

[[[Date]]]

Maarten Botterman  
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Dear Maarten:

On behalf of my GNSO Council colleagues, I am writing to describe recent Council deliberations and agreements regarding the development IDN policies – and in particular on coordination between the now-launched IDN EPDP and the planned IDN Guidelines v4.0 Operational Track.

The Council has discussed: (1) its previous approach for the implementation and adoption of the IDN Guidelines v4.0; and (2) the elements of the IDN EPDP Charter that was recently completed and approved.

- 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 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.

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), the Council decided to defer all work of the IDN Guidelines v4.0 Operational Track until the issues overlapping with the IDN EPDP can be fully deliberated by the IDN EPDP (at which point the Operational Track might no longer be necessary as its work will be covered by the IDN EPDP).

The Council also respectfully requests 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 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; and the Council intends to take advantage of that situation to the extent possible:

- 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. The GNSO Council is working to 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.

Sincerely,

Philippe Fouquart  
Chair, GNSO Council