs are ICANN´s allies and work together with all Internet agencies to create a more stable and secure Internet. Most ccTLDs are not-for-profit organizations that base their income on the sales of their TLDs. This initiative (three character top level domains for countries and locations) is a way to eliminate ccTLDs in emerging economies that in long turn will hurt ICANN as well. The domain name market is being seriously affected by the use of social media and apps. Further breaking this pie in the three charter top level domain level is just an	the existing ccTLD in the country. It can actually prove to be a way to strategically eliminate many ccTLDs who are doing great work worldwide, supporting ICANN and a free and open Internet. I emphasize on the importance of ICANN in focusing on strategy, technical issues and governance, and leave aside financial interests. Moving forward this policy, will in the long turn hurt ICANN enormously since it will lose the current representation and support that ccTLDs provide (from a technical and political standpoint). I see absolutely no advantages of such policy.	I see no advantage of such policy.

		unnecessary way to continue to cannibalize among TLDs. I see no advantaged of this policy.		
Centre Survey **(22 respondents)**[62]	73% Yes 27% No	59% Yes 14% No 27% Unsure	32% Yes 50% No 18% Unsure	64% Yes 23% No 14% Unsure
.sv	Yes, they should be reserved as ccTLD and be ineligible for use as gTLDs. Pros: avoid confusion in general public, since there is one and only one table in ISO 3166-1 that includes both 2 and 3 letter codes referring to the same country or territory. The two versions (2 and 3 characters) are equally the official representation of the country or territory, so they should hold the same treatment from the TLD	In principle, the 3 character codes that are NOT in the 3166-1 list could be eligible for use as gTLD. However, how about possible new codes entering the table in the future, if they have already been assigned as gTLD? Pros: continue fostering competition in domain names.	If they are NOT in the 3166-1 list, why should these 3-character codes need support or non-objection from governments or authorities? There should not need that support. Pros: continue fostering competition in domain names.	In the spirit of an open and competitive environment in the domain names industry, there can be unrestricted use of 3 character strings not conflicting with country and territory codes. Pros: continue fostering competition in domain names.

[62] Participating cc-TLD registries: .al, .be, .ch, .de, .dk, .ee, .es, .hr, .is, .jp, .lu, .lv, .me, .mt, .nl, .no, .pl,

.pt, .rs, .ru, .se, .tr; for individual responses, see:
https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/49354211/ccTLDSurvey.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1448464976361&api=v2

	designation logic.			
Yuri Takamatsu	No. Limiting the use of three-character strings or labels which have significant social value will decrease the usability and the value of the Internet.	No. Limiting the use of three-character strings or labels which have significant social value will decrease the usability and the value of the Internet. In addition, the future change of ISO-3166 list is very probable and we should not depend on the current list.	No. We can't comment on this because the situation assumed above can't define "relevant government" or "public authority".	Yes. In principle, the labels with three characters should be treated in the same way with more than three-characters. Basically the registration and usage of the labels with three characters should be unrestricted.
.hn	We think that should be reserved for ccTLDs. Disadvantage: If we reserve them for gTLDs it would turn them into monopoly, and would weaken ccTLDs, which encourages purchasing exclusion by market value, insecurity. Advantage: If we reserve them to ccTLDs they would strengthen and this guarantees their sustainability and would become more competitive.	No. This is a disadvantage. This would limit the market for ccTLDs, and leads to the of decline ccTLDs. Advantages: None.	No	No. We already mentioned the reasons why it shouldn't.
.no	This is a wrong kind of question. ccTLDs as such are 2-letter codes and it should remain so.	Yes. All 3-character strings that are not in conflict with 3-letter codes from ISO 3166-	This is a possibility that should be considered. There might be countries in the world where the	No. We are not in favour of unrestricted use of 3-character strings. See our

	In our view some 3-letter codes could be gTLDs; namely those not on the ISO 3166-list. See our answer to question 2.	°©- 1 list, which represents countries and territories, could be eligible as gTLDs. This is in compliance with the Applicant Guidebook as it was for the first round – a compromise reached after years of discussion. But if 3-letter codes on the ISO 3166 list are allowed as gTLDs, there will be confusion among users. Some country & territory representations being 2-letter codes run by national laws and 3-letter codes possibly representing country or territories under the global ICANN regime / global law.	2-letter code is taken by commercial interests and are not run as a "proper" TLD according to RFC 1591 etc. Then the country could have their 3-letter code instead. This would also follow the system of today where capitols and cities need support or non-objection from the relevant government or public authority of the country. But this would still be a gTLD under the gTLD regime, with the possibility of confusion for users.	answers above.
.pa	Yes, they should be reserved as ccTLDs only. All three-character top-level domains should be ineligible for use as a gTLDs. Advantage: Prevent confusion in the general public. As there is one and only one table in ISO 3166-1, which includes both	3 character codes that are not in the 3166-1 list should not be eligible for use as gTLDs. If they are used now, if assigned as gTLDs now, in the future there may be conflict with those potential new codes that require entry in the table. Advantage: Continue to	Should not be eligible. Advantage: Prevent confusion in the general public. Continue to promote competition in the current domain names.	Must not be allowed unrestricted use of the 3-character string as gTLDs because it conflicts with the codes of countries and territories. Advantage: Continue to promote competition in the current domain names.

	codes, 2 and 3 letters (characters), codes that refer to the same country or territory. The two versions, 2 and 3 letters (characters) are equalitarian to the official representation of the country or territory and therefore must maintain the same treatment for the logical designation of a TLD.	promote competition in the current domain names.		
.de	DENIC believes that "country code" TLDs should strictly be limited to two character codes as per ISO3166 (IDN ccTLDs notwithstanding). The introduction of a new Three-Letter-"Country Code" category is likely to introduce confusion and blur the unique position that ccTLDs have maintained successfully.	DENIC believes that changes over time regarding the code points listed in the three letter list would have to be addressed to maintain a consistent regime. Similarly, the alpha-3 list has certain code points for 'private use', all of which would have to be used in a consistent fashion. Therefore, this appears to be a less favorable option.	It is unclear to us how an assignment that does not match ("conflict" with) a code on the alpha-3 list would lead to a "relevant government". Assuming the "and" was an "or", first our comment to point 2 holds; secondly, for reasons of distinction, the only legitimate and established use of a country code has a length of two letters. Unless the 3 letter code would match a well known abbreviation (or even the name) of the country, there would be no good reason to give public authorities a special voice.	DENIC does not want to judge the peculiarities of "applicable string similarity rules", but "unrestricted use" looks like the most consistent approach in general.
.ar	NIC Argentina does not consider necessary to ban	NIC Argentina considers this policy to be of the outmost	NIC Argentina considers that this matter shouldn´t be taken lightly,	NIC Argentina considers that not conflicting three

	gTLDs from using three letter character top level domains, still there are some considerations that should be taken into account such as reservation of the Alpha -3 codes from ISO 3166-1 list.	importance because of the danger of having end user confusions about countries, ccTLDs and gTLDs. The alpha 3 codes are not only a part of internet but also represents a very distinguishable name of each country in everyday life.	because this case may be very easily confused with the ccTLD. Not all ccTLDs are run by governments, but are an essential part of the internet ecosystem within the country, and as such, this confusion might lead to severe competition which may prove prejudicial for its country and end users.	character strings as gTLDs would be ok.
.fi	Shouldn't be changed at this point anymore. Risk: Many three-character gTLDs already registered. Can't be changed anymore	Equal and simple solution for all Risk: ISO 3166-3 must be "up-to-date" all the time	Could work but needs more clarification. Risk: Difficult to categorize, what is relevant documentation from relevant government of public authority. ICANN should not be required to decide which three-character strings would/might violate rights of governments.	Let the market decide. Open, equal solution.
GAC	The GAC does not think that it is necessary or feasible to reserve all 3-character codes as ccTLDs at the top-level and notes that in practice, nearly 150 three-character ASCII codes already operate as gTLDs in the DNS. It does not, however, follow that all 3-character codes should be	Many GAC members believe that the existing alpha-3 codes from the ISO 3166-1 list should continue to be ineligible for use as gTLDs, as they are in the current version of the gTLD Applicant Guidebook. Furthermore some GAC members believe	The GAC thinks that this scenario is promising and definitely warrants additional consideration. Practical aspects should be investigated in more depth.	Relying on "string similarity rules" to protect certain strings should be avoided as it would generate too much uncertainty and complexity in the process.

	eligible as gTLDs, in particular country codes (see detail in letter above).	that other codes corresponding to countries and to governmental functions should also be protected (see detail in letter above).		

Cross Community Working Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names as top-level domains

Overview of Responses on 3-character codes – Question 5-7 (as of 15 December 2015)

	5. In future, should all IDN three-character strings be reserved exclusively as ccTLDs and be ineligible as IDN gTLDs? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?	*6. In future, should there be unrestricted use of IDN three-character strings if they are not in conflict with existing TLDs or any applicable string similarity rules? What would be the advantage or disadvantage of such a policy?*	*7. Do you have any additional comments that may help the CWG-UCTN in its discussion on three-character strings as top-level domains?*
Registry Stakeholder Group	No. For the same reasons as given above, such 3-character strings should only be unavailable for use as IDN gTLDs where this is a matter of international law [or there is a GNSO policy restricting the use of such strings]. Since such 3-character gTLDs already exist, imposing such a restriction now might even result in consumer confusion.	Yes. This would provide greater choice of available strings, encouraging the expansion of IDN gTLDs.	Any restrictions on the availability of such strings for use should be based on international law and not local laws, and the burden should be placed on those advocating for these restrictions to demonstrate this. In any case where there is such a basis in international law, then what is adopted should be the least restrictive means to satisfy that legal requirement, developed as a result

			of a full policy development process.
Brian Winterfeldt, Griffin Barnett	This would prevent any future applications for three-character IDNs as gTLDs. We oppose this option.	This would permit any IDN gTLD applications so long as the string were not confusingly similar to another previously-delegated or applied-for string. This is the most logical and legally-sound option. We support this option.	n/a
GAC – Afghanistan	It should be reserved only for ccTLDs.	As long as it is not in conflict with existing alpha 3 codes from ISO 3166-1 list, they are good to proceed. The only advantage is that there will be more business opportunities for brands to register their names, but it should go through no objection process from governments and other authorities. Disadvantage would be the same (Confusion for users)	No
GAC – Norway	No. Existing 3-letter gTLDs should be eligible for an exact match of an equivalent IDN 3-letter code. Also new IDN ccTLD should also be eligible for a IDN 3-letter code	No. Same as previous answer. The should be very limited use of IDN 3-letter codes as suggest in the answer to Q5.	In our view there are so many other available strings that could be used for a new top level domain and you should therefore not pick those that will most certainly cause end user confusion and also are likely to create conflicts between national law and ICANN policy
Intellectual Property	The IPC does not support the reservation of IDN 3-character strings	There should be unrestricted use of IDN three-character strings if they are	From an intellectual property point of view, the IPC recognizes that it is

Constituency	for exclusive use as ccTLDs. While restrictions on 3-character ASCII strings effectively results in the exclusion of over 17,000 potential new gTLDs from the DNS, restriction of all IDN 3-character strings would exclude hundreds of thousands of potential new gTLDs from language communities that have already suffered decades of exclusion from the DNS. The IPC can see no basis or reason for such a disruptive exclusionary policy, which would not serve ICANN's mission to internationalize the DNS.	not in conflict with any applicable string similarity rules. The IPC needs more information on what constitutes "conflict with an existing TLD." Domain name allocation policy must facilitate, not impede, the need of billions of people to join the internet community. A core goal of the New gTLD Program is to bring new participants into the DNS. The view of the IPC is that this is not achieved by restricting the use of potential new IDN gTLDs unless there is a clear technical or legal justification for doing so. However, the IPC would need to clarify what is meant by a "conflict with [an] existing TLD" before opining on this aspect of the question. Clearly, no one can apply for a TLD that is identical to an existing TLD (i.e., that consists of the same characters in the same order); this is beyond question. This then raises the question of what "conflict with existing TLDs refers to," if it does not refer to string similarity or an attempt to register a string that is already registered. Does it refer to translations and transliterations of existing TLDs, or to TLDs that are	extremely difficult to reconcile the concerns of governments with the fact that well-established international law prohibits the effective expropriation of rights without due process and/or compensation. A clear and natural tension exists between legally recognized private rights on the one hand and government interests on the other. The IPC notes that the use of geographic names in the Domain Name System ("DNS") is a long-standing issue and one of the most troublesome issues in domain name allocation policy. The practice of registering geographic names and geographical indications as second- and third-level domain names was expressly noted by the World Intellectual Property Organization in 2001 in its Final Report on its Second Internet Domain Name Process. An important conclusion of the WIPO II Report was the absence in international law of support for governments' assertions of priority rights in geographic names preventing their use by others as domain names. The IPC reaffirms the

		typographically indistinguishable from existing TLDs (i.e., where characters in different scripts look the same or very similar)?	comments and conclusions of the GNSO Working Group on Reserved Names, which emphasized the need to "ensure that 'there is a solid and clear basis in existing international law which can be applied so as to prevent erosion of the integrity of geographical indicators and enhance the creditability of the DNS'."3 The adoption of exclusionary policy without clear and credible legal basis creates a danger of appropriating or impinging upon existing rights, to the detriment of the global community's interaction with the DNS.
.pl Registry Operator	I do not think so, however there is some idea behind. First of all we are not sure about the future regarding IDN; it is complex technology which can cause Internet less stable or even partially unstable. I think we need more research and better analysis; otherwise, I think that we do not have enough knowledge to build any theoretical project and set the rules. The question is: do we have to decide just now? What is a reason behind for making a decision even if it would be wrong in the future? (as our today's knowledge is not	As above, it would be good to have the unrestricted use, however the definition of the meaning of "unrestricted" in this context has to be set first.	In general, we should do our best and avoid of creating the artificial barriers driven by unjustified reasons and curb Internet development, however I think that the planning process in projects should follow the set polices and ISO rules first; I do think, that we have not got a legitimate position to change the UN policy and maintain any new one. Doing differently, I think that simply sooner or later the projects will fail, and the team will be busy with huge load and unproductive work. The known rule first come first served in

	sufficient enough..?). In general, the rules applied should be as presented above.		this context is note the one we should focus on first.
.hk Registry Operator	All IDNs which are official names or commonly known names of countries or territories, irrespective of their length (number of IDN characters) should be reserved exclusively as ccTLDs.	This is not sufficient. See answer to Q6 above.	N/a
Partridge and Garcia PC	All three character top level domains should be eligible for use as gTLDs even those that are identical to existing alpha 3 codes from the ISO 3166-1 list. Countries are currently protected by the two letter codes contained in ISO 3166. Codes on the ISO 3166-1 list also serve as acronyms for large organizations, airport codes, names of companies, and words in the English language. [T]ere are many examples of uses of gTLDs that would unnecessarily be impinged upon should this proposed policy be adopted (see table in original submission)	There is no recognizable advantage to there being a "support/non-objection" process for governments and public authorities. There is no basis in international law for governments or public authorities having this type of power over the determination of trademark rights. The proper forum for this type of determination best handled via binding arbitration in an internationally recognized forum in which objective and reasonable standards apply. The relevant governments and public authorities should have no right of reservation for three-character ccTLDs, nor should they be given authority to reject three-character strings that conflict with existing alpha-3 codes from the	Yes, there should be unrestricted use of three-character strings as gTLDs if they are not conflicting with any applicable string similarity rules. This has been the status quo with the DNS for almost 20 years. During the recent round of gTLD allocations ICANN approved numerous three-character strings as gTLDs .ADS, .BBC, .FAN, .CFD, .XIN, .GOO, .GDN, .NTT, .IFM, .JCB, .ONE, .FIT,. LAT, .DEV, .IWC, .SEW, .SKY, .LDS, .CRS, .RIP, .IBM, pyc (Russian), TUI, FLY, GLE, ZIP, CAL, WME, GMX, BOO, DAD, DAY, FRL, ING, NEW, MOV, EAT, ESQ, HOW, OOO, UOL, SCA, TOP, ONG, KRD, NGO, NRA, NRW, SCB, BMW, OVH, BZH, NHK, BIO, VET, HIV, RIO, GMO, WTC, TAX, WTF ,FOO, SOY, GAL, EUS, GOP, MOE, REN, AXA, DNP,

		ISO 3166-1 list.	INK, opr (Russian),BID, BAR, PUB, XYZ, WED, KIM, RED, CEO, ONL, CAB, SEX and UNO. Based on research only one these new gTLDs was objected to as being confusingly similar to a ccTLD see *SE Registry SA BV, v. Internet Marketing Solutions , Limited* (Case No. 50-504 T00304 13) (Independent arbitrator found .SX and .SEX were not confusingly similar).
GAC Finland	See the answer in question 1. Shouldn't be changed at this point anymore. Creates confusion, because many IND three-character strings already exists.	This is the current situation. Multilingual, open and equal solution. However it is hard to know, how "FIN" is written in all IDN scripts, and that's why some country or territorial names written in IDN scripts might suffer.	N/A
GAC Switzerland[63]	See Overview Questions 1-4		
ALAC			
.be Registry	No, see point 1.	Yes, that seems like a fair policy that keeps the right balance for existing	The WG should consider a fair and simple procedure for governments to

[63] Switzerland proposes to tackle the issue of the future use of three-character codes as TLD according to the following methodology: initially, it is essential to clearly delimit the three-character codes concerned by means of a protection mechanism. It would then be advisable to define the protection mechanism itself and, finally, to rule on the method of use of protected and non-protected codes.

		players and newcomers.	raise their objections. I refer to the actual discussions and debate between GAC, ICANN Board & community with regard to the 2-letter domain names release under the new gTLD's. If you want to persuade the governments, there will have to be clearer procedures than the current ones.
.tn Registry	Only when it's conflicting with name of counties for example for Egypt in Arabic it's مصر (three-character string) and I'm thinking in the same way is to give countries the opportunity to create an industry of domain names	Only when it's in conflict with country names	N/a
.cr Registry	Please consider the same advantages and disadvantages mentioned in Point 1 for this question.	Please consider the same advantages and disadvantages mentioned in Point 4 for this question.	Please take into account that opening the possibility of three character stings to countries and locations in the long term will lead to destabilizing and even eliminating current ccTLDs who are key allies and representatives of ICANN throughout the world. ccTLDs are key for the stability and resilience of the Internet from a technical and political perspective, and losing this support may prove fatal to ICANN. This is specially true for emerging

			economies where ICANN needs the most support and which prove to be very complex political environments. I urge the CWG-UCTN to consider that ICANNs role is to further strengthen the Internet, not weaken it. This kind of initiative may prove to have some kind of financial gain in the short term but have drastic technical and political consequences in the long turn as explained in the previous answers to the questionnaire. I urge them to stop this project.
Centre Survey **(22 respondents)**[64]	23% Yes 55% No 23% Unsure	59% Yes 18% No 23% Unsure	Should 3-character strings in the ISO 3166 list be reserved all together (to avoid user confusion)? 45% Yes

[64] Participating cc-TLD registries: .al, .be, .ch, .de, .dk, .ee, .es, .hr, .is, .jp, .lu, .lv, .me, .mt, .nl, .no, .pl,

.pt, .rs, .ru, .se, .tr; for individual responses, see:
https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/49354211/ccTLDSurvey.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1448464976361&api=v2

			27% No 27% Unsure
.SV	In the spirit of an open and competitive environment in the domain names industry, there can be unrestricted use of 3 IDN character strings not conflicting with country and territory codes. Pros: continue fostering competition in domain names.	In the spirit of an open and competitive environment in the domain names industry, there can be unrestricted use of 3 IDN character strings not conflicting with country and territory codes. Pros: continue fostering competition in domain names.	Special consideration should be taken to 3-character strings proposed as gTLD if they happen to be the 3 first characters of an existing gTLD, or a brand, trademark or location name. They should be clearly justified.
Yuri Takamatsu	No. The reason is the same as above.	Yes. In principle, the name space of the labels, except those with two ASCII characters, should be unrestricted in their registration and usage.	The response above is a personal position, not a JP ccTLD registry's.
.hn	They should be reserved as ccTLDs for linguistic reasons.	It should not be regulated. As an advantage: it ensures the safety, reliability for purposes of governance. As a disadvantage: it generates un-governability.	The existence of 3 characters in theISO 3166 must exist only for cc Top Level Domains, we see no reason to generate in this standard three other characters and reserve them only for gTLDs. If that decision was taken, it would be condemning the ccTLDs to decline and would further promote the exclusion which is seen in developing countries, fostering monopolies, conversely to the

			principles of free trade agreements.
.no	No. For IDN the considerations are different. 3-character strings might be in use both for ccTLDs (where a script leads to 3-letters to express a 2-letter code in ASCII) and gTLDs for generic names and trademarks in scripts.	Yes, see above. But a condition must of course be that they are not in conflict with existing TLDs etc.	Our view in summary is that the rules in the AGB existing for the first round of new gTLDs with regard to the use of country & territory names should be continued - that is: All 3-character strings on the ISO 3166-1 list should not be allowed as TLDs; neither as ccTLDs nor as gTLDs. This is first and foremost relevant for ASCII characters. IDNs raise different questions. If 3-character ASCII on the ISO 3166-1 list should be allowed, this must be in cooperation with the relevant government - the same rules as for capitols and some cities as today; namely support or non-objection. It will then be a gTLD, following the same policy as other gTLDs, not a ccTLD, following local policy. However, the government would then be able to set some critera for giving their support. In our opinion a change to the exiting regime in the AGB might cause disputes internally within the ICANN system. In the times of the IANA-transition with all the work that

			follows this process, and the importance of a successful Post-IANA Transition environment, and the work-stream 2 of the accountability-process, we do not think it is wise to open up for more change to the AGB than necessary. We also see the political pressure coming, ref WSIS+10. Yours sincerely, UNINETT Norid AS
.pa	All three-character IDN strings should be reserved exclusively as ccTLDs and should be ineligible as IDN gTLDs. Advantage: Continue to promote competition in the current domain names.	There should be no unrestricted use of IDN strings of three characters, even if they are not in conflict with existing TLD or any similar rule applicable chains. Advantage: Continue to promote competition in the current domain names.	Special consideration must be taken to three-character strings as top-level domains, especially if these three characters match the first 3 characters of a brand name, a trademark, a location or an existing gTLD. Should be very clearly justified
.de	DENIC believes that IDN three-character strings are in no way special and suggests that the general question of the properties of an IDN ccTLD need to be solved prior to responding to this question.	With reference to the previous response, we suggest that the response to this question might need to be postponed.	DENIC believes that the question of alpha-3 codes should not be mixed with the topic of IDN ccTLDs or IDN TLDs in general. The guiding principle for dealing with three letter ASCII codes should be consistency and predictability, with future changes to ISO 3166 alpha 3 in mind. For the ccTLD community it should be of utmost importance to maintain the

			singularity of ccTLDs based on the ISO 3166 alpha-2 list.
.ar	NIC Argentina considers the same as expressed above for IDN strings	NIC Argentina considers the same as expressed above for IDN strings	n/a
.fi	Shouldn't be changed at this point anymore. Risk: creates confusion	Multilingual, open and equal solution. Risk: Some ccTLDs in IDN scripts might suffer	n/a
GAC	As in question 1, the GAC does not think that it is necessary or feasible to reserve as ccTLDs all IDN three-character codes at the top-level and notes that in practice, dozens of 3-character IDN TLDs are in operation in the DNS, including more than a dozen ccTLDs and over 40 gTLDs. It does not, however, follow that all 3-character codes should be eligible as gTLDs (see detail in letter above).	In general, using only "string similarity rules" to protect certain strings should be avoided as it would generate too much uncertainty and complexity in the process (see detail in letter above)	