Draft Implementation Plan for IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process

Please note that this is a discussion draft only. Potential IDN ccTLD requesters should not rely on any of the proposed details ~~of~~in the ~~contained~~ information contained here as the program remains subject to further consultation and revision.

Revision Notes:

Rev1.0: In this revision, clarification has been made to the IDNC WG position on IDN tables. The topic has been listed for public discussion in Module 7, and the deadline for submitting comments has been extended per the announcement following this document.

Rev2.0: In this revision, clarifications and updates have been made in accordance with public comments received on the previous version. In conjunction with this revision two papers, proposing implementation details on some open issues, have been released. All material is being posted to seek further community collaboration, in particular during the ICANN meeting in Mexico City, Mexico, March 1-6, 2009.

Rev2.0 is provided in both a redlined and a clean format.

Rev 3.0: In this revision detailed explanations of the entire evaluation process have been included together with flowcharts. Topics considered complete have been removed from Module 7 (these are: association between IDN ccTLD managers and the ccNSO; provisions concerning contention between strings and labels; and the yearly usability evaluation) to various other places in the Draft Implementation Plan so that only outstanding topics remain in Module 7. In conjunction with this revision, three papers are posted (1) revised DoR, (2) proposed details regarding financial contributions to ICANN (3) revised proposal on the management of IDN Tables. All material is being posted to seek further community collaboration, in particular during the ICANN meeting in Sydney, Australia, 21-26 June 2009.

19 February 29 May 2009

Rev3.0 is provided in both a redlined (compared with the Rev2.0 clean format) and a clean format.

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Module 1

General Introduction ~~and Background Information~~

This is ~~version 2~~revision 3.0 of the Draft Implementation Plan for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track ~~process as requested by the ICANN Board at the ICANN meeting in Paris in June 2008.~~Process.

The plan is based on recommendations provided by the IDNC Working Group (WG) in its Final Report, as well as on public comments provided throughout the IDNC WG's online and public comment options, and on public comments received on the previous versions of the plan.

The plan is presented in modules that will be further detailed and finalized after a final round of public comment for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track ~~process~~Process. The modules are:

Module 1: General Introduction

Module 2: Fast Track Eligibility Requirements

Module 3: TLD String Criteria and Requirements

Module 4: Technical Committee Considerations

Module 5: ~~Fast Track~~ Request ~~and~~Submission for String Evaluation ~~Process~~

Module 6: ~~TLD~~Request Submission for Delegation ~~Process~~Evaluation

Module 7: Discussion of Additional Topics

~~To~~Several papers ~~has~~have been ~~provided~~made available with supporting material to this plan:

- Proposed ~~Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers~~Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD managers (revision 1.0)
- ~~Proposed Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings~~
- Proposed Development and use of IDN Tables and character variants for second and top level strings (revision 1.0)
- Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Financial Contributions to Support the Development and Deployment of IDN ccTLDs
- ICANN Cost Analysis by Stakeholder Interest Area

- ICANN Staff considerations and analysis of received comments

1.1 Background Information

One of the most significant innovations for the Internet since its inception will be the introduction of top level ~~Internationalised~~Internationalized Domain Names (~~IDNs~~IDN TLDs). These IDN TLDs will offer many new opportunities and benefits for Internet users around the world by allowing them to establish and use domains in their native languages and scripts.

IDNs have been discussed in the ICANN community for many years. Initially, development focused on enabling the introduction of IDNs as registrations under existing top-level domains (TLDs), but in the past year especially focus has shifted to be on broadening the character repertoire available for use in top level strings.

Over the past years the introduction of IDN gTLDs was discussed in the context and as part of the ~~new~~New gTLD program.

The formal consultation and discussion on the introduction of IDN ccTLDs[1] was initiated by the ICANN Board at its meeting in São Paulo (December 2006). The Country Code ~~Name~~Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) and the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) were ~~requested~~asked to collaborate, in consultation with the relevant technical community, to produce an issues paper on the selection of IDN ccTLDs associated with the two-letter codes described in the ISO 3166-1 standard.

The ccNSO and GAC formed a joint IDN working group~~, which~~ (IDNC WG) that published and submitted to the ICANN Board a list of issues relating to the introduction of IDN ccTLDs in June 2007.

Consultations and discussions of the IDN working group made it clear that several countries and territories have a pressing need for IDN ccTLDs. This realization initiated a discussion of the provisions needed for an interim approach to IDN ccTLDs to meet near-term demands and to gain experience with mechanisms for selecting and authorizing such TLDs that can inform a policy development process. The ICANN Board requested the ICANN community, including the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO), ccNSO, GAC, and the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), to collaboratively explore both an interim and an overall approach to IDN ccTLDs and recommend a course of action to the Board (ICANN meeting, San Juan, June 2007).

Following a ccNSO Council recommendation and broad support of the ICANN community, including the GAC, GNSO and ALAC, the ICANN Board asked the ALAC, ccNSO, GAC and GNSO chairs

[1] The shorthand term "IDN ccTLDs" refers to new top-level domains associated with entries in the ISO 3166-1list.

to set up an IDNC working group appoint its members and begin work in accordance with its Charter as soon as possible.

The IDNC WG was tasked to recommend mechanisms to introduce a limited number of non-contentious IDN ccTLDs, associated with the ISO 3166-1 two-letter codes, to meet near-term demand while the overall policy is being developed.

At the ICANN meeting in Paris (June 2008) the IDNC WG submitted its Final Report to the Board, including GAC and ccNSO statements on the proposed methodology. At its meeting in Paris the Board resolved:

> *Resolved (2008.06.26.04), the Board thanks the members of the IDNC WG for completing their chartered tasks in a timely manner.*
>
> *Resolved (2008.06.26.05), the Board directs staff to: (1) post the IDNC WG final report for public comments; (2) commence work on implementation issues in consultation with relevant stakeholders; and (3) submit a detailed implementation report including a list of any outstanding issues to the Board in advance of the ICANN Cairo meeting in November 2008.*

ICANN then posted the IDNC WG Final Report for public comments and began implementation as directed. Following the public comment period, ICANN posted a consolidated overview of the comments received and a document containing staff considerations of the comments received. During implementation planning, ICANN also submitted letters to relevant public authorities and ccTLD managers to seek information on their interest in participating in the Fast Track ~~process~~Process.

This is the ~~second~~third revision of the Draft Implementation Plan. The ~~two previous versions~~initial and first revision were posted right before and immediately following the ICANN meeting in Cairo, Egypt, 1–7 November 2008~~.~~, the second revision was posted before the ICANN meeting in Mexico City, Mexico, 1-6 March 2009.

In preparing this revised ~~Plan~~plan, ICANN took into consideration the comments received on the previous ~~two~~ versions; in particular public comments and input received through meetings, such as the ICANN ~~meeting~~meetings in Cairo ~~on November 3–7, 2008. An~~and Mexico as referenced above. The analysis of ~~these~~received comments ~~was~~is released in a separate ~~document together with this paper~~documentation.

This revised plan, presents a Fast Track ~~process that allows~~Process for the delegation of IDN ccTLDs ~~to be implemented~~. However, as outlined in the ~~previous~~earlier versions some open issues require further community collaboration~~. To attempt to resolve these issues, additional information have been included in this revised plan and two papers serving as proposed solutions on these open issues have been released.~~ (see Module 7).

- ~~Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers~~
- ~~Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings~~

All this material is being released to seek further community collaboration, in particular before and during the ICANN meeting in ~~Mexico City on March 1-6,~~Sydney, Australia, 21-26 June 2009. A public comment period ~~for these papers~~ will enable and document such community discussions. Comments received will be used to revise the plan in preparation of a Final Implementation Plan~~.~~, which is expected to be provided for Board consideration no later than at the ICANN meeting in Seoul, 25-30 October 2009.

This, per the ICANN Board resolution during the ICANN meeting in Mexico City, Mexico:

It is resolved (2009.03.06.03), that the Board thanks the ICANN community for its work to date and encourages it to continue its work so that the implementation plan can be finalized and considered by the Board no later than at its annual meeting in 2009.

A full overview of activities and links to the materials related to the IDN ccTLD Fast Track ~~process~~Process and its implementation can be viewed at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/.

A glossary of IDN terms used throughout this document is available at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/idn-glossary.htm.

Module 2

Participation Eligibility Requirements

Participation in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track ~~process~~Process has been limited ~~by~~in accordance with the IDNC WG recommendations, as discussed in this module. The recommendations and their inherent limitations were decided through community consultations, as described in Module 1. The primary reasons for ~~making the~~implementing limitations are that the process is experimental[2] in nature and should not pre-empt the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO ~~PDP (Guiding Principles B and F from the IDNC WG Final Report). Further limitations~~Policy Development Process. Limitation aspects related to the string criteria and requirements are presented in Module 3.

2.1 ISO 3166-1 Representation

To be eligible to enter the IDN ccTLD Fast Track ~~process~~Process, the country or territory must be ~~represented~~listed in the International Standard ISO 3166-1 (Codes for the representation of names and countries and their subdivisions – Part 1: Country Codes). The exception to this requirement is the additional eligibility of ~~the .eu for~~ the European Union, which has an~~is~~ exceptionally reserved code designated by ~~on~~ the ISO 3166 Maintenance Agency ~~1(s list and its scope extended in August 1999 to any application needing to represent the name European Union. S~~ee http://www.iso.org/iso/support/country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists/iso-3166-1~~_decoding_table.htm#EU~~) and has also been deemed eligible under ICANN policy for a country-code top-level domain.

~~decoding_table.htm#EU~~

A country or territory represented on the ISO3166-1 list is eligible to participate in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track ~~process~~Process and to request an IDN ccTLD string that fulfills the additional requirements set forth in Module 3.

2.2 ~~*ccTLD Manager as*~~ Requester of an IDN ccTLD

The Fast Track Process is divided into three distinct stages, as discussed in more detail in Module 5:

[2] It is important to note that by "experimental," the working group was commenting on the policy aspects of IDN introduction and not the technical aspects. IDNs have been tested in the root zone and technical implications of the introduction are generally well understood. All studies will be completed to ensure there is a full understanding that IDNs will have no deleterious effects on DNS interoperability, stability and security.

- Stage 1: Preparation Stage;
- Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation; and
- Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation ~~requests are received by~~ Evaluation.

The entity acting as the requester, and that submits the request for an IDN ccTLD to ICANN ~~to appoint country code top level domains to a local manger (also known as a "Sponsoring Organization"). This~~, can be the identified IDN ccTLD manager (proposed sponsoring organization), or in accordance with the recommendations of the IDNC WG: "…where a delegate is not yet selected in the Territory the relevant public authority of the Territory may perform the role of the "selected delegate" until the Territory is ready to enter stage 3 of the Fast Track process."

If the requester is the proposed sponsoring organization (this may be the existing country-code top-level domain manager for the ISO 3166-1 code, or a different entity~~. In either case, the organization~~) it must have the support from the country or territory corresponding to the relevant ISO 3166-1 entry, and must satisfactorily document this support ~~in accordance with ICANN's typical delegation evaluation procedures.~~ .

The documentation of support may be limited to evidence of support~~, or non-objection,~~ from the relevant government or public authority. This is defined as a signed letter of support~~, or non-objection~~, from the Minister with the portfolio responsible for domain name administration, ICT, foreign affairs or Office of the Prime Minister or President; or a senior representative of the agency or department responsible for domain name administration, ICT, Foreign Affairs or the Office of the Prime Minister.

The letter should clearly express the government or public authority's support~~, or non-objection,~~ for the request.

Module 3

TLD String Criteria and Requirements

Conservative limitations for potential ~~TLD~~IDN ccTLD strings have been ~~proposed for this process due to its~~included because of the Fast Track Process' limited introductory nature and to safeguard against pre-empting the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO Policy Development Process. Limitations in this module are focused on criteria and requirements set for the TLD string itself ~~and are defined here as a guide to participants~~which are included to address the reasons for the limitations listed above.

3.1 Language and Script Criteria

The conditions for ~~the language~~allowable languages and ~~script~~scripts to be used for the selected TLD string are as follows:

The language must be an official language in the corresponding country or territory, and have legal status in the country or territory, or serve as a language of administration.

The language requirement is considered verified as follows:

- If the language is listed for the relevant country or territory as an ISO 639 language in Part Three of the *Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of Geographical Names, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names* ~~(the~~ ("UNGEGN Manual~~)~~") (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm); or
- If the language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant country or territory in the ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10; or
- If the relevant public authority in the country or territory confirms that the language is
    a. used in official communications of the relevant public authority; and
    b. serves as a language of administration.

Requests can only be made for strings in scripts other than Latin; that is, other than the characters (a,…,z), either in their basic forms or with ~~combining marks.~~diacritics. Languages based on the Latin script are not eligible for the Fast Track ~~process (in accordance with Guiding Principle D from the IDNC WG Final Report).~~Process.

3.2 Meaningfulness Requirement

The selected string for the IDN ccTLD must be a meaningful representation of the ~~official~~ name of the ~~corresponding~~represented country or territory~~.~~ A string is deemed to be meaningful if it is in the official language of the country or territory and if it is:

- The name of the country or territory; or
- A part of the name of the country or territory denoting the country or territory ~~in the selected language~~; or
- A short-form designation for the name of the country or territory that is recognizable and denotes the country or territory in the selected language.

The meaningfulness requirement is verified as follows:

1. If the requested string is listed in the UNGEGN ~~manual~~Manual, then the string fulfills the meaningfulness requirement.
2. If the requested string is not listed in the UNGEGN ~~manual~~Manual, then the meaningfulness must be substantiated, as in the following :

~~Submission and presentation~~More details about submission of documentation from an internationally recognized linguistic expert or organization stating that the requested string meets the criteria~~.~~ can be found in Module 5.

~~ICANN is seeking external expertise in this area to further inform implementation of the process. Additional information will be made available as soon as it is obtained.~~

3.3— Number of Strings per Country or Territory

The number of strings that a country or territory can apply for is ~~purposely~~ not limited to a specific number (in accordance with Guiding Principle G in the IDNC WG Final Report). However, the following maximum limitation applies:

- *One string per official language or script per country or territory.*

~~Given certain circumstances it is proposed to expand the concept of Guiding Principle G in order to meet the Fast Track Process intent of allocating strings~~This limitation may cause issues for ~~those~~some countries and territories ~~where an~~which have expressed ~~need is demonstrated.~~

~~In limited cases it is suggested that identified~~the importance of having variant strings ~~will be~~ allocated ~~as top-level string, such as for example in the case of traditional and simplified Chinese, see~~

~~http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-10feb09-en.htm.~~

~~The paper ("Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings") contains more details about how this expansion should be implemented, and has been posted together with this revised Draft Implementation Plan. Comments on this paper are sought in preparation for a Finalized Implementation Plan.~~

This topic is currently under discussion and the revised paper ("Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Development and Use of IDN Tables and Character Variants for Second and Top Level Strings") is posted together with this plan and contains more details about IDN Tables and variant management.

3.4 Technical String Criteria

This section describes technical criteria for strings only, other technical requirements related to delegation (such as name server requirements) are considered in Module 6.

Meeting all the technical string requirements in this section 3.4 does not guarantee acceptance of a prospective top-level string, since the following subsections do not contain an exhaustive list of all requirements or restrictions. Technical requirements for IDN ccTLD strings and IDN gTLD strings are equivalent and are established by technical standards developed by the IETF.

~~This section described technical criteria for strings only, requirements related to delegation (such as name server requirements) are considered in Module 6.~~

The IDNA protocol to be used for internationalized labels is under revision through the Internet standardization process (in the IETF). Following that revision completion in the IETF, additional requirements may be specified or the requirements specified here may be changed, in accordance with the finalized IDNA technical standard The preference is to have the IDNA protocol revision completed before IDN TLDs are delegated; however, if this is not feasible then the technical requirements may be stricter for initial delegations. The current status of the protocol revision is documented at http://tools.ietf.org/wg/idnabis/ and additional updates can be found at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/rfcs.htm

3.4.1 General Technical Requirements

The following are general technical requirements that must be complied with for the IDN ccTLDs in A-label[3] format.

3 **The A-label** is what is transmitted in the DNS protocol and this is the ASCII-compatible (ACE) form of an IDNA string; for example "xn--11b5bs1di". **The U-label** is what should be displayed to the user and is the representation of the Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) in Unicode.

The A-label (i.e., the label as transmitted on the wire) must be valid as specified in technical standards for *Domain Names: Implementation and Specification* (RFC 1035); and *Clarifications to the DNS Specification* (RFC 2181). This includes:

- The label must have no more than 63 characters. This includes the prefix (the four initial characters "xn--").
- Upper and lower case characters are considered to be syntactically and semantically identical.

The A-label must be a valid host name, as specified in technical standard *DOD Internet Host Table Specification* (RFC 952); and *Requirements for Internet Hosts — Application and Support* (RFC 1123). This includes:

- The label must consist entirely of letters, digits and hyphens.
- The label must not start or end with a hyphen.

3.4.2 IDN Specific Technical Requirements

This subsection details the specific technical string requirements for IDN strings. ~~Requestors~~Requesters for these internationalized top-level strings are assumed to be familiar with the IETF IDNA standards, Unicode standards, and IDN terminology.

The string must be a valid internationalized domain name, as specified in technical standards http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/rfcs.htm or any revisions of this technical standard currently under consideration by the IETF. As a result, IDN-related technical requirements are subject to change. These are presented guidelines only and are not a complete statement of the requirements for IDNA specifications. The label:

- Must contain only Unicode code points that are defined as "Protocol Valid" and be accompanied by unambiguous contextual rules where necessary.
- Must be fully compliant with Normalization Form C, as described in *Unicode Standard Annex #15: Unicode Normalization Forms.* Examples appear in http://unicode.org/faq/normalization.html
- The string must consist entirely of characters with the same directional property. This requirement may change as the IDNA protocol is being revised to allow for characters having no directional property (as defined at http://unicode.org/Public/UNIDATA/extracted/DerivedBidiClass.txt) to be available along with either a right-to-left or a left-to-right directionality.
- The string must not begin or end with a digit (in any script).

The string must meet the relevant criteria of the *ICANN Guidelines for the Implementation of Internationalized Domain Names*. This includes:

- All code points in a single string must be taken from the same script as determined by the *Unicode Standard Annex #24: Unicode Script Property.*

Exceptions to this guideline are permissible for languages with established orthographies and conventions that require the commingled use of multiple scripts. However, even with this exception, visually confusable characters from different scripts will not be allowed to coexist in a single set of permissible code points unless a corresponding policy and character table are clearly defined. Further, the IDN Guidelines contain a requirement for IDN registries to develop IDN Tables. The IDNC WG recommended the following for IDN Tables ~~(for further discussion on this topic, see Module 7, Section 7.5):~~:

> *The language/script table to be used by the IDN ccTLD may already exist i.e. has been prepared by another Territory using the same language/script and was already submitted. In this case the selected delegate should indicate its intention to use that language/script table.*
>
> *Territories using the same script are encouraged to cooperate in developing a language/script table, in accordance with IDN guidelines.*

Building on this recommendation ~~from the IDNC WG Final report~~ ICANN ~~prepared and released a~~ revised the paper ~~("Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top-level strings"). See Module 7~~("Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Development and Use of IDN Tables and Character Variants for Second and Top Level Strings"). The paper is posted for ~~more details.~~

~~3.5 Clarifications of Changes to the IDNC WG Technical Recommendations~~

~~In a few instances the technical requirements above deviate slightly from those recommended in the IDNC WG Final report. Some deviations in language exist because the protocol revision is still ongoing. Therefore, additional adjustments can be expected to the technical requirements before they are considered final. ICANN staff will remain in close contact with the technical~~further community ~~as the implementation of the Fast Track process progresses to ensure that the technical requirements are consistent with the protocol revision efforts~~discussions on the topic.

Overview of Technical String Requirement Changes

Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
1. There is no mixing of scripts	All code points in a single string must be taken from the same script as determined by the Unicode Standard Annex #24: Unicode Script Property. Exceptions to this are permissible for languages with established orthographies and conventions that require the commingled use of multiple scripts. However, even with this exception, visually confusable characters from different scripts will not be allowed to co-exist in a single set of permissible code points unless a corresponding policy and IDN table is clearly defined.
Rationale: Given the fact that certain languages (for example Japanese) are expressed by using a mixing of scripts it was deemed inappropriate to completely prohibit mixing of scripts in a top level string, as long as adequate measures are in place to prevent unnecessary mixing of scripts. This is in line with the IDN Guidelines.	
Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
2. No names that are shorter than two characters in non-ASCII are used	Not available in technical requirement language
Rationale: The determination as to whether a string consists of a minimum of two characters is not considered a requirement that the Technical Committee should be verifying. This will instead be verified immediately when ICANN receives the request for an IDN ccTLD string so that any factual errors against this requirement are found as quickly as possible, and corrected if the requestor wishes to do so. Staff may seek linguistic expertise if necessary; however this is anticipated to be the exception not the norm.	
Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
3. It is demonstrated that the selected string in combination with the language/script table when being used, in for example e-mail addresses, URIs etc, does not create any rendering or other operational issues.	Not available in technical requirement language
Rationale: This requirement has been moved to the Request Template, where the requestor is required to (i) accept that IDNs can cause rendering problems in certain applications and (ii) demonstrate that all due caution has been taken into account in development of the TLD string and associated registration policies to avoid such rendering problems. Requestors can become further familiar with these kinds of problems by understanding the IDNA protocol and in particular via the proposed new version of the IDNA protocol – or by active participation in the IDN wiki where some rendering problems can be demonstrated and experienced. One example of a rendering problem can be for the potential TLD registry manager to demonstrate that they have tested that the character "x" (first character in their proposed TLD) has rendering problems together with the character "y" (that might be the end of the 2nd level domain). Because of this, the registration policy for this TLD prohibits all 2nd level domains that end with "y".	
Original IDNC WG requirement	**Revised Language**
4. Verification that the proposed code cannot be interpreted as any of the elements in the alpha-2 codes that is used by ISO 3166/MA (section 5.2 of ISO 3166-1:2006)	TBD
Rationale: Proposal is to let the technical requirement stand as it is recommended, but apply support to the Technical Committee to allow them to align this confusability check with the process in the gTLD process and further to allow them to seek linguistic expertise in cases where there is doubt about confusability with ISO3166 strings. (See also discussions in Module 7).	

Module 4

DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel Considerations

The role and responsibility of the Technical Committee (referred to as the DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel) is to provide external and independent advice to the ICANN Board about whether, based on the documentation provided by the IDN ccTLD requester, a selected string meets the technical criteria. If the DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel finds that the selected string does not meet one or more of the criteria, the request for the IDN ccTLD with that particular selected string is not eligible under the Fast Track Process. However, the committee can seek further clarification from the requester, if deemed necessary by the panel, before providing its findings on the requested string.

In line with the IDNC WG Final Report, the external and independent DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel should be appointed to conduct technical due diligence and report to the ICANN Board.

~~Previously, ICANN used the Registry Services Evaluation Process to evaluate proposed registry services such as the introduction of DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC) in existing gTLD registries, rapid zone updates, DNS wildcard entries, partial bulk transfer, release of previously reserved second-level domain names, add-grace period limits, and abusive use policies. High-level technical expertise performs these evaluations.~~

~~ICANN believes it~~ ICANN will secure the services of a competent technical panel (DNS Stability Panel) to make stability evaluations. In their actions and statements as Panel and review team members, these experts do not represent either their affiliated organizations or the country in which they reside in any way.

ICANN is ~~similarly feasible to use~~finalizing the ~~existing Registry Services Technical Evaluation Panel (RSTEP) experts and attract additional technical and linguistic expertise to fulfill~~ coordination of the ~~duties of the~~ DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel. Further details will be made available.

4.1 Proposed DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel Function

A core piece of the IDNC WG Final Report ~~includes~~is technical recommendations for the stability and security of the TLD string itself. These technical requirements are outlined in Module ~~2. While~~

~~all~~3. All requests in the Fast Track ~~process will undergo a fast track admissibility check by staff, all requested strings~~Process must successfully pass a DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel review for the requested IDN ccTLD string to continue through the Fast Track ~~process~~Process.

~~It is proposed that the~~ The DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel conducts an initial ~~examination~~evaluation on the strings submitted by prospective IDN ccTLD managers.

If the ~~panel~~Panel determines that ~~strings need further review,~~ a ~~smaller~~ string needs extended evaluation, a three-member ~~panel~~review team will be formed from the Panel to conduct ~~a DNS Stability Review~~the extended evaluation.

The ~~panel~~review team will ~~review~~examine the string and determine whether the string will adversely affect the security or stability of the DNS.

~~The panel~~ Usually the review team will ~~be conducted in~~ conduct its review within 30 days ~~or less,~~.

The review team may seek clarification from the requester if necessary. An extended review is likely not to be necessary for a string that fully complies with the string requirements referenced in Module 3, subsection 3.4. However, the string review process provides an additional safeguard if unanticipated security or stability issues arise concerning a requested IDN ccTLD string.

~~possible.~~

If the ~~panel~~review team determines that the ~~applied for~~requested string does not comply with relevant standards or creates a condition that may adversely affect the throughput, response time, consistency or coherence of responses to Internet servers or end systems, then ~~this decision~~the findings will be communicated to ICANN staff and to the requester. ~~The request for an IDN ccTLD cannot proceed if there is a decision against the string.~~

~~However, the panel may seek clarification from the requester if necessary. An extended review is likely not to be necessary for a string that fully complies with the string requirements referenced in Module 3, section 3.4. However, the string review process provides an additional safeguard if unanticipated security or stability issues arise concerning a requested IDN ccTLD string.~~

~~ICANN acknowledges that comments received are requesting more details on the topic of formation of the DNS stability Technical Panel, such as the selection criteria for appointing members to this panel. The panel will be formed through and open solicitation or tender and more details will be provided as soon as possible.~~

~~Module 5~~

~~Fast Track~~ The request for an IDN ccTLD cannot proceed through the Fast Track Process if the Panel or review team identifies that a requested string raises significant security and stability issues.

Module 5

Request ~~and~~Submission for String Evaluation ~~Process~~

This module ~~gives an overview~~ contains details of the process for requesting an IDN ccTLD string under the Fast Track ~~process, and includes~~Process, including instructions for completing and submitting required supporting documentation and other necessary materials.

This module also discusses how to request ~~help~~assistance concerning the process, and the circumstances under which a submitted request can be withdrawn or terminated. ~~A glossary of relevant terms is available online at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/idn-glossary.htm~~

5.1 General Fast Track Process Overview

An overview of the entire IDN ccTLD Fast Track ~~process~~Process is presented in Figure 5.1. The three color-coded stages represent the three-stage methodology as recommended by the IDNC WG: ~~the Preparation Stage; the Request Submission and String Evaluation Stage, and the Delegation Process Stage.~~

- ~~5.~~Stage 1~~.1 The~~ : Preparation ~~Stage~~;
- Stage2: Request Submission for String Evaluation;
- Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation.

These three stages are described briefly in the following subsections 5.1.1 to 5.1.3. The remaining sections in this Module 5 are focused solely on Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation.

5.1.1 Preparation (Stage 1)

In the Preparation Stage, the requester undertakes preparatory work to enter the Fast Track ~~process.~~Process. Primary preparation activities include identification of:

- The language(s) and script(s) for the IDN ccTLD string(s),
- Selection of the string(s) ~~and hence~~representing the name of country or territory for the IDN ccTLD(s), and
- The development of the associated IDN Table(s) and identification of any potential ~~variants required for linguistic reasons.~~variant characters.

In addition, at this time the requester develops the required documentation of endorsements. Documentation of endorsements must include:

1. Support from the relevant government or public authority ~~in the country or territory that the selected string is a meaningful representation of the country or territory name.~~of the country or territory for the selected string. This should be demonstrated in a similar manner as required for delegation requests: http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide

2. Support from the local internet community and by the relevant government for the proposed sponsoring organization, as required for delegation requests: http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide.

   The sponsoring organization does not need to be appointed until the request has reached Stage 3: Request for Delegation Evaluation (see Figure 5.1). Requests can be submitted by either the proposed sponsoring organization or by the relevant government or public authority ~~in the country or territory for the selected registry manager.~~ .

As previously mentioned the evidence of support~~, or non-objection,~~ from the relevant government or public authority is defined as a signed letter of support~~, or non-objection,~~ from the Minister with the portfolio responsible for domain name administration, ICT, foreign affairs or Office of the Prime Minister or President; or a senior representative of the agency or department responsible for domain name administration, ICT, Foreign Affairs or the Office of the Prime Minister.

The letter should clearly express the government or public authority's support~~, or non-objection,~~ for the request.

The involvement of the ~~participants~~relevant stakeholders in the country or territory should be documented as described above in a manner similar to that required for a standard ccTLD delegation request, by the requester. ~~See http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/ for more details~~ The application should demonstrate there has been community dialogue regarding which string is the appropriate representation of the country in the selected string(s) and/or language(s)/script(s), and that appropriate stakeholders have been involved in the decision making process.

See http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/ for more guidance.

To support the requesters in preparing requests, ICANN will be launching a support function for guidance and support in the development of IDN related aspects of the requesters' IDN registration policy.

5.1.2 ~~The~~ Request Submission ~~and~~ for String Evaluation (Stage 2)

In ~~the~~Stage 2: Request Submission ~~and~~ for String Evaluation ~~Stage~~, the requester submits a request for the selected string(s) to be accepted by ICANN as eligible to be a representation of the country or territory. The request ~~undergoes~~is reviewed through the defined ~~evaluation~~validation steps, including:

- Request ~~Admissibility~~Completeness Validation
- Linguistic Process ~~Review~~Validation
- DNS Stability String ~~Confirmation Process~~Evaluation
- Publishing of ~~String and Delegation Readiness Verification Process~~Validated Strings

The steps in ~~this~~ Stage 2 are described in further detail in the ~~following subsections~~section 5.6.

5.1.3 ~~The~~Request Submission for Delegation ~~Process~~ Evaluation (Stage 3)

After a request has successfully passed ~~the~~Stage 2: Request ~~and~~Submission for String Evaluation ~~stage~~, it enters the Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation.

In this phase, the standard ICANN IANA process for delegations is followed, as already exists for ASCII country-code top-level domains. The ICANN Board approves the delegation.

The process for the Request for Delegation ~~Process Stage, during which the standard IANA Pre-Delegation process is applied before the request for delegation can be submitted for approval by the ICANN Board.~~

~~The Delegation Process Stage~~ Evaluation is described in ~~further~~ detail in Module 6.

Once the ~~ICANN Board approves a request~~delegation process is concluded successfully, the string(s) is delegated in the DNS root zone, after which the ~~IDN ccTLD manager can launch~~domain is active and the sponsoring organization can commence operations ~~and start~~ such as accepting registrations ~~under~~within the ~~delegated~~new IDN ccTLD.

5.2 Submission of an IDN TLD Fast Track Request

~~Requests for IDN ccTLDs can be submitted to ICANN starting [Fast-Track opening date]. A template for the required information for such a request can be downloaded at [link to template, to be developed].~~

~~Requests must be submitted electronically to [to be determined], with any~~ Formal requests for IDN ccTLDs can be submitted to

ICANN starting [Fast-Track opening date/TBD]. The submission system for the string evaluation stage (Stage 2) is a web-based form that identifies the information necessary. The web-based form is available at [link]. Figure 5.2 illustrates the submission of a request. By submitting the request the requester must acknowledge that they understand that usability of IDNs may be limited in that some software applications may not be capable of working with IDNs. Further, some acceptability and usability issues may occur as the IDNA protocol standard is revised and as the IDN protocol for email management is finalized in the IETF. Until standards are implemented broadly adopted by relevant application software writers, users may experience different results in different applications and may experience no functionality at all.

The necessary supporting documentation ~~additionally~~ for the string evaluation is:

- Documentation of support for the request from the government or relevant publicly authority for the country or territory (if applicable),
- Documentation that the selected language(s) is considered official in the country/territory (if applicable) and under which definition of official (listed above),
- Documentation that demonstrates the requested string(s) is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country/territory,
- Documentation that the selected string(s) and sponsor is supported by the local community,

This documentation must be uploaded in electronic form to the web based form and submitted together with the request to ICANN. In addition supporting documentation must be provided in original form ~~(or certified copies), and in addition requests must be submitted to ICANN~~to ICANN in signed hard copy format at the following address:

ICANN
4676 Admiralty Way Ste 330
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
USA

Attn: Request for an IDN ccTLD Fast Track

~~ICANN~~
~~4676 Admiralty Way Ste 330~~
~~Marina del Rey, CA 90292~~
~~USA~~

~~Attn: Request for an IDN ccTLD Fast Track~~

~~The applicant~~All information provided in a request must be provided in English or with an accompanying official English translation of any non-English documents. Any information and supporting documentation not provided will ~~be provided with a reference number to be associated with~~ delay processing.

Requesters that are unable to utilize the online web based form for submitting their request~~, to be used in for any follow-up queries associated with the string evaluation.~~ should contact ICANN directly.

IDN ccTLD Fast Track requests can be submitted at any time from the start date and until the ~~finalization~~conclusion of the ccNSO PDP on IDNs (in accordance with Guiding Principle A from the IDNC WG Final Report). The end date for submission of a Fast Track request will be announced as soon as it is known. It is expected to last through the adoption and implementation of the IDN ccTLD policy development recommendations.

Requests for IDN ccTLDs ~~are expected to~~ will (other than as mentioned above) be processed manually due to the ~~currently~~ expected ~~volume~~limited number of requests. The expected ~~volume~~number of requests is based ~~loosely~~ on the replies ICANN received to ~~the~~a request for information (RFI~~). Last year, in accordance with the IDNC WG recommendation, ICANN sent letters to countries and territories informing them about~~) from potential participants in the Fast Track ~~process and asked them to indicate their level of interest. The RFI was to gain an understanding of the interest of individual countries and territories participating in the Fast Track process. ICANN received 74~~Process. A detailed overview of the responses~~, with a small number of respondents requesting confidentiality. Of the 74 responses (omitting a small number that asked their replied be kept confidential), 31 expressed interest in participating in the Fast Track process, representing a total of 15 different languages. The remaining respondents were not interested in participating at this time or would not be eligible to obtain an IDN ccTLD under the terms of the process.~~

~~A more detailed analysis of responses to the RFI is provided online~~ on this outreach can be found at ~~http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-10feb09-en.htm~~:

http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-10feb09-en.htm

5.3 ICANN Staff Support and Contact Functions

To support countries and territories in participating in the Fast Track Process, several contact points and support processes will be made available. These support functions, described in greater detail in the following subsections, will be available to prospective

IDN ccTLD managers in their preparation phase ~~and again~~as well as after the requested IDN ccTLD ~~is~~are delegated.

~~Potential conflicts during~~During the entire string evaluation ~~process,~~(Stage 2, Figure 5.1), requesters must not approach, or have any other person or entity approach on their behalf, any ICANN staff member, any ICANN Board member, or any person associated with the evaluation process, including any evaluators, experts, examiners, or reviewers retained by ICANN.

~~ICANN will provide contact details to which applicants can submit enquiries on the process.~~

If such contact is attempted, the requester will be redirected to submit their inquiry to the system that is in place for such inquiries (see the description for the web-based request system, above). The exception to this case would be when or if a requester is approached by ICANN or its agents for clarification of information in the submitted request. In addition, some communication will occur during the standard ICANN function for delegation of the IDN ccTLDs and for providing root management services. (Stage 3, Figure 5.1).

5.3.1 General Contact Details

ICANN Regional Liaisons and Fast Track ~~program office~~Program staff will be available to assist prospective IDN ccTLD managers in the Preparation Stage of the Fast Track ~~process~~Process.

Region-based contact details will be made available for Fast Track participants to ensure that inquiries are responded to promptly within all time zones.

Answers to the most common questions about the Fast Track ~~process~~Process will be made available in a FAQ on the Fast Track website at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/

5.3.2 Specific IDN Support Details

To support the requesters in ~~preparing requests~~their preparations, ICANN will ~~be providing~~make a support function ~~containing~~available that contains guidance and information in the development of elements related to requesters' IDN registration policy. This support function will be available in the Preparation Stage and again to an IDN ccTLD manager following delegation of the requested IDN ccTLD~~.~~(s).

The following elements will be included in the IDN support process:

1. Review and implementation of IDN Guidelines, including support for understanding the details of the following requirements:
    1.1. Implementation of IDNA protocol requirements
    1.2. Defining script or language and sets thereof

1.3. Development of IDN Table(s), including identifications of variants

1.4. Posting of IDN Table(s) in the IANA repository

1.5. Making all information available online

1.6. Identification of stakeholders that need to be consulted

2. Support and description of various available options for decision-making on implementation issues, such as:

2.1. How to determine which characters to support (protocol validity, user survey, variants)

2.2. Development of general registration policy (such as first-come-first-serve, grandfathering or other preregistration rights or intellectual property rights)

2.3. Development of variant registration policy (such as bulk vs. block registrations)

2.4. Definition of necessary tools and support functions related to registrar communication, support needs, and implementation topics in general.

2.5. Support to development of more technical necessary tool, such as WHOIS capabilities, IDNA conversions, and more.

In developing IDN Tables and associated registrations policies, requesters are encouraged to work with other language communities that are using the same scripts as the basis for the languages they plan to ~~facilitate~~support.

ICANN will provide support and general assistance in these matters. ICANN will not provide legal or business advice ~~for~~to countries or territories, or any potential or existing registry managers.

5.4 Termination ~~Criteria for~~ of Submitted Requests

Several of the steps in the ~~Fast Track process~~request Submission for String Evaluation (Stage 2) allow for a requester to withdraw a request. It is also possible that ICANN will terminate a request if the request contains certain errors.

Errors resulting in termination include the following:

1. The requested string is already a string delegated in the DNS, or approved for delegation to another party.

2. The ~~requester~~country or territory of the request does not correspond to a listing in the ISO3166-1 list or the European Union.

3. The requested string consists of one or more characters from the Latin script.

4. The language represented does not fulfill the language criteria for the corresponding country or territory.

If such errors are discovered, the requester will be ~~informed of this result before the Termination Process is initiated. Details of the Termination Process are to be developed~~contacted by ICANN and provided an opportunity to amend its request. Alternatively the requester may decide to withdraw the request.

Other issues arising from a submitted request may delay the determination of whether the requested string should be delegated. Such delaying factors could include: (1) the requested string is already applied for in the Fast Track ~~process~~Process, (2) the requested string is already applied for in the gTLD process, (3) the request does not contain support from the corresponding country or territory, and (4) the requested string is not included in the UNGEGN manual and it is not otherwise substantiated that the string is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country or territory. In all such cases the requester will be consulted for clarifications before any determination on the request is made.

While contention between strings is not expected and is unlikely to occur, the proposed procedure and rules for resolving such cases are described in ~~Module 7,~~the following section ~~7.4.~~.

~~5.5~~5.5 String Confusion and Contention

String confusion exists where a string so nearly resembles another visually that it is likely to deceive or cause confusion. For the likelihood of confusion to exist, it must be probable, not merely possible that confusion will arise in the mind of the average, reasonable Internet user. Mere association, in the sense that the string brings another string to mind, is insufficient to find a likelihood of confusion.

String confusion issues can involve two or more strings that are identical or are so confusingly similar that they cannot coexist in the DNS, such as:

- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against existing TLDs and reserved names;
- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against other requested IDN ccTLD strings; and
- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against strings applied-for gTLD strings.

Contention situations between Fast Track requests and new gTLD applications are considered unlikely to occur. Assessments of whether strings are considered in conflict with existing or applied-

for new gTLD strings are made in the DNS Stability String Evaluation for Fast Track requests and in the initial evaluation step for new gTLD applications. The following supplemental rules are the thresholds for solving any identified contention issues:

A. A gTLD application that is approved by the ICANN Board will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.

B. A validated request for an IDN ccTLD will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.

For the purpose of contention, an IDN ccTLD string is validated once it is confirmed that the string is a meaningful representation of the country or territory and that the string has passed the DNS Stability Panel evaluation.

5.6 Processing of a Fast Track Request

Requests for IDN ccTLD(s) submitted to ICANN will be subjected to a series of manual evaluation reviews by ICANN staff and by outside appointed experts where required. Figure 5.1 outlines the overall process. The, while the detailed processes are outlined described in the following subsections and associated figures.

5.56.1 Request ~~Admissibility Process~~Completeness Validation

The first activity after ICANN receives a request for an IDN ccTLD(s) is a check performed on the admissibility of that the request is complete. This is illustrated in Figure 5.3.

Here, ICANN staff verifieswill verify that all required fields have been entered and ICANN staff will verify that the information provided is sufficient to initiate the string evaluation.

ICANN will verify that:

- The requested string (A-label) does not exist in the DNS, is not approved for delegation to another party, and it (U-label) is not identical to an entry in the Reserved Names list.
- The requested string (U-label) does not contain Latin characters.
- The requested string (U-label) is a minimum of 2 characters.
- The following required elements required in are in agreement: the requested string(s) (U-label), the identified ISO 3166-1 corresponding code, the identified UNGEGN Manual entry (if

applicable), and the language(s) or script(s) listed in the IDN Table.

- The following required elements are in agreement: the requested string (U-label), the identified script(s), and language(s).

- The following required elements are in agreement: the requested A-label, U-label, and corresponding Unicode code points.

- All contact details provided are accurate and usable

- If the string request is not coming from the government, formal documentation from the relevant government or administration supporting the requester as sponsor is included. (ICANN will verify that the received documentation of support is from an authoritative source.)

    - ICANN Staff may seek assistance from the GAC in verifying that the documentation is from an authoritative source.

    - ~~the Fast Track Request Template are included in the request, ensuring that there are no obvious administrative errors in the request.~~.

This check identifies requests ~~that are~~ as complete or incomplete ~~as quickly as possible~~. ICANN staff will inform the requester of ~~this error~~any missing elements or errors in the request, and the requester will be able to either provide additional information at this time, or withdraw the request (and ~~start over~~potentially resubmit at a later time~~.~~). If no errors are encountered, ICANN staff will notify the requester that the Request ~~Admissibility Process is complete and passed~~Completeness Validation is passed successfully and that the Linguistic Process Validation and DNS Stability Evaluation have been initiated.

5.~~5~~6.2 ~~*String Confirmation.*~~ *Linguistic Process Validation*

The ~~next step is the String Confirmation~~Linguistic Process~~. This process is outlined in Figure 5.3 (see Appendix 1, Module 5) and is~~ Validation is graphically described in ~~the~~ Figure 5.4. In this step ICANN staff is verifying that the following ~~paragraphs.~~are satisfactory:

- ~~The String Confirmation Process begins with a validation~~That the selected language(s) and script(s) are considered official in the country/territory of the request.

    - If the language is listed for the relevant country or territory as an ISO 639 language in Part Three of the *Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of Geographical Names, United Nations Group of*

Experts on Geographical Names (the UNGEGN Manual) (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm); or

- If the language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant country or territory in the ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10; or
- If the relevant public authority in the country or territory confirms that the ~~process for self-certification of linguistic requirements is complete. The~~ language is (i) used in official communications of the relevant public authority; and (ii) serves as a language of administration.

- That the received documentation of community support for the string(s) is satisfactory.
  - This should be demonstrated in a similar manner as required for delegation requests: http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/
- That the string(s) requested is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country/territory name by verifying that either
  - o the string is matching an entry (/entries) in the UNGEGN Manual, or
  - o the received expert documentation states that the string(s) is a meaningful representation of the country/territory name,

For purposes of the Fast Track Process the requested string is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country or territory name if it is listed as the long or short form name of that country or territory in Part Three of the Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of Geographical Names, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (the UNGEGN Manual http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm) in an official language of the country or territory.

If the requested string is not listed for the country or territory in the UNGEGN Manual the requester must provide documentation which includes a report from an internationally recognized expert(s) in a relevant field of expertise, such as toponymy, that the selected the string(s) is a meaningful representation of the country/territory name as per the following criteria:

- The string is the name of the country or territory in the official language; or

- The string is a part of the name of the country or territory that denotes the country or territory in the official language; or

- The string is a short-form designation for the name of the country or territory, recognizably denoting it in the official language

Examples of strings that are not listed in the UNGEGN Manual but may be of interest to countries and territories include:

- The selected string is a *part* of the long or short form name of the country or territory in the UNGEGN Manual in the selected language; or

- An acronym of that name; or

- The country or territory, or the language does not appear in the UNGEGN Manual.

ICANN will ~~be consulted if issues are found and clarification~~provide examples of what such reports should include.

ICANN will ~~be sought. ICANN is developing a linguistic support function for requesters. Details~~also provide assistance in identifying internationally recognized experts in a relevant field to any country or territory requiring such assistance. The details of this ~~support function are yet not~~ assistance program are in the process of being finalized and will be provided as soon as it is available.

~~*Once linguistic verification has been completed, the string*~~

5.6.3 DNS Stability Evaluation

The DNS Stability Evaluation process is graphically described in Figure 5.5. The request and associated material will be ~~forwarded~~provided to the DNS Stability Technical Panel (see Module 4 for details) and the ~~technical~~ string ~~check~~evaluation will begin. This evaluation consists of two main components:

i. is a detailed technical check in which all the technical string requirements referenced in Module 3 are applied and adherence verified~~. If technical issues on the selected string are discovered in this review the panel can request clarification from requester.~~, and

ii. is an evaluation of confusability with any Reserved Names, existing TLDs (both ccTLDs and gTLDs), or potential future ccTLDs.

If the DNS Stability Panel finds that additional linguistic expertise is necessary to satisfy the latter component of the evaluation, such can be requested through the Staff Manager. The Staff Manager will in return request assistance, specific information, or a full confusability review by experts. The specific expertise needed will partly depend on the actual string in question, but could for

example, consist of a full review conducted by the String Similarity Panel. This is a panel assessing string pairs for confusing similarity, following the rules set forth in section 5.5. If any issues on the selected string are discovered in this review the DNS Stability Panel can request clarification from the requester through the Staff Manager. If clarifications are either not sufficient or cannot be provided, the Termination Process will be initiated. See ~~Section~~section 5.4.

If the DNS Stability ~~Technical~~ Panel review reveals no technical issues the requester is notified that the DNS Stability String ~~Confirmation Process~~Evaluation is successfully completed and that the requested string will be ~~posted publicly~~queued for public posting.

5.~~5~~6.3 Publishing of Requested String(s)

Following a successful outcome of the String Confirmation Process, the requested IDN ccTLD string(s) will be posted publicly.

The ICANN website will contain an area dedicated to presenting strings that reach this step in the Fast Track process. RSS ~~features~~feeds of changes to this area will be made available.

5.~~5~~6.4 IANA Delegation Readiness ~~Verification Process~~

~~At this point~~Following the public posting of the requested string, all Stage 2 process requirements ~~under the IDNC WG recommendations~~ are considered successfully completed. ~~ICANN staff will prepare a delegation readiness verification report for IANA staff.~~ The requester will be notified that the ~~formal~~standard IANA delegation process can begin and what further actions are necessary. The IANA delegation process is described ~~further~~ in Module 6.

Appendix 1 to Module 5

Revision note: All flowcharts contained in previous versions of the plan have been completely replaced, with the flowcharts contained in this appendix.

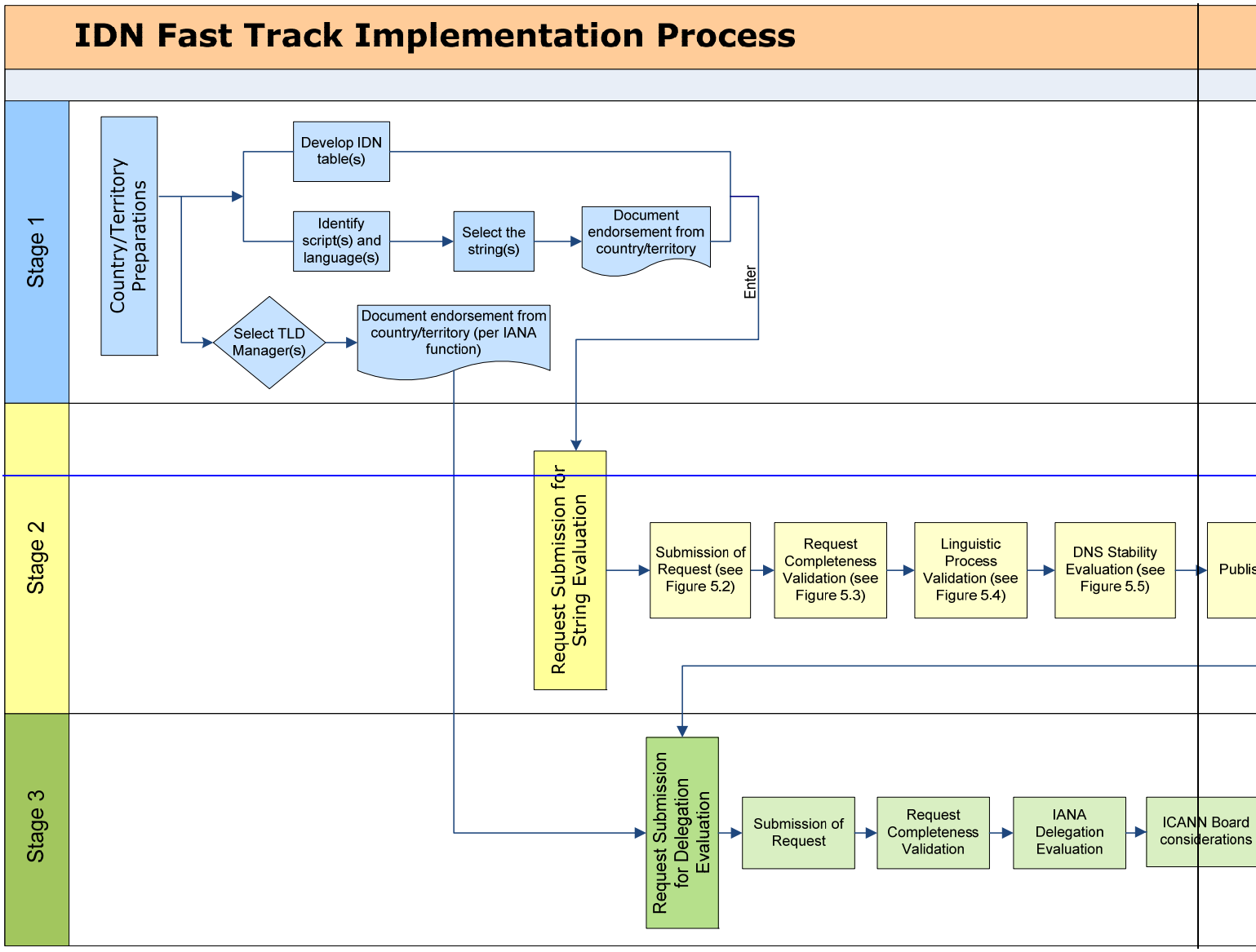
Appendix 1: Figure 5.1: General Overview of the Fast Track Process; Stage 1: Preparation; Stage 2: Request Submission ~~and~~for String Evaluation; Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation

Figure 5.2: ~~String Confirmation~~Stage 2: Submission of a Request for String Evaluation

Figure 5.3: Stage 2: Request Completeness Validation

Figure 5.4: Stage 2: Linguistic Process Validation

Figure 5.5: Stage 2: DNS Stability Evaluation


IDN Fast Track Implementation Process
Stage 1
Stage 2
Stage 3
Country/Territory Preparations
Develop IDN table(s)
Identify script(s) and language(s)
Select the string(s)
Document endorsement from country/territory
Enter
Select TLD Manager(s)
Document endorsement from country/territory (per IANA function)
Request Submission for String Evaluation
Submission of Request (see Figure 5.2)
Request Completeness Validation (see Figure 5.3)
Linguistic Process Validation (see Figure 5.4)
DNS Stability Evaluation (see Figure 5.5)
Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation
Submission of Request
Request Completeness Validation
IANA Delegation Evaluation
ICANN Board considerations

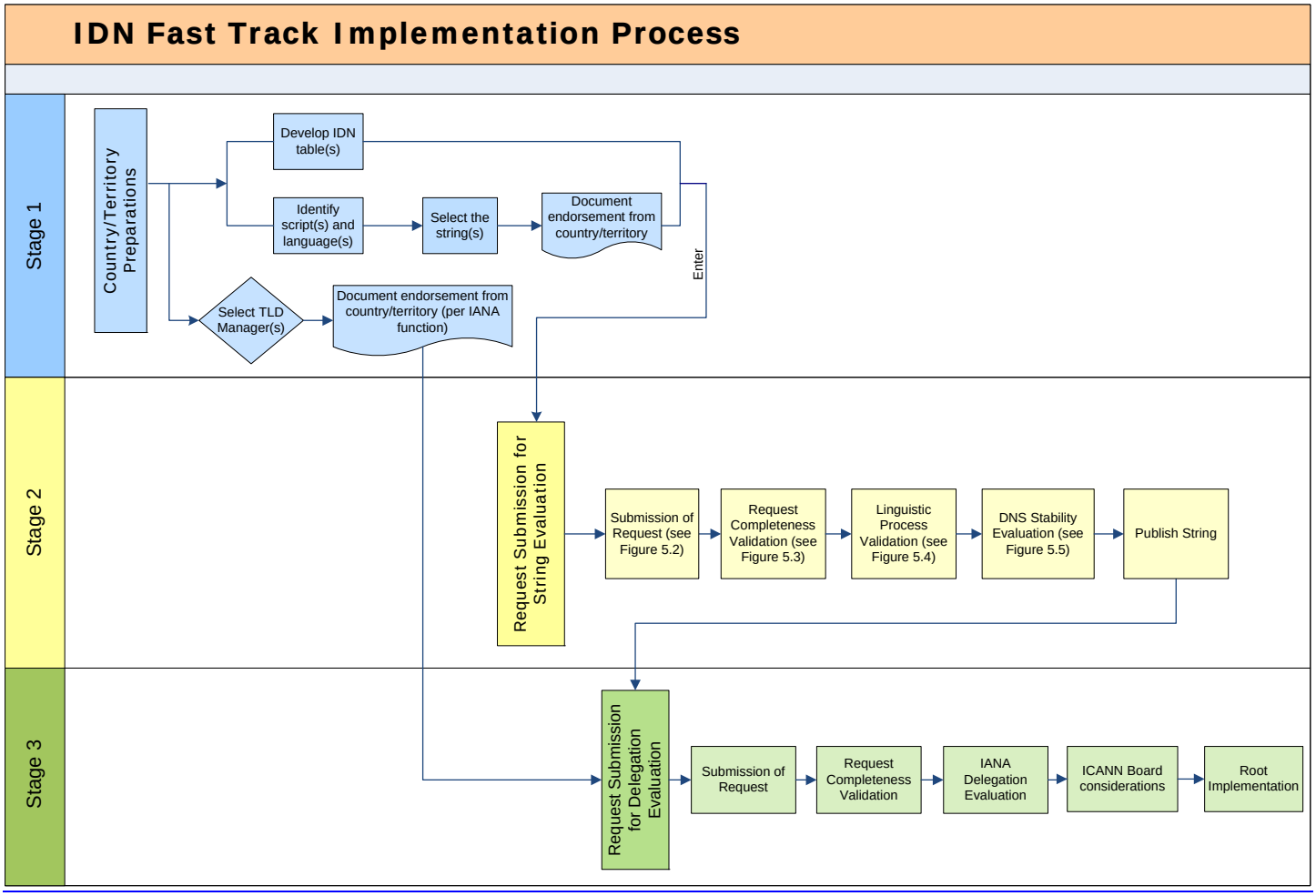
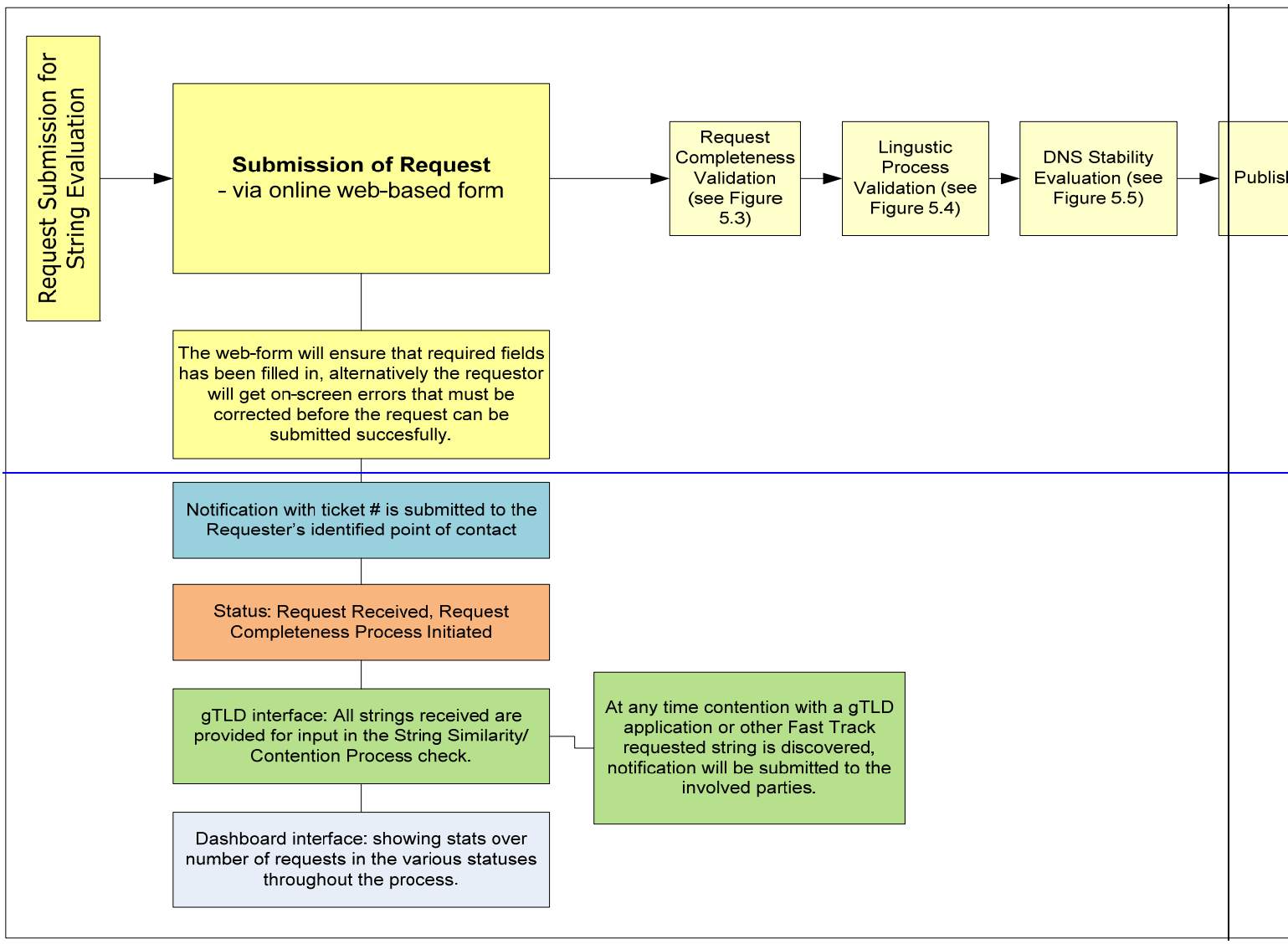


Figure 5.1: General ~~overview~~Overview of the Fast Track Process; ~~Stage1~~Stage 1: Preparation; Stage 2: Request Submission ~~and~~for String Evaluation; Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation ~~Process~~Evaluation.


Request Submission for String Evaluation
Submission of Request
- via online web-based form
Request Completeness Validation (see Figure 5.3)
Lingustic Process Validation (see Figure 5.4)
DNS Stability Evaluation (see Figure 5.5)
Publish
The web-form will ensure that required fields has been filled in, alternatively the requestor will get on-screen errors that must be corrected before the request can be submitted succesfully.
Notification with ticket # is submitted to the Requester's identified point of contact
Status: Request Received, Request Completeness Process Initiated
gTLD interface: All strings received are provided for input in the String Similarity/ Contention Process check.
At any time contention with a gTLD application or other Fast Track requested string is discovered, notification will be submitted to the involved parties.
Dashboard interface: showing stats over number of requests in the various statuses throughout the process.

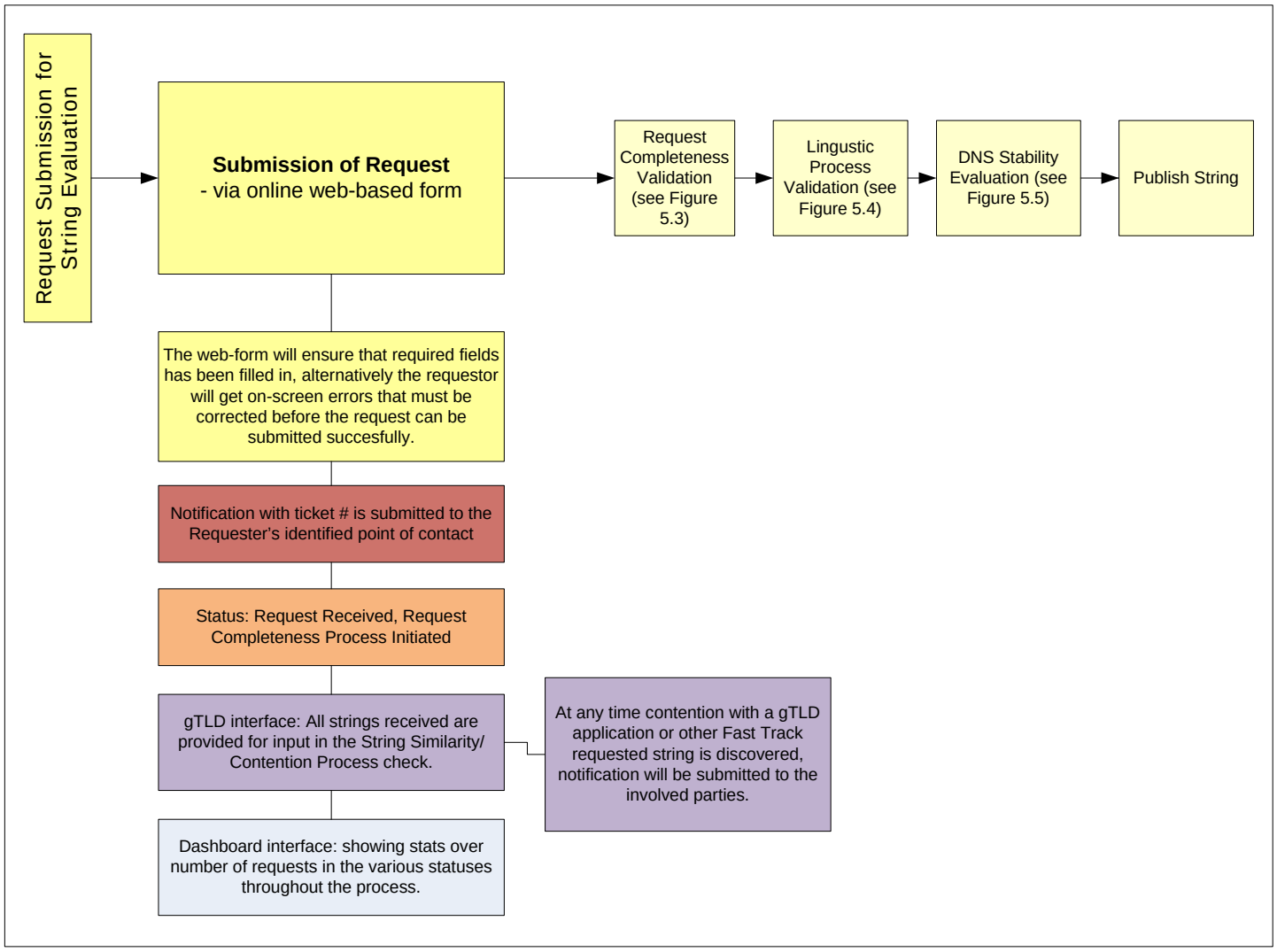


Figure 5.2: Stage ~~2B:~~2: Submission of a Request for String ~~Confirmation~~Evaluation.

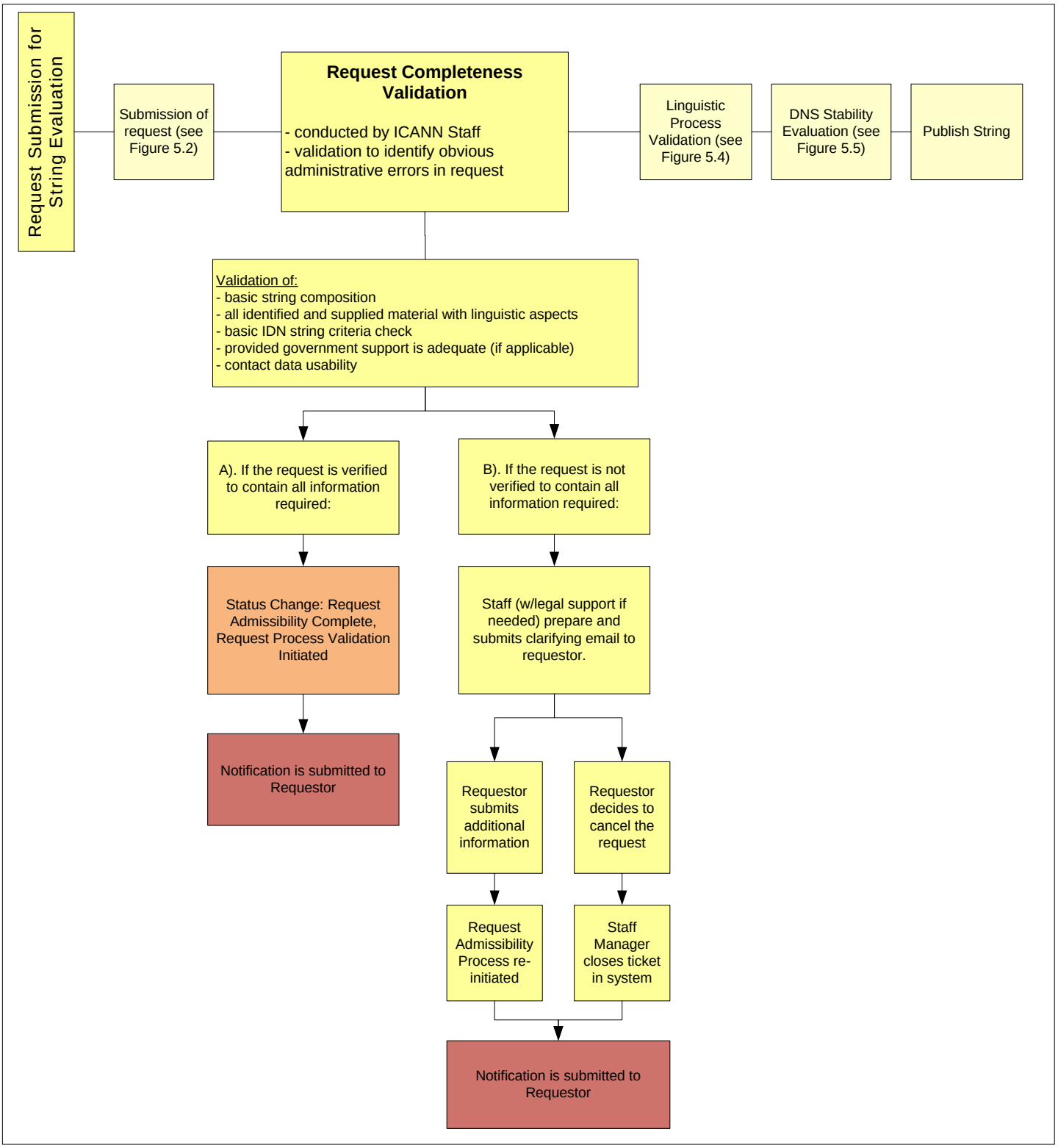


Figure 5.3: Stage 2: Request Completeness Validation.

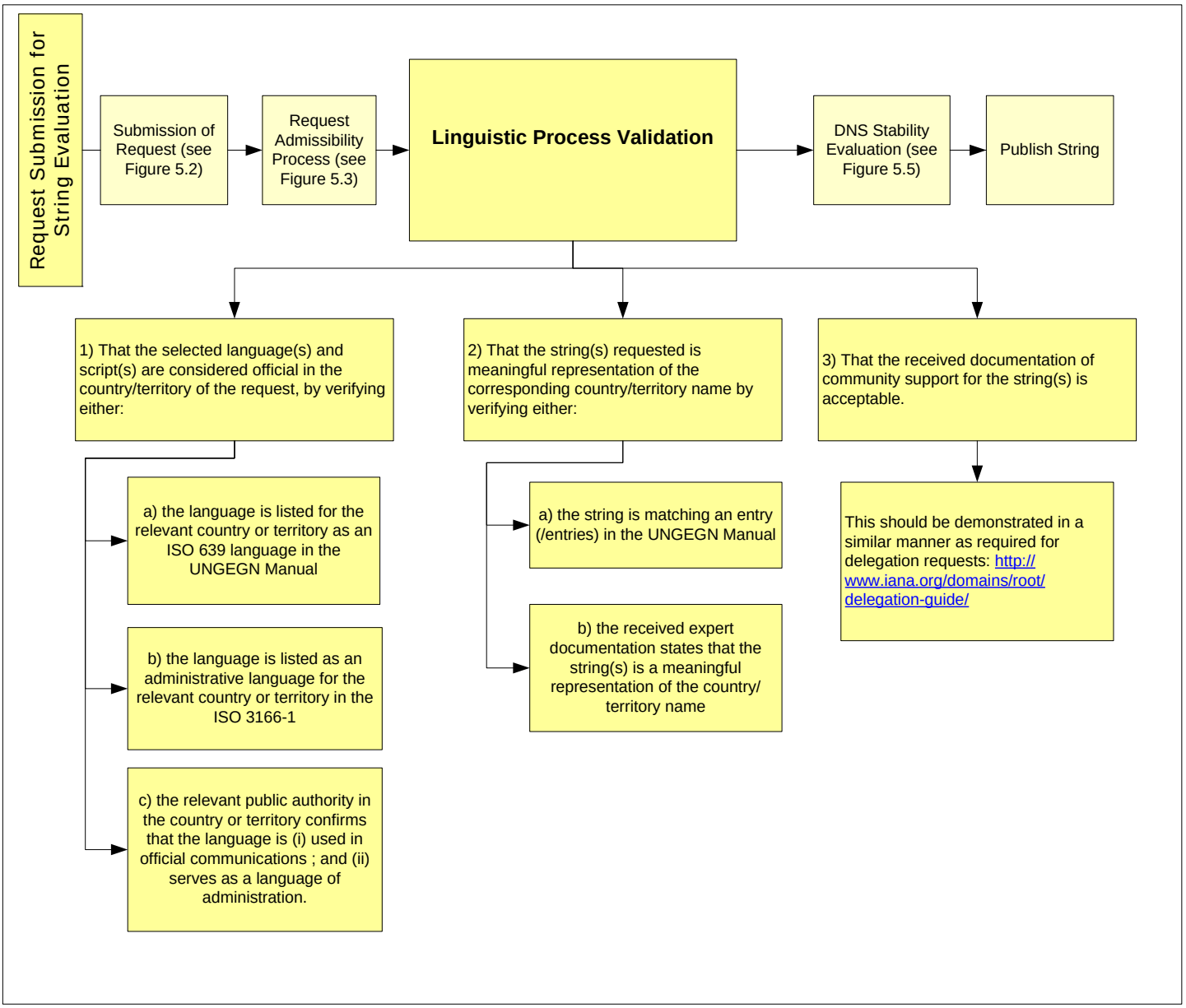


Figure 5.4: Stage 2: Linguistic Process ~~– the technical criteria is verified and the linguistic process requirement is checked here~~Validation.

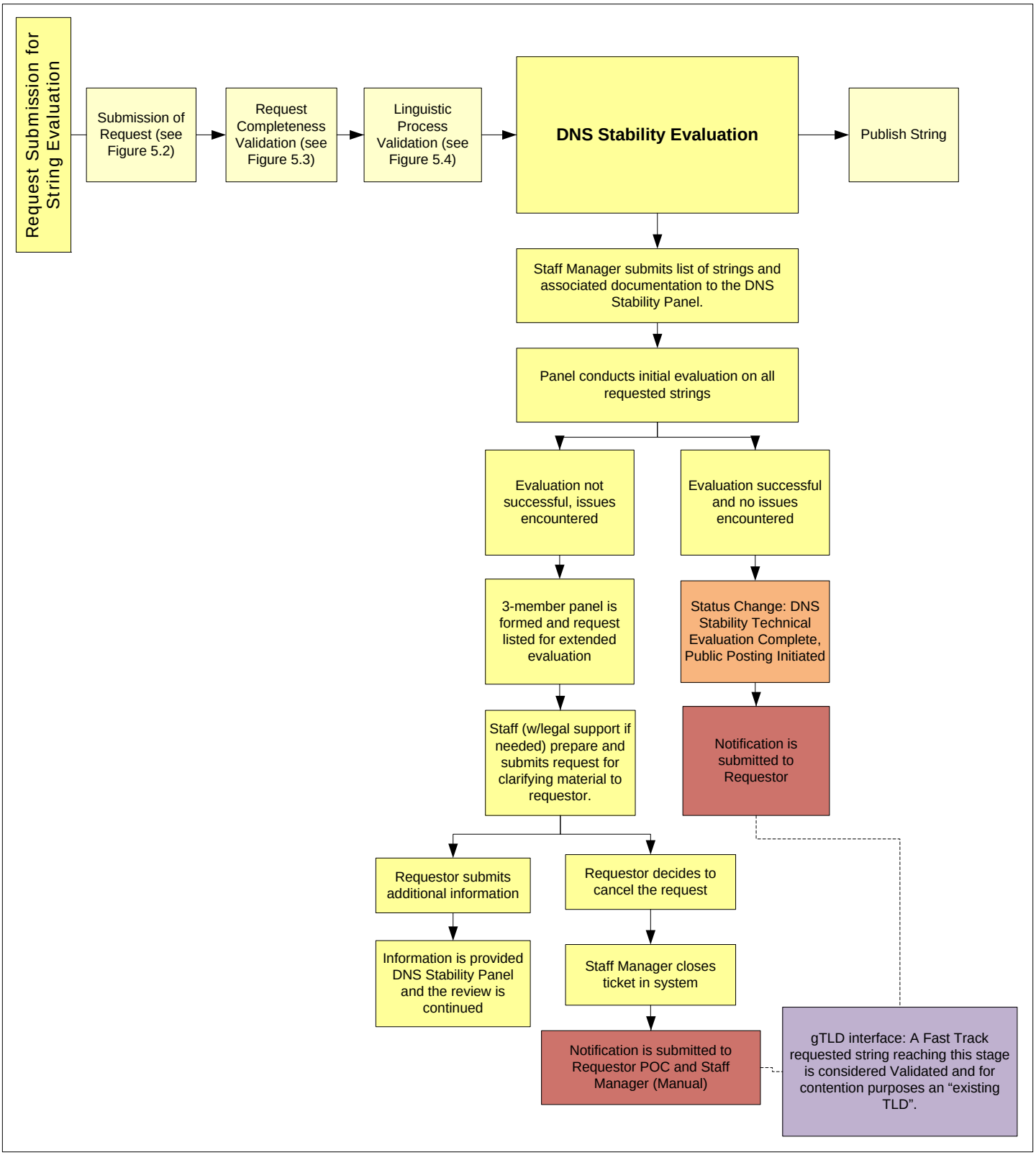


Figure 5.5: Stage 2: DNS Stability Evaluation

Module 6

Delegation Process

ICANN maintains a process for delegating top-level domains in its execution of ~~the~~its IANA functions. A guide to the delegation procedure for existing country-code top-level domains is described at http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/. This process remains largely applicable to IDN ccTLDs. The online document will be updated to reflect updated operational practices for IDN ccTLDs.

Requesters that have successfully completed the String Evaluation Process will receive a notification from ICANN that the selected string has been approved for use by that country or territory, and that they are welcome to apply for the delegation process (Stage 3). While the process described in Module 5 is concerned with assessing the string, the delegation process involves assessing whether the proposed sponsoring organization is a qualified trustee for the local Internet community.

As the requirements of the two processes are separate, the requester must submit the qualifying documentation for delegation separately. If some documentation is the same as for the string evaluation process, it must be resubmitted at this time.

6.1 IANA Function

ICANN manages the IANA functions under a contract with the United States Department of Commerce. The IANA function process for delegating an IDN ccTLD will remain consistent with the process for existing ~~ccTLDs~~TLDs directly derived from the ISO 3166-1 standard. The process will be augmented only to include the requirements in Module 5.

In this process, ICANN staff will receive a request to delegate a IDN ccTLD that is composed of a formal template explaining the delegation request together with supporting documentation. This supporting documentation must describe how the principles in RFC1591, ICP-1, and the GAC principles are supported. Some of these principals are:

6.1.1 Operational and Technical Skills

1.1 The prospective manager has the requisite skills to operate the TLD appropriately.

1.2 There must be reliable, full-time IP connectivity to the name servers and electronic mail connectivity to the managers.

1.3 The manager must perform its duties in assigning domains and operating name servers with technical competence.

6.1.2 Manager in Country

1.4 The prospective manager supervises and operates the domain name from within the country or territory represented by the TLD.

1.5 The prospective administrative contact must reside in the country represented by the TLD.

6.1.3 Equitable Treatment

1.6 The Registry manager shall operate the IDN ccTLD in a manner that allows the TLD community to discuss and participate in the development and modification of policies and practices for the TLD.

6.1.4 Community/Governmental Support

1.7 The prospective manager has the requisite authority to operate the TLD appropriately, with the desire of the government taken very seriously.

1.8 Significantly interested parties in the domain should agree that the prospective manager is the appropriate party to receive the delegation.

In addition to material that demonstrates the requester suitability under these RFC 1591 criteria, requesters must provide the additional specific material relating to the evaluation described in the Module 5. This requirement will be satisfied by the Delegation Readiness report that describes the IDN-specific factors.

ICANN will perform due diligence on the documentation provided in accordance with the IANA review process ~~defined~~described in RFC 1591. If the request does not adequately cover all areas, they will confer with the requester, who may provide further information. When ICANN deems the IANA due diligence evaluation complete, it will package the request and its assessment for ICANN Board review.

6.2 ICANN Board Review Process

All delegations and re-delegations of ccTLDs require ICANN Board approval to proceed. This approval is expected to remain constant with the introduction of IDN ccTLDs.

At the conclusion of the IANA function evaluation, of the ICANN Board will assess the delegation request.

The ICANN Board will evaluate whether requests are consistent with governing policies and with ICANN's core values set out in its

bylaws to "ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems."

6.3 US Government Authorization

After approval of a request, ICANN will execute its regular IANA function root zone change management process.

This change involves retesting the technical configuration of the delegation data supplied by the requester, and ensuring that name servers function correctly. Once satisfied, the request will be transmitted to the US Department of Commerce for authorization. Following this authorization, it will be implemented in the DNS root zone.

Module 7

Discussion of Additional Topics

This module contains a description of issues and topics that are relevant parts of the Draft Implementation Plan, but were not fully covered in the IDNC Final Report. ~~It initially included the list of outstanding issues the ICANN Board directed staff to produce before the ICANN Cairo meeting in November 2008. This list has now been updated with proposed positions and proposed implementation details (based on public comments) and in some cases with references to external papers with proposed implementation details.~~

~~Most of the topics covered~~ Module 7 has been updated to only contain discussions of outstanding issues. Topics deleted from the previous versions of the plan are considered solved and have been included elsewhere in the plan as deemed necessary. In the final version of the Implementation Plan, Module 7 will be completely eliminated. Most of the topics remaining in this module relate directly to the overarching requirements to:

- Preserve the security and stability of the DNS
- Ensure compliance with the IDNA protocol and IDN Guidelines

~~Topics included are:~~

~~Ensuring~~The remaining topics included have all been addressed in supporting papers to this plan. They are listed here for reference.

- Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers (revision 1.0), aiming at
    - ensuring ongoing compliance with the IDN technical standards, including the IDNA protocol and the IDN Guidelines.

~~a. Updated with a proposed arrangement between ICANN and potential IDN ccTLD managers. This proposal is released in a separate paper: Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers, see section 7.1.~~

~~2. Possible establishment of financial contributions.~~

- ~~Updated with preliminary~~ cooperative engagement, a mechanism to ensure that ICANN

and the IDN ccTLD will, as a first step, attempt to resolve any dispute in a cooperative manner.

- Proposed Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings (revision 1.0), aiming at:
    - o informing and defining rules around the development of IDN tables, and
    - o proposing use of identified variants especially at the top level.
- Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Financial Contributions to Support the Development and Deployment of IDN ccTLDs, a new paper aiming at:
    - ~~a.~~ proposing principles suggesting that some contribution should be ~~required~~ received from IDN ccTLD managers to offset program costs~~, see section 7.2.~~

~~3. IDN ccTLD participation in the ICANN community.~~

~~a. Updated, proposing a mechanism for the short-term participation of IDN ccTLD managers in continued IDN policy activities, see section 7.3.~~

~~4. Prevention of contention issues with existing TLDs and those under consideration in the gTLD process.~~

~~a. Updated with a proposed set of rules to be applied in rare cases where contention might exist, see section 7.4.~~

~~5. IDN Table Procedure~~

~~a. Updated with a proposed process for how IDN Tables should be managed at both second and top level. See section 7.5.~~

~~ICANN is actively soliciting additional community collaboration on the updates made in this version of the Implementation Plan. The feedback will play a key role in shaping the Final Implementation Plan. It is intended to presentation the final Plan at the ICANN meeting in Sydney (June 2009). However, this date is at risk. The issues described here must be resolved in order to publish the Implementation Plan as 'final."~~

~~*7.1 Relationship between ICANN and IDN ccTLD Manager*~~

~~The IDNC WG Final Report does not cover the relationship between ICANN and the IDN ccTLD manager after delegation of the IDN ccTLD(s). However, the nature of such relationship was~~

~~considered extensively in the comments received and concerns raised in the IDNC Final Report.~~

~~Therefore the need, and possible mechanisms, to formalize the relationship between ICANN and the IDN ccTLD manager has been considered part of the Draft Implementation Plan.~~

~~Since ccTLDs were introduced the circumstances and environment has changed considerably. This includes an increasing demand for transparency and accountability, increased need to ensure the security and stability of the Internet for the benefit of the local and global community, and demand to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the entities involved in the function of the DNS.~~

~~The introduction of IDN ccTLDs will require that a number of additional technical aspects are taken into account to ensure the security, stability and resilience of the Domain Name System. In particular it will be necessary to ensure that the IDN ccTLD manager adheres to the IDNA protocol and IDN guidelines on an ongoing basis and until a full PDP process can be completed for cc IDNs.~~

~~ICANN staff sought input and guidance from the community to develop a formal arrangement that included a general description of responsibilities for both ICANN and IDN ccTLD managers. This community input indicated that there should at least be a mechanism to ensure that all IDN managers adhere to the IDNA protocol over time, as well as compliance with associated standards, guidelines and other standards as they develop.~~

~~The Draft Fast Track Implementation Plan proposes a "Documentation of Responsibilities" (DoR) between the IDN ccTLD manager and ICANN. The DoR is intended to document the roles and responsibilities of both the IDN ccTLD manager and ICANN, particularly to ensure adherence with the relevant standards and guidelines during the phase of fast track deployment and pending the conclusion of the IDN ccPDP (Policy Development Process for the longer term introduction of IDN ccTLDs).~~

~~A separate paper entitled "*Documentation of Responsibilities between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD managers*" provides more detail on this issue and includes a draft DoR for consideration.~~

~~Comments are sought on the various elements in the proposed Documentation of Responsibilities~~.

7.2 Financial Contributions

The IDNC WG Final report contains no recommendation about possible financial contributions for implementing IDN ccTLDs. The community discussed this topic and various viewpoints were put forward proposing establishment of financial contributions.

ICANN is looking forward to continuing this dialogue with the community, and to receiving feedback so that resolution can be reached on this topic in a timely manner. While working toward resolution, there are some preliminary statements that can be made regarding financial contributions in general.

As a not-for-profit organization, ICANN strives for fair and equitable cost recovery to fund its services, seeking appropriate frameworks to recover costs from the communities it serves. The principle of fair and equitable cost recovery is also applicable when ICANN develops new services. With new services come new costs; the only question is the manner in which those costs are funded. Should the costs of new services be absorbed by current ICANN contributions, or should beneficiaries of new services pay for them? In certain cases, it was decided that new programs must be fully self-funded, most notably, the New gTLD Program. In other cases, new services are funded through ICANN's regular budget process; for example, ICANN's DNSSEC work.

Formal and informal feedback on required contributions by IDN ccTLD managers is divided. Some point to ccTLDs predating ICANN, and that the existing model of voluntary contributions for ASCII ccTLDs should be extended to new IDN ccTLDs. Others note that IDN ccTLDs are new entities not covered by existing country code policy, and that their funding should come from the managers of these new TLD registries. This is a financial issue in that new costs will certainly be incurred from the IDN program that must be funded, and an issue that touches on the relationships between the new IDN ccTLD registries and ICANN.

While parallels can be drawn between current ccTLD managers and potential IDN ccTLD managers, it should be recognized that the circumstances and environment has changed since ccTLDs were first introduced into the DNS. There is an increasing demand for transparency and accountability, an increased need to ensure the security and stability of the Internet for the benefit of the local and global community, and demand to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the entities involved in the function of the DNS.

Given that the Fast Track program is a new program created specifically for new IDN ccTLD managers and their Internet users, some contribution should be required from IDN ccTLD managers to offset its program costs. Still, this remains a Module 7 discussion issue in this Implementation Plan draft because more discussion is required before finalizing recommendations contributions, including feedback on required contributions, the cost components and levels that should be considered in a cost

recovery mechanism, how contribution levels might be set, and possible exceptions to required contributions.

7.3 Association of IDN ccTLD Manager with the ccNSO

Another topic not covered by the IDNC WG report relates to the association of IDN ccTLD managers to the ccNSO.

When the ccNSO was established in 2003, the introduction of IDN ccTLDs was yet not envisioned. As such the membership definition of the ccNSO is too restrictive to accommodate IDN ccTLD managers, and the current structure and voting mechanisms also do not accommodate IDN ccTLD managers.

This issue: whether IDN ccTLD managers can become members of the ccNSO, will be addressed in the IDN ccNSO PDP.

Although the ccNSO is open to members and nonmembers, the status of members in the ccNSO is different. For instance, ccNSO consensus policies, including the IDN ccNSO PDP outcome when implemented, are only applicable through the voluntary membership of the ccNSO.

Assuming that IDN ccTLDs will be operational before the conclusion of the IDN ccNSO PDP, an interim solution is desirable. ICANN suggests that the ccNSO consider whether an interim solution might be feasible by which IDN ccTLD managers could, for example, be granted temporary advisory positions to the ccNSO. In that way, support for the finalization of the IDN ccNSO PDP can be facilitated in a way that covers the development of consensus policies for IDN ccTLD managers. Further mechanisms are also proposed to be in place to ensure compliance with ccNSO consensus policies, including the outcome of the IDN ccNSO PDP.

From the comments received on this topic, it is anticipated that the ccNSO will provide an interim solution to ensure that adequate experience and expertise in IDN implementation is included in the ongoing work on the ccNSO PDP on IDNs. This is a reasonable short-term solution and therefore this topic no longer needs to be a subject of discussion.

7.4 Discussion of Contention Issues with Existing TLDs and new gTLD Applications

During implementation of the Fast Track process and the process for introducing new gTLDs, a potential contention has been identified between Fast Track requested IDN ccTLD strings and:

- Existing gTLD strings
- Existing ccTLD strings
- Proposed strings in new gTLD applications

These contention issues can involve two or more strings that are identical or are so confusingly similar that they cannot coexist in the DNS.

Some cases will be covered as the process for introducing new gTLDs requires government support if the proposed string represents a country or a territory name. However, in rare cases, an applied-for generic string could be identical or confusingly similar to a requested IDN ccTLD string, without the gTLD string being submitted for the same purpose as the IDN ccTLD string.

This issue is made more complex by Fast Track requests being considered confidential until the end of the request and evaluation stage (see Module 5) while all applications in the New gTLD Program are public as soon as the application period closes.

While contention situations between Fast Track requests and new gTLD applications are unlikely to occur, ICANN received several comments on this topic revealing that it is necessary to:

- Have adequate coordination in place between the two processes to identify any strings that are in conflict (i.e., identified as very similar) as early as possible.
- Have an adequate procedure in place to determine, in the case of contention, which application prevails over the other(s).

In response to these comments, ICANN proposes the following rules and thresholds to benefit the Fast Track applicant as much as possible because the Fast Track applicant is requesting a country or territory name.

Assessments of whether strings are considered in conflict with existing or applied-for new gTLD strings are made in the technical validation step for Fast Track requests and in the initial evaluation step for new gTLD applications. The following supplemental rules are proposed to adequately address contention cases between the processes.

A. A gTLD application that is approved by the ICANN Board will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.

B. A validated request for an IDN ccTLD will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.

- For the purpose of contention, an IDN ccTLD string is validated once it is confirmed that the string is a meaningful representation of the country or territory and that the string has passed the Technical Committee evaluation.

C. Upon receipt of an IDN ccTLD request, if contention is identified with a new gTLD application not yet approved by the ICANN Board, the new gTLD application will be placed on hold and the IDN ccTLD request will prevail, provided it passes validation. However, if both parties have the requisite government assent, both applications will be placed on hold until the contention is resolved through agreement between the parties.

7.5 IDN Table Procedure

An IDN Table is a list of all those characters that a particular TLD registry supports beyond the twenty-six letters of the basic Latin alphabet (a-z), ten digits (0-9), and the hyphen (-). If any characters in a table are considered to be variants of each other (essentially meaning "the same as"), this is indicated next to each character in a variant group. The term "variant" designates orthographic equivalence on the character level, such as that between "æ" and "ae" in "encyclopædia" and "encyclopaedia", but not in the broader sense that pertains to the variant spelling of words, as "encyclopaedia" vs. "encyclopedia" or "color" vs. "colour".

An IDN Table will typically contain characters that either represent a specific language, or are taken from a specific script without particular reference to any of the languages that are written with it. The term "IDN Table" as it is used here, corresponds to what in previous contexts was referred to as a "variant table", a "language variant table", a "language table", or a "script table".

In accordance with the IDNC WG Final Report and consistent with the IDN Guidelines, an IDN Table identified is required for IDN registries. The table must indicate the script(s) or language(s) it is intended to support and any variant characters as defined above must be identified in the table.

The IDNC WG Final Report says that countries and territories using the same script are encouraged to cooperate in developing a language/script table in accordance with the IDN guidelines. Based on the IDNC recommendation and on the input and comments received on this topic, ICANN prepared a paper (Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings) providing proposed implementation details on this subject. The paper provides definitions of IDN Tables and character variants. The benefits to TLD registries that plan to introduce IDNs (either at the second or top level) are described. The paper also proposes an outline for developing an IDN Table and a methodology for how ICANN should use the IDN Tables provided in the criteria for the TLD allocations and management.

The paper is posted in conjunction with this revised Draft Implementation Plan, and comments are sought in preparation for a finalized Implementation Plan.

~~7.6 Proposed Evaluation of Fast Track the Process~~

~~To ensure that the Fast Track process functions in the best interests of the entire Internet community and for the benefit of registrants, the following review process is proposed.~~

~~Every 12 months following the opening of the Fast Track process, ICANN should open a period for public comment on the functionality of the process. The public comment period should last at least 45 days. At the conclusion of the comment period, ICANN should analyze the comments received and seek community guidance and feedback on such comments, in particular from the ccNSO, GAC, GNSO, ALAC and the SSAC.~~

~~If necessary, based on these consultations, the Fast Track process can be modified to better suit the needs of the community. If such changes are implemented, a one month notice must be provided publicly, containing clear descriptions of the changes that are introduced and their impact on prospective IDN ccTLD managers.~~

~~Based on the comments received on this topic ICANN will schedule a review of the Fast Track process as proposed. Depending on the time required to complete the ccNSO PDP on IDNs, one or more such reviews may take place.~~

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