



**Council of European National
Top-Level Domain Registries**

Report on ICANN57

Hyderabad
3-9 November 2016

Contents

Executive Summary **4**

ccNSO report **5**

Extended Process Similarity Review Panel (EPSRP) Working Group update	5
CCWG on the Use of Country and Territory names (CCWG-UCTN)	5
ccNSO Strategy and Operating Plan (SOP) WG update	6
TLD-OPS Standing Committee update	6
PDPs on the retirement of ccTLDs and the review mechanisms	6
Public Technical Identifiers (PTI) update	6
IANA Stewardship Transition (IST) update	7
Service Level Expectations (SLEs) for PTI	7
The Customer Standing Committee (CSC)	7
Root Zone Evolution Review Committee (RZERC)	7
Other news	7
Content Control and DNS	7
ccNSO Council elections and nomination for the ICANN Board seat 11	7
Auction Proceeds working group	7
Nomulus	8
Chairing Skills Program (pilot)	8
Becky Burr leaves the ccNSO	8

GAC Report **8**

Country/territory names and codes	12
Two letters at second level	12
Three letters at second level	12
Names at top level	12
GAC operating principles and procedures (new ICANN Bylaws)	12
GAC engagement with the Board, including advice	13
Other issues discussed by the GAC	13
GAC who's who update	13

GNSO Report **14**

gTLD Marketplace Health Index Initiative	14
New gTLDs: Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice (CCT-RT)	14
Mitigation of Abuse in gTLDs	14
Geographic TLD Interest Group	15
Next Generation Registration Directory Services (RDS) PDP	15
Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP)	15
New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP	16
Review of Rights Protections Mechanisms (RPMs)	17
Other GNSO Council votes/actions	17

Executive Summary

The ICANN57 meeting in Hyderabad was the first of its kind, applying the [Meeting C format](#) expanding over a long 7-day period. Not all SO/ACs bloated their regular schedules accordingly, but Meeting C is the time for ICANN's Annual General Meeting. It is also characterised by two Public Forum sessions, which triggered animated discussions on the .web auction, among other controversial topics, and was home to so-called High Interest Topics sessions, which were setup rather hastily a few weeks prior to the meeting, but will benefit from this first C edition to improve on the next version.

This report covers issues discussed at the ccNSO, GAC and GNSO meetings, with a special focus on topics relevant to ccTLDs.

ccNSO

- The adoption of the working group report on the **Extended Process Similarity Review Panel** has been postponed until the SSAC has published its additional comments
- The Policy Development Process (PDP) on the **retirement of ccTLDs and the review mechanisms for decisions on delegation, transfer, revocation and retirement** has been kicked off
- Updates from the ccNSO appointees and volunteers following the **transition of the IANA stewardship** show that everything is on track; the Customer Standing Committee (CSC) appointed Byron Holland as Chair and held its first meeting – Service Level Expectations (SLEs) have been categorised and the dashboard is available, allowing better control for the community

GAC

- All GAC sessions were conducted as **open meetings**, including the Public Safety Working Group and the Communiqué drafting sessions
- The GAC continued to debate many of the same topics it has discussed at many of its past meetings (particularly **country/territory name** protection and intergovernmental organisation name and acronym protection), as well as topics

on the working modalities of the GAC and how it should **interact with other parts of the ICANN community**

- An emerging trend in the GAC in Hyderabad was the **reading out of statements** by groups of governments on issues that the GAC as a whole has been unable to reach consensus on
- There were some **tense moments** between the GAC and GNSO, and the GAC and Board in their joint meetings, but the more open and frank discussions seem to have had a positive effect, with misunderstandings being fully aired and explored, and the groups agreeing (once more) to work together more collaboratively in the future

GNSO

- The **Next Generation Registration Directory Service PDP** focused on fundamental requirements for users/purposes, data elements and privacy aspects
- The GNSO adopted the charter for a CWG on the **New gTLD Auction Proceeds**, noting strict requirements for members to provide declarations in relation to potential applications for proceeds (to avoid potential conflicts of interest)
- The **Next Round of New gTLD PDP** is looking into the possibility of a first come, first-served model rather than strict rounds of applications and specific timeline windows
- **RDAP** “how to” session outlines advantages such as standardised format, support for scripts other than English, user authentication and gated access and support for encryption
- **Data** was a common thread across many sessions (e.g., gTLD Market Health Index, CCT Review Team, Rights Protection Mechanisms reviews and GeoTLDs). CENTR was approached for ccTLD data and has responded with data that is already public (e.g., DomainWire, Registrar Portal)
- The **GeoTLD** group discussed its newly formed Belgian-based association, formal membership of the RySG, 2017 strategy and data/benchmarking
- GNSO remains a chartering organisation of the **CWG on Internet Governance**

- Findings on competition, trust and choice in new gTLDs showed price declines, market share increase and highlight challenges with applications from developing economies
- **Thick WHOIS:** .com, .net and .jobs will transfer to a thick WHOIS registry as of 1 May 2018 (new registrations) and February 2019 (existing

registrations)

- Reviews into **rights protection mechanisms** are still in phase one (systems implemented in the context of the New gTLD Program), with the review of the UDRP to come in phase two, at a later stage.

ccNSO report

All presentations from this ccNSO meeting can be found [here](#).

Extended Process Similarity Review Panel (EPSRP) Working Group update

The ICANN Board requested for the ccNSO to provide guidance on how to deal with split findings of the Extended Process Similarity Review Panel (EPSRP). This is an appeal mechanism for strings that have been declared confusingly similar to existing ASCII codes in the course of the IDN fast track process. It wasn't clear, however, what should be done when the panel of linguists came to a split decision. The ccNSO created the [EPSRP Working Group](#) under chairmanship of Giovanni Seppia and invited the GAC and SSAC to participate in any way that they felt to be most appropriate. Individual members of the GAC participated as observers. The WG drafted a set of recommendations to provide guidance, which was published for public comment. The recommendations from the WG included (1) that "split recommendations" with different outcomes for upper and lower cases should be resolved based on lower case assessment; (2) any risks should be mitigated at registry level; and (3) confusingly similarity principles and rules should be applied consistently throughout the TLD space.

As part of the public comment process, SSAC produced a comment that was directed to the Board and recommends not to adopt the recommendations of the WG and instead conduct a new process. SSAC has notified the working group that they will provide

additional advice within a month. As part of the public comment process, ALAC expressed its support and, after closure of the public comment period, the GAC sent its comment to the ccNSO and ICANN Board of Directors, supporting the recommended course of action.

Cross Community Working Group on the Use of Country and Territory names (CCWG-UCTN)

The [CCWG-UCTN](#) has finalised its discussion on 2-letter codes, concluded that the status quo should be maintained: all 2-letter codes (in ASCII) used as TLDs should remain reserved for ccTLDs, as per the existing ICANN policy. After an analysis of the community feedback on 3-letter codes, a straw-person proposal on 3-letter codes was presented and discussed during and following ICANN55. A broad cross-community session was held in Helsinki (ICANN56), where valuable input was received and taken into account by the group, focusing on the feasibility of a harmonised framework for the use of country, territory and other geographic names. The Working Group published an [Interim Report](#) on 25 October, which includes the consensus views to date, the issues that the Cross-Community Working Group has brought to the surface and the conviction of the WG that a harmonised framework is not feasible regarding 3-letter codes at top level. The Report also recommends closing this CCWG and for "the ICANN community [to] consolidate all policy efforts relating to geographic names".

ccNSO Strategy and Operating Plan (SOP) WG update

Operating plan 2018 is to be published in March 2017. Cost reduction and an efficiency improvement exercise at ICANN continues. With regards to ICANN global engagement, there are so far no clear measurements for the quality of the engagement efforts. This makes proper control, assessment and improvement difficult. ICANN is currently working on making hubs fully operational. More information on and documents related to the SOP WG can be found [here](#).

TLD-OPS Standing Committee update

This is the technical incident response community for and by ccTLDs. The goal is to make ccTLDs more reachable and informed on security incidents. All European ccTLDs are participating in this initiative. The incident list has been used on four occasions so far in the last 18 months. [TLD-OPS](#) will organise a workshop at ICANN58 to discuss how ccTLDs can collaboratively detect and mitigate DDoS attacks.

Policy Development Processes (PDPs) on the retirement of ccTLDs and the review mechanisms for decisions on the delegation, transfer, revocation and retirement of ccTLDs

Ever since the Framework of Interpretation (Fol) working group delivered its [final report](#), two big gaps in the policy framework for ccTLDs still needed to be filled:

- To develop the review mechanism of decision pertaining to the delegation, transfer, revocation and retirement of ccTLDs; and
- To develop recommendations for a policy on the retirement of ccTLDs.

The first step in getting this done is to start working groups that will draft these PDPs. The working groups need charters and the request from the ccNSO Council to draft these charters is the first formal step in this process, which is expected to last two years in total (until the issuing of the Final Reports for both PDPs). Preparatory work also includes the drafting of an Issue Report and an agreement on the guiding principles for the PDP on the review mechanisms.

The call for volunteers will go out in mid-November. As this is a crucial set of policy documents for the ccTLD community, it is highly recommended for the CENTR membership to participate. The secretariat will also volunteer in its role as ccNSO Council observer to keep the membership updated on progress.

Public Technical Identifiers (PTI) update

Elise Gerich (IANA) outlined the background to the IANA stewardship transition process and current status. Selected points:

- Creation of the Public Technical Identifiers (PTI), which is now an affiliate of ICANN responsible for performing the IANA services on behalf of ICANN. Elise was designated president of PTI by the ICANN Board. Becky Nash will be treasurer and Samantha Eisner is the secretary. [More information](#)
- PTI does not set policy – it implements agreed policies and principles developed by the ICANN multistakeholder community.
- Board members on PTI: Elise Gerich, Akram Atallah, David Conrad, Lise Fuhr and Jonathan Robinson.
- IANA line item in budget funds PTI. ICANN contracts to PTI to do operations (e.g., naming services) meaning that if a ccTLD operator makes a change request for admin contact, they will still send it to the same people as previously, except the organisation is now called PTI.
- PTI outputs to community: Service Level Expectation (SLE) dashboard, updates to root zone and database, monthly reporting to [iana.org](#)
- A short live demonstration of the SLE dashboard was provided.
- PTI is a cost centre 100% funded by ICANN
- PTI's budget is submitted 9 months before the start of ICANN's fiscal year.
- Rather than the previously reported 9.3 Million USD, 10 million USD will be assigned in the FY2018 ICANN budget. This 700k USD growth is due to extra staff and oversight activities such as PTI Board and other committees. Verisign is paid from IANA services budget within PTI.
- All operational details can be found [here](#).
- The SLE dashboard can be found [here](#).

IANA Stewardship Transition (IST) update

All necessary processes were concluded before the transition. The intellectual property rights transfer is still ongoing. The PTI Board has been installed with interim independent directors to allow NomCom to set up a nomination process. There is also a need to put in place liaisons between the PTI Board and the Customer Standing Committee (CSC). There are no remaining issues with the IANA Naming Function Agreement following substantial input from the ccTLD community.

Service Level Expectations (SLEs) for PTI

The team working on the [SLEs](#) has categorised them as follows:

- Category I: Routine updates impacting Root Zone
- Category II: Routine updates not impacting Root Zone
- Category III: creating/transferring gTLD
- Category IV: creating/transferring a ccTLD
- Category V: other change request

Each category has different SLEs. Six reporting mechanisms have been put in place, of which five are public and one can only be used by the ccTLD that requested the change (status/timestamp/required actions).

The Customer Standing Committee (CSC)

The [CSC](#) has four members (two ccTLDs [Byron Holland and Jay Daley] and two gTLD representatives). The CSC's mission is to ensure continued satisfactory performance of the PTI customers. It's an operational oversight role to ensure PTI lives up to the expectations. Byron has been appointed Chair of the CSC.

Root Zone Evolution Review Committee (RZERC)

The NTIA had other roles in addition to approving change requests. It also dealt with decisions like DNSSEC or IDN implementation. This part of its role is now taken over by [RZERC](#). RZERC is to advise the ICANN Board. Its task is to listen to the community and discuss and decide whether or not to initiate public comments. It will require close cooperation

with the CSC. Peter Koch is the ccNSO-appointed member to the RZERC.

Other news

Content Control and DNS

Session page and recordings can be found [here](#).

There was an interesting discussion on the (ab)use of the DNS to prevent access to content. The discussion had two intertwined parts: firstly, whether or not this is an area within ICANN's scope and secondly, if there are limits to private terms of service that registries can put in their terms and conditions (T&Cs). While the Bylaws explicitly state that content control is not within ICANN's remit, clauses from the new gTLD contracts were grandfathered into the Bylaws. These are called the Public Interest Clauses. For instance, they restrict registrations under specific gTLDs (and as such can be perceived as content-related). While the session was too US-focussed, it provided a good overview of the main arguments, discussion on limits to private terms of service and boundaries within ICANN's set rules. It is unfortunate, however, that the assumption that the DNS can actually be used to block access to content was not questioned at all.

ccNSO Council elections and nomination for the ICANN Board seat 11

The following candidates were nominated and seconded, and accepted their nominations to the ccNSO Council:

- African Region: Souleymane Oumtanaga, .ci
- Asia-Pacific Region: Hirofuma Hotta, .jp
- European Region: Nigel Roberts, .jj & .ge
- Latin American and Caribbean Region: Alejandra Reynoso, .gt
- North American Region: Stephan Deerhake, .as

Chris Disspain was nominated and seconded, and accepted his nomination to the ICANN Board seat 11. While none of the seats were contested, the ccNSO had a healthy Q&A with all candidates, both online and during the meeting in Hyderabad.

Auction Proceeds working group

The ccNSO will actively participate in the cross community working group that will draft the

framework on how to spend the proceedings from the new gTLD auctions. Currently accumulating around USD 250 Million and expected to grow in the next year, these funds has enormous potential for capacity building, awareness raising and training.

Nomulus

Google presented Nomulus, the open source software it uses for its registry business. It was built from scratch and development was driven by requirements put forward by registrars. It is functional, but still needs development on WHOIS and EPP protocol level endpoints and the admin control user interface. Code, install guide and documentation can be found on [Github](#).

Chairing Skills Program (pilot)

As of December 2016 through ICANN58, current chairs can ask to be evaluated and given feedback (face-to-face meetings, conference calls and webinars). This will be done by a third party. [More information](#)

Becky Burr leaves the ccNSO

Becky Burr left the ccNSO Council to join the ICANN Board on behalf of the GNSO. What Becky did for the ccTLD community can never be overestimated. On the behalf of the CENTR community, we would like to thank her wholeheartedly for her invaluable contribution.

GAC Report

Summary of key issues at the GAC

Issue	GAC Communiqué	Board action	Other ICANN community progress on issue
2-letter codes at second level	Advice requesting clarity on whether the Board Resolution is consistent with GAC Advice given in Helsinki Communiqué, and requesting that the Board always communicates its position prior to adopting resolutions. (GAC Hyderabad Communiqué)	8 November 2016: Resolution 2016.11.08.15 approving the Measures for Letter/Letter Two-Character ASCII Labels to Avoid Confusion with Corresponding Country Codes	None.

Continued on next pages

Issue	GAC Communiqué	Board action	Other ICANN community progress on issue
3-letter ISO country codes at top level	No advice. GAC discussion ongoing.	None.	Cross-Community Working Group on Use of Country/Territory Names as TLDs (CCWG-UCTN) most recent reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCTN Progress Report (25 Oct 2016) • UCTN Draft Interim Report (25 Oct 2016)
Country names	No advice. GAC Geographic Names WG work ongoing.	None.	CCWG-UCTN (see above)
IGO names & acronyms	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : engage with GNSO before ICANN58 to resolve differences between GAC advice and GNSO-developed policy.	Pre-ICANN57 ICANN Board “Small group” proposal likely to be starting point for post-ICANN57 discussions between GSNO and GAC.	None.
Red Cross/Crescent/ Crystal protection	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : ask the GNSO Council to re-examine & revise its Red * recommendations, which are not consistent with previous GAC advice & make protection of Red * marks permanent.	None.	None.
Community new gTLD applications	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : No advice. GAC to consider Council of Europe report, Applications to ICANN for Community-Based New gTLDs: Opportunities and challenges from a human rights perspective , as possible input for future new gTLD policy development.	None.	None.

Issue	GAC Communiqué	Board action	Other ICANN community progress on issue
Public Safety (inc. mitigating of DNS abuse)	<p>GAC Hyderabad Communiqué: requests Board to respond to a number of questions regarding DNS Abuse Mitigation by ICANN & Contracted Parties attached as Annex 1 to the Communiqué.</p> <p>In addition, the GAC Public Safety Working Group (PSWG) is developing recommendations on sensitive strings and child protection online</p>	None.	<p>Security Framework Drafting Team: following feedback on draft framework, final version not due until late 2017.</p> <p>Privacy & Proxy Services Accreditation (PPSAI) Implementation Review Team: implementation due in 2019.</p>
String similarity	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : apply the views in the letter of 28 September 2016 to the ccNSO Chair regarding the Extended Process Similarity Review Panel WG proposed guidelines on the second string similarity review process.	N/A	Extended Process Similarity Review Panel WG final report : SSAC recommends not to adopt the recommendations of the WG and instead conduct a new process (SSAC to provide additional advice to the WG within a month)
GAC participation in Empowered Community	No decisions. Agreement to develop paper for further discussion by GAC members.	N/A	N/A
GAC/Board interaction	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : engage in more regular communication with the Board; ask Board to consider posting draft resolutions in advance of Board meetings.	The Board/GAC Implementation	N/A

Issue	GAC Communiqué	Board action	Other ICANN community progress on issue
GAC/GNSO engagement	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : no advice. GAC to work with GNSO on further implementation of early PDP engagement mechanisms.	None.	The GNSO is happy with its pilot on early engagement GAC project and would like to take it further. There was much discussion between GAC and GNSO on how to achieve this, given the resource constraints GAC members are under.
GAC participation in the NomCom	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : no advice. A group of 14 GAC members made a formal statement during the GAC meeting urging the GAC to take up a non-voting liaison seat on the NomCom.	None.	None.
Human rights	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : No advice. GAC Working Group on Human Rights & International Law to assist CCWG-Accountability subgroup on Human Rights engage with UN Working Group on the Ruggie Principles .	None.	CCWG-Accountability Work Stream 2 subgroup on Human Rights is drafting a Framework of Interpretation for the ICANN Bylaw on human rights.
Diversity	GAC Hyderabad Communiqué : advises Board to enable implementation of GAC Underserved Regions activities, including capacity building and participation in policy processes.	None.	CCWG-Accountability Work Stream 2 subgroup on Diversity is actively looking at increasing diversity across ICANN. ALAC is sponsor of the ICANN Academy , which aims to train the next generation of ICANN leaders.

Country/territory names and codes

Relevance to ccTLDs: For some governments, country/territory identifiers (names and codes) are public goods that should be managed by the associated authority for the territory. For others, there is no issue in the use of country/territory names at the second or more specific levels. The range of GAC member opinions are more closely aligned with the spectrum of opinions of ccNSO members than they are with the GNSO, as GNSO members would generally be in favour of more liberalisation in that field.

Two letters at second level

Singapore read out a statement from ASEAN countries on the issue of 2-letter country/territory names at the second level. The statement had [previously been sent](#) to Steve Crocker and Goran Marby on 2 November.

The GAC was not happy that the Board passed a [resolution on two-character ASCII labels at second level](#) without first responding to the GAC's Helsinki Communiqué advice on the issue. The GAC felt that, procedurally, if the Board does not respond to GAC advice before taking a decision, it risks making decisions on misunderstandings on the advice. This prompted the GAC to urge the Board to respond to GAC advice and meet with the GAC shortly after the issue of each Communiqué, in its advice in the Hyderabad Communiqué.

Three letters at second level

Some GAC members, including the Netherlands and USA, felt that the existence of 2 and 3-letter codes at the second level was not an issue for them, as there were many examples of such codes in current domain names that were not causing problems. Thailand had consulted with its stakeholders, who believed that 2 and 3-letter country codes were highly technical, and not readily recognized by general Internet users as being associated with a specific country/territory. Instead, for Thai stakeholders, the full word, "Thai" was more strongly associated as a national asset.

Names at top level

There was a brief mention of the ITU World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly [proposal](#) by a group of African countries to amend

WTS Resolution 47, which is about ccTLDs, to include geographic names as well. The resolution was prompted by ongoing delays in the .africa dispute, with the GAC hearing that the delays were causing African governments to seek relief elsewhere.

Most GAC members were not aware of the meeting of the Cross-Community Working Group on Use of Country/Territory Names as TLDs (CCWG-UCTN) at ICANN57. Later, when the ccNSO met with the GAC, they heard a summary of the CCWG's draft report. Switzerland agreed with the position of many ccTLD operators that the use of geographic names in TLDs was larger than just the New gTLD Program and should be dealt with via a cross-community policy development process. Annebeth Lange agreed to send a short summary of the CCWG's report to the GAC after the meeting.

The GAC's WG to Examine the Protection of Geographic Names in Future Expansion of gTLDs is still developing a "Best practices" document, including a possible recommendation for a repository of names that governments believe should be protected but do not currently appear in any formal list of protected geographic names. This possible recommendation does not yet have GAC consensus. The WG will continue to develop its Best Practices draft and present it to the full GAC membership before ICANN58.

GAC operating principles and procedures in the wake of the new ICANN Bylaws

Relevance to ccTLDs: GAC operating processes are not directly relevant to ccTLDs, but the struggles that the GAC is having in modifying its principles and procedures provides insight into the difficulties that the GAC has: until it has a set of agreed principles and processes, the GAC will continue to face challenges in making progress on substantive issues, which by nature will slow progress on work related to other SO/ACs.

The new ICANN Bylaws raise questions for how the GAC sends its advice to the Board. In particular, the issue of how to define a "formal objection" that stops GAC advice being "consensus advice", was a tough topic. To date, the GAC has used "constructive ambiguity" and an undefined, yet mutually acceptable, understanding of consensus to develop

its advice. If the nature of a “formal objection” and “consensus” is defined concretely, it could change the nature of GAC negotiations into a more oppositional, less collaborative approach, which GAC members are keen to avoid. In the end, the GAC WG looking at operating principles was unable to reach consensus on updates to the operating principles, and is now extending its target deadline through to ICANN60 (October 2017).

Not a formal part of the GAC discussions on operational principles, but an interesting organic development was the emergence of formal statements by groups of governments at the meeting. Three statements were read out, with the contributing countries inviting other GAC members to sign on:

- ASEAN countries, on the topic of two-letter ISO country/territory codes at the second level
- A group of mostly South American countries, on operationalizing the GAC’s right to have a non-voting liaison seat on the NomCom
- A group of mostly South American countries on how the GAC should participate in the Empowered Community.

There is no established procedure for handling such statements, so the statements have not been published on the GAC website, but they have been circulated to the GAC member mailing list. They will also appear in the transcripts of the GAC meetings. The statements are not binding, but do indicate that the GAC is beginning to develop more formal alliances between governments who share similar views on specific topics. Unlike the UN, however, these groups are loosely affiliated and seem to shift according to the issue under discussion. The emergence of statements could be an early signal that a more UN-like formality could creep into the GAC’s negotiation style in the future.

GAC engagement with the Board, including advice

The Board-GAC Recommendation Implementation Working Group (BGRI-WG), which was revived following the Helsinki ICANN56 meeting to consider how to increase the effectiveness of GAC advice, met in Hyderabad to further their work. The GAC’s displeasure at the Board not responding to its Helsinki advice on 2-letter country codes indicates that there

is perhaps further work before the GAC and Board reach an understanding on what constitutes effective transmission and understanding of GAC advice.

Other issues discussed by the GAC

New gTLD subsequent procedures: As well as community-based applications and reserved strings (including country names), the GAC briefly discussed:

- Support for applicants from developing countries
- Categories for new gTLDs
- Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs)

Secretariat funding: the independent GAC secretariat faces a funding shortfall. Without urgent injection of funds from GAC members, there will not be enough funds to fulfil the contract for the GAC secretariat (ends July 2017). There are also not guaranteed funding for an independent secretariat beyond July 2017, with no current activities to develop a contract beyond that time.

GAC who’s who update

The GAC now has 170 Member States and 35 Observers (new GAC member since ICANN56: Nepal).

The GAC Chair Thomas Schneider (Switzerland) was re-elected unopposed (for a period of 2 years).

Vice Chairs (for a period of 1 year):

- Manal Ismail (Egypt) (for a second term)
- Guo Feng (China)
- Milagros Castanon Seoane (Peru)
- Ghislain De Salins (France)
- Mark Carvell (United Kingdom)

GAC liaison roles reaffirmed at ICANN57:

Customer Standing Committee (CSC): Norway

CCWG-Accountability Work Stream 2:

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Canada
- Denmark
- Iran

GAC Chair (Thomas Schneider) was extended as interim representative to the ICANN Empowered Community until ICANN59.

GNSO Report

gTLD Marketplace Health Index Initiative

This work, initiated in 2015 and run by ICANN staff plus an “advisory panel”, is focused on tracking data to “support the evolution of domain name marketplace to be robust, stable and trusted”. The somewhat broad remit has so far focused its attention on data metrics such as registration stats (volume, adds/deletes, etc.), number and diversity of service providers, competition aspects, UDRP cases and more. They have produced a [beta report](#), which was open to [community feedback](#) until early September.

Relevance to ccTLDs: CENTR was approached by the group to assess the likelihood of access to knowledge/data on the ccTLD community (they currently only include gTLDs). Although CENTR cannot share member data (e.g., from CENTRstats/surveys), other public resources are available such as the [DomainWire quarterly report](#) and the [Registrar Portal](#) on the CENTRstats platform.

New gTLDs: Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice (CCT-RT)

ICANN has published findings from a series of studies related to competition, trust and choice (via the [CCT review team](#)). The studies by Nielsen (to both consumers and domain registrants) were taken twice over a period of one year to assess the changes. Other studies focused on gTLD applicants (experiences in the application process) and studies on organizations in the developing world that didn’t apply (and factors that might motivate them to). The overall issue the review team had to face is that there is very little data (especially in terms of competition, trust and pricing), so the team’s most important recommendation is for ICANN to collect more data for better analysis in the future.

Selected findings:

- New gTLDs grew from 2% to 9% market share of all TLD registrations
- Average retail prices declined in legacy and new gTLDs
- Retail mark-ups over wholesale prices declined

- No significant change in wholesale prices
- Discussion on price caps in legacy gTLDs and how it impacts pricing studies
- New gTLDs and the “global south” (countries mostly in southern hemisphere, sometimes referred to as emerging markets): the study tried to determine factors that influenced organisations in the global south not to apply. Main reasons: inadequate awareness of the New gTLD Program, lack of clarity on business models/cases and concerns on price and process complexity. It was also noted in this session that limited domain registration activity in this region is not limited to gTLDs: ccTLDs face similar challenges.

Relevance to ccTLDs: the work of the CCT-RT is to assess the impact of new gTLDs on the domain name market, and to assess how the first round of applications went. The series of studies the review team has commissioned gives an interesting overview of the global domain name market, which can serve as an interesting benchmark for ccTLDs on a few levels (market shares, security, perceptions and awareness, etc.). More details are available on the CCT-RT wiki page, including links to all completed studies.

Mitigation of Abuse in gTLDs

The High Level Interest Session on Mitigation of Abuse in gTLDs was led by the GAC’s Public Safety Working Group (PSWG) and served to give a brief overview of current trends in DNS abuse, discuss industry practices and share views for consideration in ongoing reviews and initiatives. Although there is no absolute agreement on a definition of abuse, The GAC Safeguards on New gTLDs (Beijing Communiqué, 11 April 2013) defines abuse of the DNS as “domains [...] used to perpetrate security threats, such as pharming, phishing, malware and botnets”.

The session included presentations from the Secure Domain Foundation, ICANN (from the legal team and Security, Stability and Resiliency Team), the Public Interest Registry (.org), Rightside, EURid (.eu), Blacknight and Facebook. They included updates on

recent trends in DNS abuse, current legal safeguards in registry and registrar agreements, voluntary efforts, as well as reactive and proactive activities. It also included testimonials on pitfalls and failures, as well as how best to interact and collaborate with law enforcement agencies (LEA). In conclusion, the panel of participants to this session agreed that what is key is to have a common understanding on who can do what in terms of legal or proactive abuse mitigation activity, and that it is also of paramount importance to keep the lines of communication open among all players and foster collaboration.

[View all presentation slides](#)

Relevance to ccTLDs: LEA will continuously knock at all stakeholders' doors (ICANN, registries, registrars, hosting providers, ISPs) to gain access to data in order to prevent abuse. It is increasingly to registries' benefit to be proactive in communicating their role and obligations in the ecosystem, so that LEA understand each player's responsibilities and the best approach to improve the quality of zone files. Interaction with gTLD registries in that respect will ultimately improve that understanding and the general process to mitigate abuse in the DNS.

Geographic TLD Interest Group

The Geo TLD group has recently formally registered as an international non-for-profit organisation in Belgium. The goal of the association as outlined is to "promote digital identities for cities, regions, language and culture on the Internet" by exchanging best practices and benchmarking. Since formalising, they have progressed in several areas:

- Creation of a [website](#)
- Definition of objectives for 2017 (increase membership, advance on GeoTLD-related topics, create a benchmarking environment)
- Creation of working groups on liaising with the GAC, data privacy and universal acceptance
- Next meeting will be at next ICANN Copenhagen (March 2017) and a second stand-alone meeting in San Sebastian in Summer 2017.

Other selected points:

- Interest in collaborating with Regional Organisations such as CENTR (noting the work done in data/stats), countered with reminders on their ccTLD-exclusive focus

- Webhosting.info nTLDstats presented stats/ services with sample reports
- .nyc shared details on a premium launch (auctions, tiered pricing, development programs)
- GeoTLD group to meet with GAC at next ICANN meeting to discuss next gTLD round restrictions
- Group agreed in sharing more stats with aims for availability in time for ICANN58

Next Generation Registration Directory Services (RDS) PDP

This Board initiated (April 2015) PDP plans to define the purpose of collecting, maintaining and providing access to gTLD registration data and consider safeguards for protecting data to ultimately produce new gTLD policy. This WG is, in essence, looking into what will be replacing or improving the current WHOIS. Chuck Gomes updated on behalf of the group (of around 130 members) noting key work currently underway is focused around the fundamental requirements:

- users/purposes – i.e., who should have access to gTLD registration data as well as the link with RDAP which will allow for gated access
- which data elements should be collected/stored
- privacy aspects

A full list of possible requirements can be viewed [here](#). Once the fundamental requirements are identified, the group will assess the extent to which the existing WHOIS system already addresses the items or whether it needs overhaul.

Relevance to ccTLDs: as ccTLDs also collect/store or use registration data using the WHOIS system, they may be interested to follow outcomes of this PDP. As work in the PDP is still in its early days, more substance may come later into 2017. Further to this, it will be interesting to watch how the group links RDAP into the work of this PDP.

[More information](#)

Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP)

A "how to" session ran on the topic of RDAP outlining the history of WHOIS and a mounting need for a replacement, which has resulted in

RDAP (formally initiated after SAC51 advice in 2011). Main points on why RDAP is needed are that the existing WHOIS protocol has no standardised format, there is no support for internationalisation (contact data in scripts other than English), no way to authenticate users, no support for encryption, and no bootstrapping mechanism, among others. RDAP solves these aspects and is now built into contracts for all gTLD registries and ICANN-accredited registrars. Aspects of “tired/gated” access are also instilled in RDAP and are being explored in the RDS PDP (see above).

Relevance for ccTLDs: RDAP may be an interesting option for ccTLDs in that it addresses many of the limitations of the old WHOIS protocol. It is also of obvious interest to ccTLD registries that also manage gTLDs. CENTR has run a survey on this topic (closing 20 November) to assess plans of RDAP implementation among ccTLDs.

[More information](#)
[RDAP operational profile](#)

New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP

The [New gTLD Subsequent Procedures](#) WG discussed its four Work Tracks (WT) around the topics of applicant support, legal and regulatory, next round process and technical issues. Current status of the PDP is that it expects to publish a summary of public comments on its [Initial Report](#) by January 2017 (final report not to be completed until July 2018). It was noted that an overarching principle of this work is that unless there is consensus, the policy status quo will apply to any new gTLD round/application. An overview of questions assessed in each WT is provided below.

WT1: Applicant Support Programme - What went wrong with the Applicant Support Program in the 2012 round? Registry Service Provider (RSP) accreditation to third-party certifier: what about testing requirements? Accrediting possibilities for an unknown quantity of TLDs?

WT2: Legal & regulatory (contracts) - Is a single Registry Agreement still suitable for the needs of all new gTLDs moving forward? Reserved names issues (several categories: at top level, at second level): keep, reduce, increase? Emergency Back End Registry Operator (EBERO) still needed in case of registry

technical failure?

Several participants noted that brand registries are a very different to other TLD types, arguing that gTLD registries should be sub-categorised and as such, have access to different types of Registry Agreements with ICANN. Simon McCalla (Nominet) highlighted the importance of emergency funding and the existence of the EBERO. Annebeth Lange (Norid) supported the idea of different categories for Registry Agreements since “as we say in the [country code] world, one size doesn’t fit all” and it will help speed up the process.

WT3: Next round and objection procedures - Hold another similar round or switch to a first come, first-served process? Go for a hybrid approach (scheduled rounds)? Annebeth Lange (Norid) commented that based on the experience from second level, first come, first-served at top level would obviously demand more from the objection process.

WT4: Technical and operational issues, universal acceptance and IDNs - When should technical competence be shown (at application or at the signing of the agreement)? Should single-character IDNs be allowed? How to improve criteria and evaluation process in application? Name collisions (.home, .corp, .mail): any other to be considered and what methodology should be used to identify high-risk strings?

There seemed to be general agreement that single-character IDNs should be allowed when representing a full word/phrase. For IDN variants, the case of .quebec was given as an example (.québec was not allowed). It was suggested that they should be treated as a single domain (confusingly similar, according to ICANN, so should be treated the same), but with mandatory rules. Chuck Gomes mentioned that gTLDs should be treated the same way as ccTLDs (allowed to have exceptions, which gTLDs were not). TLD bundling was suggested as a potential solution.

Relevance to ccTLDs: the work of this PDP is of particular interest because it includes assessing backend provider issues (types of contracts with ICANN, pre-delegation testing [PDT] requirements, etc.). For example, it was suggested for ICANN to create “approved provider” seals or pre-certifications so that registries wouldn’t have to go through PDT for every additional TLD management. Individual RSPs could agree to an exchange of letters (similar

to ccTLDs) with ICANN, outlining their respective responsibilities relating to the DNS (proposal by Neustar). There were comments on differentiated certifications, but the overall idea received positive feedback, with caution on competition issues (unfair advantage for certified providers). The reserved names discussions are also far from over and worth keeping an eye on.

Review of Rights Protections Mechanisms (RPMs)

Phase one of this review focuses on RPMs created for the 2012 New gTLD Program (report due late 2017) and phase two on the 1999 Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP), which applies to all gTLDs. The group gave an update on its status and work plans. Selected points:

- Phase one focuses on Trademark Post-Delegation Dispute Resolution Procedures and the Trademark Clearinghouse. It needs to be completed prior to the launch of another round of new gTLDs, but the entire review could run over the next 4-5 years.
- The group is focused on capturing reliable data such as number of sunrises, dates on when registrars started carrying TLDs, claims notice user behaviour, etc. Surveys may be an option and gTLD registries can expect more outreach from the group.

- Some concerns on initial questions for the PDP were very broad: most don't want to re-invent the wheel and start from scratch.

[Presentation slides](#)

Other GNSO Council votes/actions

- GNSO Council adopted recommendations of the GAC-GNSO Consultation Group on GAC Early Engagement in GNSO Policy Development Processes
- GNSO Council adopted recommendations in relation to ways to identify new/additional rights and responsibilities under the revised ICANN Bylaws within the Empowered Community
- Election of the Chair: James Bladel from the Contracted Parties House was the only candidate for the role and will proceed for the 2017-2018 term.
- ALAC appointed Cheryl Langdon-Orr as it Liaison to the GNSO
- New councillors: Darcy Southwell (Registrar Stakeholder Group), Michele Neylon (Registrar Stakeholder Group), Rafik Dammak (Non Commercial Stakeholder Group), Erika Mann (Nominating Committee Appointee)

ICANN58 will be held on 11-16 March 2017 in Copenhagen, Denmark.



CENTR is the association of European country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries, such as .de for Germany or .si for Slovenia. CENTR currently counts 53 full and 9 associate members – together, they are responsible for over 80% of all registered domain names worldwide. The objectives of CENTR are to promote and participate in the development of high standards and best practices among ccTLD registries.

CENTR vzw/asbl
Belliardstraat 20 (6th floor)
1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 627 5550
Fax: +32 2 627 5559
secretariat@centr.org
www.centr.org



*To keep up-to-date with CENTR activities and reports,
follow us on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn*