

Speak up for your Language! Join a Panel Today

Dear ccNSO community member,

In the past, labels in the Internet's Root Zone could only contain ASCII characters. The rules for creating new top-level domain labels were simple: labels must (i) only be composed of letters (a-z) in the English alphabet, and (ii) consist of two to 63 characters. All of that is changing now. The future holds a multilingual Internet, where a user from anywhere across the world can navigate entirely in his or her native language.

Be a part of this historic change! ICANN is calling for volunteers to serve on one of several panels that will define the rules for generating new top-level domain labels for the script or writing systems for their community.

Join a Generation Panel today by emailing identlds@icann.org. Make sure to tell us the language you speak and the script or writing system you want to get involved with. Please help inform and motivate others to join as well.

The goal of these panels is to support the use of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) by determining what is a valid top-level domain label in each script or writing system. This involves answering three questions: (i) which subset of characters from the various scripts can be used to form a label¹, (ii) which of these characters (if any) may be considered confusable or variants by end users, and (iii) what are additional constraints² on these labels?

As there is a single Root Zone, all such label generation rules for all the scripts must be merged into a single reference, which is called the Label Generation Rule-set (LGR). The ICANN community has established a [procedure](#) to develop the LGR for the Root Zone. This procedure is divided into three steps:

1. The basis is a subset of Unicode code points which may be appropriate for the Root Zone and called the Maximal Starting Repertoire (MSR).
2. Communities representing various scripts (e.g., Arabic, Cyrillic, Devanagari, Greek, Chinese, Latin, Thai, etc.) are invited to organize into Generation Panels to start from the MSR and propose the label generation rules (which contains the three types of rules defined above) for their respective scripts.
3. The script-based proposals developed by the communities are reviewed by a panel of experts called the Integration Panel. Proposals that meet the criteria in the [procedure](#) are integrated into the LGR by the Integration Panel. The LGR is incrementally built upon until it contains all the necessary scripts.

For Step 1, ICANN recently released the [Maximal Starting Repertoire \(MSR-1\)](#), covering 22 scripts (Arabic, Bengali, Cyrillic, Devanagari, Georgian, Greek, Gujarati, Gurmukhi, Han, Hangul, Hebrew, Hiragana, Kannada, Katakana, Lao, Latin, Malayalam, Oriya, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu and Thai) and containing 32,790 code points short-listed from 97,973 allowable code points from Unicode version 6.3. Work on additional scripts will be completed soon.

Step 2 is now underway; ICANN needs your help in developing proposals to extend the Root Zone LGR to cover each of these scripts. There is a role for everyone: general script community representation as well as volunteers with knowledge of scripts, linguistics, Unicode, IDNA/DNS or policy.

Volunteering is easy; just send an email to identlds@icann.org. Join a Generation Panel today. Help ICANN support top-level domain names in your language!

With kind regards,

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¹ Code points appropriate for labels must be letters and should be in widespread modern use.

² For example, a label cannot be formed entirely by combining marks and must contain at least two letters