Note: The module incorporates recommendations and implementation guidance from IDN EPDP WG Phase 1 Report.

Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)

ICANN expects a diverse set of applications for new gTLDs, including IDNs, creating significant potential for new uses and benefit to Internet users across the globe.

1. Rules for IDN gTLDs and Their Variant gTLDs

An applied-for IDN gTLD must comply with IDNA2008 (RFCs 5890-5893[1]) and all of its successor(s). The IDN gTLD must also comply with the applicable version of Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR; see [Section x: Root Zone Label Generation Rules]).

An IDN gTLD can be represented in Unicode characters (called U-label) and its equivalent ASCII mapping prefixed by "xn--" (called A-label) as per IDNA2008. Applied-for IDN gTLDs (in U-label format) must be longer than a single character. As an exception, single-character IDN gTLDs (in U-label format formed) may be [can?] applied for only in Han script[2], which is used in the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages. For additional string requirements, also see [Section x: DNS Stability Review].

The RZ-LGR is the sole source to calculate the variant gTLDs and their disposition values (allocatable or blocked) for all existing gTLDs and all applied-for primary gTLD.

The LGR Tool made available by ICANN at https://lgrtool.icann.org/ can be used to determine allocatable variant gTLDs for a primary gTLD.

2. Application Submission

An applied-for IDN gTLD that conforms to the mandatory string requirements, including IDNA 2008, as well as the RZ-LGR, can be submitted through the new gTLD application submission system. Where the RZ-LGR calculation during the algorithmic check deems an applied-for gTLD as "invalid" or "blocked" (in case the applied-for string is a variant gTLD), such application for a non-conforming string will be accepted by application submission system but the applicant will be warned of its potential disqualification. In such a case, an applicant may make a limited challenge on the RZ-LGR calculation by the application submission system (see detail in [Section X. Challenges]).

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[1] Also relevant are RFCs 5894-5895, which are informational documents providing background, explanation, and rationale for IDNA2008 as well as mapping characters for IDNA2008 respectively.

[2] Exception is allowed for Han script as it is an ideographic script where a single character may have a meaning.

2.1. Application Submission of New Primary IDN gTLD and its Variant gTLDs

An applicant can apply for a new primary IDN gTLD along with one or more of its allocatable variant gTLDs. Variant gTLDs will only be allocated to the same applicant as the primary IDN gTLD. All variant gTLDs must have the same back-end registry service provider as the applied-for primary IDN gTLD when delegated.

Allocatable variant gTLDs can be applied for from the set generated using the RZ-LGR. An application for an allocatable variant gTLD cannot precede an application for its primary IDN gTLD. A primary IDN gTLD and any of its allocatable variant gTLDs being applied for in the same round must be submitted through one application. An applicant cannot apply for a blocked variant gTLD of the new primary IDN gTLD, as calculated by the RZ-LGR. See [Section x: Fees] for details on application fees for variant gTLDs.

Once the primary IDN gTLD is applied-for, it cannot be changed, except for a brand IDN gTLD application[3] whose applied-for primary string has been placed in contention.

After submission of an application, the applicant is allowed to withdraw any of the applied-for variant gTLD from that application, but is not allowed to add any other allocatable variant gTLD that was not originally applied for in that application. However, after submission of an application, should the applicant withdraw its application for a primary IDN gTLD, all of its applications for variant gTLDs will also be withdrawn.

2.2. Application Submission of Variant gTLDs of Existing IDN gTLDs

An applicant can only apply for variant gTLDs of an existing IDN gTLD if it is the same legal entity as the registry operator for the already existing IDN gTLD. All variant gTLDs must have the same back-end registry service provider as the existing IDN gTLD when delegated. The back-end registry service provider must be approved through the RSP evaluation program for the next gTLD round.

Allocatable variant gTLDs of an existing IDN gTLD can be applied for from the set generated using the RZ-LGR. An applicant for allocatable variant gTLDs of an existing IDN gTLD must submit these in one application. An applicant cannot apply for a blocked variant gTLD of an existing IDN gTLD, as calculated by the RZ-LGR. See [Section x: Fees] for details on application fees for allocatable variant gTLDs.

After submission of an application, the applicant is allowed to withdraw an applied-for variant gTLD from that application, but is not allowed to add any other allocatable variant gTLD that was not originally applied-for in that application.

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[3] Based on IDN EPDP recommendation 3.25.

3. Initial Evaluation

3.1. Prioritization of Processing of Variant gTLDs of Existing IDN gTLDs

As a one-time exception, applications for allocatable variant gTLDs of existing IDN gTLDs from the 2012 round will receive priority in processing order ahead of all other new gTLD applicants, including the IDN gTLD applicants that elect to participate in the prioritization draw (see [Section x on Prioritization]).

3.2. Multiple Applicants for the Same IDN gTLD or its Variant gTLD

If different applicants apply for IDN gTLDs from the same variant-string-set, then such applications will be placed in contention, and only one applicant will be selected through the contention resolution process. This means that applied-for IDN gTLDs and their applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs will participate as a set in any contention resolution mechanisms, i.e., Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) or Auctions of Last Resort (see [Section x: Contention Resolution]).

Note that any application for an allocatable variant gTLD of an existing IDN gTLD will be rejected if it is made by an applicant that is not the Registry Operator of that existing IDN gTLD.

3.3. Justification of Variant gTLDs and its Evaluation

An applicant seeking one or more allocatable variant gTLDs of an applied-for primary IDN gTLD or existing IDN gTLD will provide the justification for the need of each variant gTLD being applied-for. A justification will be provided by the applicant for each applied-for variant gTLD which will be evaluated by a panel on a general standard of reasonableness based on the following criteria, in the context of the applied-for primary IDN gTLD or existing IDN gTLD:

1. The meaning or intended meaning (for non-dictionary words) of each of the applied-for variant gTLD is the same, based on sources included by the applicant.
2. The variant gTLD is considered the same by the intended user community.
3. The benefits and the user communities who will benefit from the introduction of the applied-for variant gTLD.
4. Steps the applicant will take to minimize the operational and management complexities of the variant gTLD and resulting variant domain names that impact registrars, resellers and/or registrants.

The applicant must pass each criterion for each applied-for variant gTLD to proceed in the program. The evaluation outcome of any one applied-for variant gTLD will not impact the

evaluation outcome of a primary applied-for IDN gTLD or any other applied-for allocatable variant gTLD in the application.

The ability to manage the applied-for allocatable variant gTLD(s) along with the applied-for primary IDN gTLD or the existing IDN gTLD will be evaluated from both a technical and operational perspective, as described in [Section x - PDT Section of AGB and Section x - RSP Handbook].

3.4. Additional Application Requirements for Variant gTLDs

An applied-for allocatable variant gTLD will be subject to the same application requirements and evaluation criteria as the associated primary applied-for IDN gTLD or existing IDN gTLD. Specifically, the same documentation requirements apply to both the primary applied-for IDN gTLD and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLD(s). For purposes of clarity, this means that an applied-for primary gTLD string and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs will be evaluated together as a set but will require relevant documentation for each variant gTLD, as needed.

With respect to the three non-standard application types of gTLDs, this means that:

- An applicant for a Community-based IDN gTLD and its allocatable variant gTLD(s) is required to submit the same endorsement for applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs as needed for its applied-for primary IDN gTLD. Additionally, should a community-based IDN gTLD be in contention (as described [section 3.2]) and opts to participate in Community Priority Evaluation (CPE), then the community-based IDN gTLD and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs will be evaluated together as a set ([see Section x: community based gTLD]).
- An applicant for a Geographic Name IDN gTLD and its allocatable variant gTLDs is required to submit documentation of support or non-objection to its applied-for primary gTLD and applied-for allocatable variant gTLD(s) from relevant governments or public authorities. That is, the requisite documentation of support or non-objection should reference both the applied-for IDN gTLD string and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs ([see Section x: Geographic Name gTLD]).
- An applicant for a .Brand IDN gTLD and its allocatable variant gTLDs is required to submit proof that its applied-for primary gTLD and applied-for allocatable variant gTLD(s) are identical to registered trademarks owned and used by the registry operator or its affiliate. That is, in addition to the .Brand IDN gTLD, any applied-for allocatable variant gTLD must also show proof that it is identical to registered trademarks owned and used by the registry operator ([see Section x: .Brand gTLD]).

3.5. Application for Variant gTLDs of Reserved Names

Only the organizations with strings on the Reserved Names List (see [Section x: Reserved Names List]) are allowed to apply for the allocatable variant gTLD(s) of their corresponding reserved name(s) at the top-level. The variant gTLDs are not required to be on the Reserved

Names List, but are generated by the Reserved Names on this list using the RZ-LGR. An application for an allocatable variant gTLD(s) of a reserved string cannot precede an application for the reserved string, which serves as the primary gTLD for generating the variant gTLDs.

3.6. Additional Dependence of Variant gTLDs

All variant gTLDs are dependent on their primary IDN gTLD for application evaluation. Should a primary applied-for IDN gTLD be disqualified for any reason, as described in this section or other relevant sections of the AGB, the associated variant gTLDs will also be disqualified. This means that, in such cases, the entire application will not be allowed to proceed.

However, while any applied-for allocatable variant gTLD be disqualified and not able to proceed, the corresponding applied-for primary IDN gTLD and any remaining applied-for variant gTLDs that are not disqualified and will still be able to proceed.