



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2012

Original: English

Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012

Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

Writing systems and pronunciation

ICANN Report

Submitted by Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) **

* E/CONF.101/1.

** Prepared by Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

General Information about ICANN

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) was formed in 1998 to coordinate the Internet's unique identifiers around the world. It is a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable.

ICANN is responsible for managing and coordinating the Domain Name System (DNS) to ensure that every address is unique and that all users of the Internet can find all valid addresses. It does this by overseeing the distribution of unique IP addresses and domain names. It also ensures that each domain name maps to the correct IP address. Please see <http://www.icann.org> for more information.

Part of the hierarchy of the DNS includes the identification of top-level domains, the label that comes after the last dot in a domain name. These include generic top-level domains (gTLDs) such as .com and country-code top-level domains (ccTLDs), such as .ca and .fr. Within ccTLDs, the DNS now includes IDN ccTLDs as well, such as .한국 (Republic of Korea in Hangeul) and .рф (RF, for Russian Federation in Cyrillic).

IDN ccTLD Fast Track Program

The IDN ccTLD Fast Track process was launched on 16 November 2009, following approval by the ICANN Board at the meeting in Seoul, Korea on 30 October 2009 (<http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-30oct09-en.htm#2>).

The Final Implementation Plan for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track can be found at <http://www.icann.org/en/resources/idn/fast-track/idn-ccTld-implementation-plan-15dec11-en.pdf>. All activities related to the development and implementation of the Fast Track process can be found at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track>.

To date, 29 countries and territories have completed the string evaluation stage of the process. A complete list of countries and territories that have completed string evaluation is available at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/string-evaluation-completion-en.htm>.

Countries and territories requesting IDN ccTLDs from ICANN will only be granted IDN ccTLDs matching their country or territory name in an official language and script (non-Latin) for the country and territory as listed in the *Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of geographical names (part III) 2007, and subsequent updates* (UNGEGN), or which is documented as a meaningful representation of their country name by an internationally recognized linguistic expert.

The objective of the Fast Track process is to enable countries and territories to use their country or territory name as a ccTLD by introducing a limited number of IDN ccTLDs that are:

- Associated with the ISO 3166-1 list and are a meaningful representation of the country or territory name,

- Addressing the need for countries and territories that are ready to implement IDN ccTLDs,
- Dedicated to preserving the stability of the DNS,
- Not based on characters from the Latin script, and
- Agreeing to follow the current delegation practices for ccTLDs.

Requesters for IDN ccTLDs may be the existing ccTLD manager for the ISO 3166-1 code, or a different entity. In either case, the requester must have an evidence of support, or non-objection, from the relevant government or public authority.

Within the Fast Track Process, ICANN has utilized assistance from the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to define a process for the identification of internationally recognized experts for those countries and territories, which may need such expertise. Additionally, ICANN sought assistance from UNGEGN experts in creating examples of documentation that would demonstrate that a requested TLD is, in fact, a meaningful representation of a country name.

The language and script criteria, as well as the meaningfulness criteria described in our briefing of May 2011 has remained constant.

Since the Fast Track process inception, this expertise has been used on four occasions, and has been very useful for those countries and territories in the Fast Track process.

IDN ccTLD Fast Track Reviews

The Final Implementation Plan for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track requires the process to undergo an annual review. Reviews are completed through the ICANN Public Comment Process. ICANN completed the first annual review in March 2011 and published a summary and analysis of input received from the Internet community (See <http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-8-21feb11-en.htm>).

A second annual review of the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process is currently underway. ICANN opened the public comment period on 9 April 2012 and will close it on 21 May 2012. Following completion of the second public comment period, ICANN will compile community feedback and publish a summary and analysis of the comments received. Recommendations for changes to the Final Implementation Plan for the Fast Track Process will be publicly posted and presented to the ICANN Board at its next available meeting following the conclusion of the comment period. We will provide an update on any changes or actions from the Board at the UNGEGN session in August.

Treatment of Geographic Names in TLDs

On 12 January 2012, ICANN achieved a milestone by launching the new gTLD program. As of the date of this letter, the application process has not yet closed, but we will provide the latest available information on the process at the UNGEGN meeting in New York.

In the current new gTLD application round, country and territory names are not allowed. City names or regional names may be allowed, if certain criteria are met. "Applications for gTLD strings must ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the interests of governments or public authorities in geographic names." See Section 2.2.1.4 of the New gTLD Applicant Guidebook at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb/guidebook-full-11jan12-en.pdf>.

Applications for strings that are country or territory names are not available under the New gTLD Program in this application round. Instead, there are two efforts within ICANN's Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) related to country and territory names:

- Study Group on Country and Territory Names, <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unctwg.htm>;
- Long-term policy process for IDNs as country and territory names (IDN PDP Working Group 1), <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/ipwg1.htm>.