4 June 2021

Philippe Fouquart
Chair, GNSO Council

Dear Philippe and Council Members:

On behalf of my RySG colleagues, our GNSO Council liaisons and the RySG members of the IDN EPDP Charter drafting team I am writing to collaborate with the Council and its constituent groups on the next steps for IDN policy development – and in particular on coordination between the upcoming IDN EPDP and the planned IDN Guidelines v4.0 Operational Track.

The purpose of this collaboration is to: (1) reconsider the Council recommended approach for proceeding with the Operational Track vis-à-vis the adoption of the IDN Implementation Guidelines v4.0; and (2) to inform the ICANN Board of this proposed plan. The current approach to implementing the Guidelines v4.0 calls for the formation of an IDN Operational Track Working Group to review the issues related to its implementation (raised by RySG) and develop a path forward.

In the meantime, the Council has launched the IDN EPDP, whose charter has just been approved. As the Charter was developed, it became apparent that the IDN EPDP will consider some of the same issues addressed by the IDN Guidelines v4.0.

Given that there is this overlap, a likelihood exists that IDN EPDP and the Operational Track will approach these issues from a different perspective and develop what might be contradicting results. In any case, both efforts will involve the same informed set of players and so will result in redundant work if considered in both fora. (In addition, both efforts might compete for the same resources.)

The team developing the IDN EPDP Charter also recognized that these issues involve policy considerations, in addition to operational aspects, and are better suited for discussion in a policy development process.

> Examples of these issues are: (1) the principle "of the same entity at the second level"; (2) the harmonization of IDN tables (i.e., the creation of a consistent set of variant rules in a given registry TLD); and (3) evolution of IDN implementation related obligations for contracted parties.

Because it was recognized that these issues required community deliberation, the ICANN Board earlier had paused the adoption of the IDN Guidelines v4.0 and ask the Council for advice. Given our recent realisations above (described above), we recommend:

- the Council defer the work of the IDN Guidelines v4.0 Operational Track, and

- advise the Board of this and recommend that the Board continue deferring the adoption of the IDN Guidelines 4.0 until the issues overlapping with the IDN EPDP can be fully deliberated and resolved by the IDN EPDP.

In making this recommendation, we have assured ourselves that no IDN issues affecting security / stability issues are being deferred.

There are other IDN-related efforts occurring in parallel with the IDN Guidelines and the IDN EPDP; we should also take advantage of this situation:

- The ccNSO is undertaking an IDN Policy re-write for ccTLDs. While GNSO and ccNSO policies are separable in the ICANN world, differences in outcomes governing IDN deployment can lead to confusing results for domain registrants and users. Therefore, we should take advantage of the timing coincidence between the GNSO and ccNSO efforts to normalize results between the two wherever possible.

- Similarly, the IDN EPDP can coordinate with the SubPro IRT so that the SubPro implementation work will not be delayed in any way.

As described above, there are now several IDN-related efforts for the purpose of enhancing their availability, ease of use and security. I think we should take advantage of the timing of this EPDP to reconcile the various approaches so that there is a coherent approach to IDN policy making and ensuring a good user experience.

Thanks for taking the time to read and consider this.

Best regards,

　　　/s

Samantha Demetriou
Chair, Registry Stakeholder Group