

6 March 2022

Manal Ismail, Chair, ICANN Government Advisory Committee (GAC)
Philippe Fouquart, Chair, ICANN Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

Dear Manal and Philippe,

In the course of the [New gTLD Program](#), the Board (via its New gTLD Program Committee) identified several topics that would benefit from policy development for future rounds. One such topic was the question of how to handle “closed generic” gTLD applications. Existing provisions of the 2012 New gTLD Program, i.e., the GNSO policy recommendations and gTLD Applicant Guidebook intended for them to be implicitly allowed, as stated by the Council in its [2013 correspondence](#) with the Board. After the Program launched, the GAC [issued advice](#) on the matter, advising that for strings representing generic terms, exclusive registry access “should serve a public interest goal.”

While the Board reached an interim solution to handle applications during the 2012 new gTLD round, it identified the issue as a topic to be addressed in the GNSO’s planned policy development process on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures. In its [Final Report](#) the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group did not reach consensus on a specific policy on closed generics. The GAC has since [reiterated](#) its advice in the [Beijing Communiqué](#) about closed generics/exclusive registries.

In view of the need for clarity on this issue for the next gTLD application round, the Board invites the GNSO Council and the GAC to explore a mutually agreeable way forward, for which the Board could facilitate a dialogue to formulate a workable framework to identify and handle closed generic applications for the immediate next round of new gTLDs. Should the GAC and GNSO Council reach agreement on a framework, the proposal would then be considered through the appropriate GNSO policy development process that includes the wider community.

The Board has asked ICANN org to provide a draft Framing Paper proposing a more detailed scope and methodology. We hope the paper will contribute to a constructive and positive discussion between the GAC and the GNSO Council and will share the draft with you in the coming days. We look forward to your response as to the willingness of your respective groups to participate in such a facilitated dialogue.

Best regards,



Maarten Botterman
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors