

EPDP on IDNs: A few key policy issues

ALAC EPDP on IDNs Team

What are IDN Variants labels?

- Some letters of some scripts function as equivalent for language communities
- For example, in the German script, 'ss' is also written as ß
- So, the labels strasse and straÙe are the same thing for German speakers
- If this was a website, then the following would be IDN variant domain names:
 - berlin.strasse (primary)
 - berlin.straÙe (variant)
- Primary + all variants (allocatable + blocked) = variant set
- Variants were not permitted in the 2012 round, although many applicants wanted them
- In the proposed next round, it is very likely that applicants can apply for variants together with their primary labels
- As variants are new, there is a need to ensure that we adopt them cautiously

Demonstration of the need

- Following the principle of conservatism, the EPDP Team recommends that the applicant—from the 2012 round or the next round—should demonstrate the need for the variants that they were applying for
- Additionally, the team also recommends that the criteria to evaluate the need should be formalized

Preliminary Recommendation 3.5:

A future IDN gTLD applicant must be required, as part of the application process, **to explain why it seeks one or more allocatable variant label(s)** of its applied-for primary IDN gTLD string. The same requirement applies to existing registry operators from the 2012 round who wish to apply for allocatable variant label(s) of their existing IDN gTLDs.

Implementation Guidance 3.6: Criteria for evaluating the explanations submitted by applicants on the need for variant label(s) **should be pre-identified and applied consistently by evaluators with the requisite expertise**

Demonstration of technical competency

- At the level of DNS, there is no consideration of the variant set, and each variant is an independent label in the root zone with no connection with others in the set
- At the policy level, the variant set is indeed a consideration
- Thus there are additional challenges in managing IDN variants
- The EPDP decided that the applicant should demonstrate its ability to manage—technically and operationally—the additional challenges arising for IDN variant TLDs

Preliminary Recommendation 3.7

A future IDN gTLD applicant must **be required to demonstrate its ability to manage the applied-for primary IDN gTLD string and applied-for allocatable variant label(s)** from both a technical and operational perspective. The same requirement applies to existing registry operators from the 2012 round who wish to apply for allocatable variant label(s) of their existing IDN gTLDs.

Implementation Guidance

Implementation Guidance 3.8: The evaluation of capability to manage the variant label set should be closely tied to the overall technical capability evaluation. The evaluation should be **based on measurable criteria** including, but not limited to, the performance of Critical Functions with respect to second-level registrations under the primary IDN gTLD string and the applied-for allocatable variant label(s).

Implementation Guidance 3.9: ICANN org may conduct research that helps **identify additional standards or tests** that should be used to evaluate the technical and operational capability to manage the variant label set.

Poll #1

Number of variants

- Some languages such as Arabic and Chinese can have a large number of variants
- Some of the Generation Panels adopted measures to limit the number of variants
- The EPDP adopted Conservatism as a basic principle, based on ICANN Board resolutions, SSAC advice, and SubPro PDP recommendations
- Thus, there was a need to limit the number of variants
- The core question was if the EPDP should put in place a ceiling on the number of variants an applicant could apply for

Preliminary Recommendation 8.1

No ceiling value for delegated top-level variant labels from a variant label set is necessary, as existing measures in the RZ-LGR to reduce the number of allocatable top-level variant labels, as well as economic, operational, and other factors that may impact the decision to apply for variant labels, will keep the number of delegated top-level variant labels conservative

Poll #2

Fees for labels

- The Staff Report prepared prior to the EPDP proposed separate applications for each variant and a per-variant fee
- During its discussions, the EPDP team favoured a single application fee for the entire variant set, as the set was a logical whole
- However, there was some discussions whether there should be some fee per label to prevent applicants from applying for too many variants, thus adding to the risk of destabilization of the root zone
- There was also the question of the 2012 applicants who wanted to activate variants of their existing TLD
- The EPDP came to the consensus that there should be a fee waiver up to a fixed number of variants, beyond which a fee based on cost-recovery should be applied

Charter Question D1b

2012 Applicants

- As a one-time exception for the immediate next application round, **the base application fee must be waived** for an existing registry operator from the 2012 round applying for **up to four (4)** allocatable variant labels of an existing IDN gTLD.

Next Round

- A future gTLD applicant applying for a **primary IDN gTLD string and up to four (4)** of its allocatable variant labels during an application round must incur the same base application fee as any gTLD applicant who does not apply for variant labels in that round.

Poll #2

Thank you