

Draft: Impact of New gTLDs on ICANN' s Structure

13 September 2012

Dear Bertrand,

The GNSO Council would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to your request for input on the impact of new gTLDs on ICANN's structure.

As you know, the Council as well as individual SGs and Constituencies have been discussing this important subject for a long time now. It has also been a topic during face to face meetings between the GNSO Council and the Board and GAC as well as with the ccNSO. Some groups have already or will respond to the Board directly and our impression is that they are confident to have taken appropriate steps to address the upcoming challenges.

As far as the Council is concerned, here will most likely be quantitative and qualitative challenges. What these will be and their size can hardly be predicted.

In qualitative terms, there may be new requests to form constituencies and new stakeholder groups in both houses, some of which may be re-configurations or alignments of existing groups.

Since this is an unknown factor, the effects on the democratic and participatory process of the Council and the response to that are yet to be seen. However, we would like to highlight that ICANN is already publishing information on how to participate (see <http://gns0.icann.org/en/about/participation.htm>) including information on how to form a Constituency. Thus, the information and processes are available to be inclusive.

In quantitative terms, challenges are more predictable in some aspects. For sure, there will be

- more attention by the general public and Governments;
 - more attendants at meetings, which has an impact on sizing the venues;
 - more groups that need administrative and technical support;
 - more telephone conferences with more participants and more remote participation;
 - more documents to be produced and read;
 - more decisions to be made and operationalized;
 - more contractors that need to be managed;
 - an increased budget to be administered;
 - more compliance issues that need to be taken care of;
- to name but a few areas of growth.

While ICANN should have sufficient funds to meet these challenges, growth needs to be managed carefully. More staff and other operational resources will be needed to support the community and fulfill ICANN's mission while preserving operational excellence.

These quantitative challenges require managerial responses that ICANN can prepare for. Such preparations should also encompass the increased burden on volunteers to

deal with even more and potentially more complex material to work on. Processes and support schemes for volunteers should be designed to best possibly avoid volunteer fatigue.

The unknown is what new groups will be established and what their place and role in the ICANN eco system shall be. However, additions will only lead to marginal changes that can be dealt with once they are known.

In summary, the GNSO Council believes that the current structure is resilient to respond to the challenges to come as long as ICANN provides the resources required to accommodate an increasing number of participants / stakeholders and their respective needs.

Thank you,
Stéphane van Gelder
GNSO Chair