

Setting up and Running a Generation Panel

REVISION 20 – Nov 7, 2013

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1 Overview

The "[Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels](#)" (Procedure) defines a two-pass process for creation of the IDN Label Generation Rules (LGR) for the Root Zone as follows: "The first pass creates a set of label generation rules specific to a given script, writing system, language, or all of these; this task is carried out by Rule Generation Panels composed of people with deep experience or interest in the script, writing system or language used by some community of Internet users."

This document provides an overview of the tasks of a Generation Panel, information about a suggested composition and some notes on how to set up and organize a Generation Panel for a given script for the first time.

2 Generation Panel

2.1 Establishment

As the process of developing the LGR for the Root Zone gets under way, the most immediate need is for Generation Panels for the 17 scripts for which IDN TLDs have been requested under the ccTLD Fast Track and New gTLD programs. These scripts are identified in the [Call for Generation Panels to develop Root Zone Label Generation Rules](#). The call does not preclude interest for additional scripts beyond the initial 17, which means that additional Generation Panels will need to be established.

Generation Panels are community efforts. In the case of communities that already have an established working group that focuses on IDNs and variants for their script, the preferred procedure would be for ICANN to work with the community and base the Generation Panel for that script, in full or in part, on the existing working group. The appointment of a corresponding Generation Panel chair may be based on recommendations from working group members or the community. Communities that have an existing working group are encouraged to respond to the "Call" by submitting a statement of interest for the working group as a whole, to be accompanied or followed up by a more extensive proposal for a prospective Generation Panel based on the outline below.

Where the need to establish a Generation Panel for some other script meets the criteria set out in the Procedure and requisite Expression of Interest to form this panel have been received, but there is no existing working group, ICANN may start the process by appointing a chair for a Generation Panel. ICANN will work with that chair on the task to attract volunteers that have the interest and appropriate expertise to do the work, as well as the qualifications to be able to represent their community. A hosting organization that can facilitate the work with meeting space and other resources, such as e-mail lists, conference call hosting, etc., would also be helpful at this stage.

In all cases, the final decision whether a proposed Generation Panel meets the requirements set forth in the Procedure and whether to move forward to formally establish a particular panel rests with ICANN.

The details of how to submit a statement of interest for existing panels or individuals to become chairs or members of a Generation Panel are contained in the "Call" document. The selection for appointment

as Generation Panel chair is competitive, focusing on the most qualified candidates. However, participation as a member of a Generation Panel is an open process; anybody can volunteer to become a member of a Generation Panel, subject to certain eligibility and diversity restrictions described in the "Call". Individuals who volunteer to serve on an existing Generation Panel or a Panel being formed around existing working groups will be referred to these groups. It is expected that any volunteers that are eligible will be accommodated, as long as the resulting Panel doesn't become unmanageable in size and as long as sufficient diversity of membership can be maintained.

Members can be added or removed from a Generation Panel at any time even after the Generation Panel is established. In particular, where a member becomes ineligible, due to a conflict of interest, for example, ICANN may remove that member.

2.2 Composition and Diversity

The members of a Generation Panel are volunteers. They are expected to combine technical and linguistic expertise with representation of the variety of users of domain names for a given script or scripts. The Procedure suggests certain diversity among the members of a Generation Panel. In addition to the formal diversity requirements stated below, the linguistic expertise and community representations should be differentiated enough to guarantee coverage of the significant user communities for the script, whether on the basis of language or geography, for example.

“Generation Panels need to have some diversity of participation in order to be useful. They must have sufficient numbers of participants [and] should be diverse in economic interest.... [however] the work of these panels is concerned with technical issues and involves linguistic expertise, and is not “representative” in nature.

If it is impossible to get sufficient numbers of participants with sufficient diversity and expertise, that is evidence that the code points in question and the rules associated with them are too specialized to be included in the root zone, and so the Generation Panel must not be established.

The diversity of expertise required depends to some degree on the nature of the repertoire to be considered by the panel. For certain simple scripts, those lacking a large repertoire or other complicating factors, a minimum panel size of three might be sufficient. For repertoires encompassing many languages or presenting technical or linguistic challenges, additional panel members or advisers would be needed.”

The following table suggests a typical composition for a Generation Panel.

Table 1: Summary of suggested Generation Panel Composition

| Position | Estimated Number of Volunteers | Summary Description |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Generation Panel Chair | 1 | Contact person, coordinator and official representative of the Generation Panel to ICANN and to the Integration Panel |
| Community Representatives | 2 or more | Members with understanding of local culture, customs, and practices |
| Linguistic Expert | 1-2, more in case of scripts used very diversely | Members with linguistic expertise in the specific languages/script, ideally with some knowledge of Unicode |
| Registry/Registrar Expert | 1-2 | Experts familiar with registry/registrar operations and standards in the given script |
| Policy Expert | 1 | Experts knowledgeable of ICANN's bottom-up process and local registration policies |
| DNS/IDNA/Unicode Expert | - | For smaller panels this may be represented by secondary expertise of other members or by an external advisor |

2.2.1 Chair

Following Expressions of Interest in response to the call for volunteer members of Generation Panels, ICANN will appoint the Chair of the Generation Panel for a term of one year, with possible reappointment. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms for which a Chair may be reappointed.

The task of the Chair is to facilitate the work of the Generation Panel. He or she acts as contact person, coordinator and official representative of the Generation Panel to ICANN and to the Integration Panel. As described in Section 3.4 below, a Chair may delegate some of these tasks.

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The Chair's responsibilities include ensuring that the Generation Panel follows the terms of the Procedure in its work, and that the work progresses at a reasonable pace. To that end, the Chair issues regular progress reports as described in Section 3.3 below.

In some cases, a Chair may be appointed with the task of facilitating the formation of a Generation Panel.

2.2.2 Members

ICANN has issued on July 2013 an open ended call for volunteer members of Generation Panels. In cases where only a Chair has been appointed for the panel initially, ICANN will work with the Chair to select panel members based on submissions received. Chairs of prospective panels are also encouraged to use community contacts to identify additional volunteers.

Members can be added after a Generation Panel has started its work. ICANN approval is required for any change in membership, so that ICANN can enforce the minimal diversity and conflict of interest requirements set forth in the Procedure. Membership of the panel will be reviewed periodically for diversity and conflicts of interest.

As stated in the procedure ICANN may also appoint additional members.

2.3 Advisors

External advisors may be called to provide input and expertise not covered by the members of the panel. ICANN plans to have a number of advisors, both volunteer and paid, that any Generation Panel may call upon as the need arises. These include experts in DNS, IDNA, linguistics, Unicode as well as in areas of administrative and policy expertise. ICANN has issued a public [call for subject matter experts](#) from which an initial set of advisors have been selected, and may issue future calls as needs dictate. ICANN staff may also be able to act as advisors. ICANN maintains a list of subject matter experts qualified and available as advisors. These are listed publicly on the [project website](#).

Unlike members of the Generation Panel, advisors may work with both the Integration and Generation Panels, but they have no vote. Whenever advisor(s) are relied on to provide input in the development of a Generation Panel's submission this information will be documented publicly as part of the submission.

2.3.1 Engaging an advisor

When a Generation Panel identifies the need for an advisor for a specific task, the Chair (or acting secretary on the Chair's behalf) submits a request to ICANN by sending a request to dnvarianttlds@icann.org. This request should provide details on the nature of the task, type of expertise needed and estimate of effort required.

If the requested expertise is already available, ICANN will work to meet the request right away. If the requested expertise is not already available, ICANN will endeavor to recruit the additional expertise, in consultation with the panel and usually within 45 days.

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If a Generation Panel is aware of an expert with suitable availability, eligibility and expertise, they can recommend that expert to ICANN. A panel may recruit its own volunteer advisor, subject to confirmation by ICANN, but ICANN will not fund such advisors or their travel expenses.

In case the attendance of advisor(s) is needed at a face-to-face meeting that the Generation Panel is organizing, a separate request and justification for travel must be submitted to ICANN for approval. Advisors engaged by a Generation Panel are listed along with its members on the Generation Panel's page on the [project website](#).

2.4 Work Plan

Once a prospective panel is formed and is able to initiate discussions and conduct business, the first item would be to create a work plan. The Procedure states:

“Each Generation Panel works on a subset of Unicode relevant to one writing system or a set of related writing systems. This work is broadly aligned along the script property of the Unicode code points in question, though it need not be restricted to a single script (see Section B.5.3).”

Many scripts are used for more than one language or writing system. A work plan would identify the relevant writing systems (languages and orthographies) that will be covered by this script, as well as how they and their user communities are represented on the prospective panel. In order to create the Label Generation Rules for this script, issues must ideally be investigated for all of the languages and writing systems – this avoids the risk of having to make incompatible changes later. The work plan should therefore address how these languages and writing systems are going to be covered and how any issues will be researched. The work plan would potentially narrow down or recommend other adjustments to the initial script area.

The work plan should also provide a tentative schedule, including major milestones, as well as address issues of logistics and funding for the Generation Panel work, including information about the approximate number, likely location and timing of anticipated face-to-face meetings and teleconferences.

2.4.1 Work plan as part of proposal for prospective Generation Panel

A tentative work plan is part of a proposal for establishing a Generation Panel as submitted to ICANN. In addition to the work plan, this proposal should also contain all the other relevant information, for example the composition of the prospective panel, including information on the expertise of each member as well as information suitable for evaluating any conflicts of interest or diversity requirements. If the panel expects to call on advice for particular expertise areas, this should be stated. For scripts for which a report was created during the Variant Issues Project <http://www.icann.org/en/resources/idn/variant-tlds/reports>, it would be useful for the work plan to explicitly consider the issues raised in the relevant issues report.

ICANN will review the proposal in light of the criteria set forth in the Procedure, and solicit the advice and consent from the Integration Panel. The proposal for the prospective panel should be submitted by e-mail to dnvarianttlds@icann.org and will be published on the [project website](#) after it has been

approved and the panel is seated. ICANN provides an outline for proposal to establish a Generation Panel in section 6 of this document. If a review concludes that a proposal is insufficient, it may be resubmitted with amendments.

2.5 Tasks of the Generation Panel

Once the composition and work plan are approved by the Integration Panel, the Generation Panel can start its work on the label generation rules. According to the Procedure, the starting point of any Generation Panel's work is the maximal set of code points defined by the Integration Panel as well as a set of Default Whole Label Variant Evaluation Rules. The following summary of tasks is provided as an overview, and is not prescriptive. The full specification can be found in the [Procedure](#) in particular, Section B.3 "Variant rule generation procedure".

2.5.1 Repertoire

A Generation Panel will create a subset of this maximal set of code points, creating a repertoire that is appropriate for labels for the Root Zone in that script. According to the Inclusion Principle, it is expected that the Generation Panel will use a process that logically starts with an empty set, affirmatively adding code points it deems necessary, while staying within the maximal set. Code points for which insufficient information about usage or requirements exist must not be added.

When presenting an LGR proposal, the Generation Panel should clearly document the code points (a) considered, (b) included, (c) rejected, and (d) not considered.

It is important to distinguish rejected code points from those not considered, so that future revisions do not consider the rejected ones any further unless the basis for their rejection has changed. In this context, a detailed rationale for both inclusion and rejection in particular would be helpful.

Further, various reasons may lead to code points which may not be considered at the outset, but may still not present any threat to the existing proposal. In such cases this information should be documented.

2.5.2 Variants

Next, the Generation Panel will determine whether the script requires the use of variants, based on the description of variants in the Procedure. If variants are required, the Generation Panel will provide a list of all variants for the entire repertoire defined by the panel. Variants are defined by mapping code points or sequences to variant code points or sequences. These mappings must be symmetric and transitive as explained in the Procedure; they may be one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one and many-to-many mappings.

Variant mappings may include mappings to code points outside the repertoire defined by a Generation Panel, including mappings to code points in other scripts. However, in that case, the disposition for such variants must be "blocked".

2.5.3 Disposition

For each variant, the Generation Panel needs to decide on a disposition. This can either be “blocked” (a variant label containing this variant should not be allocated in addition to the original label) or “allocatable” (a variant label containing this variant may be allocated to the same entity as the original label).

2.5.4 Whole Label Variant Evaluation Rules

Finally, the Generation Panel needs to decide whether the script requires the use of additional Whole Label Variant Evaluation Rules (WLE Rule). A WLE Rule will block a label (or variant label) based not on code points, but on sequences of adjacent code points. A starting point for this part of the work is the set of Default WLE Rules created by the Integration Panel. WLE Rules beyond the Default WLE Rules are usually not needed, except for certain complex scripts, where atomic units in the script may be represented by sequences of Unicode code points. The purpose of WLE rules is to exclude labels or variants that cause problems in display or processing.

Because labels in the root do not carry any linguistic context, it is essential to keep additional WLE rules for the root to a minimum. This follows from the Predictability Principle in the Procedure.

2.6 Submitting a proposed LGR

2.6.1 Before submitting a proposed LGR

The Procedure explicitly suggests that Generation Panels engage in some form of dialogue with the Integration Panel, even preceding the first submission. This dialogue would be a very useful way for the Generation Panel to be alerted early in cases where the Integration Panel anticipates problems with some features of the submission. Alternatively, it would give the Generation Panel an early opportunity to explain why it is taking certain decisions and why they are the right ones for IDN TLD labels and variants for its script. Part of such early dialogue may be the distribution of preliminary drafts. ICANN has provided a public project-wide mailing list to facilitate such discussions is made available by ICANN. See Section 4.2 “Other support”.

2.6.2 Cooperation with other Generation Panels

Where scripts are tightly related or have overlapping user communities, Generation Panels are encouraged to seek cooperation with other appropriate Generation Panels to facilitate their work and to ensure that any proposed LGR will not conflict with the proposed LGR from another panel. Prospective Generation Panels are encouraged to identify related scripts in their proposed statement of work. The Integration Panel is encouraged, in reviewing the statement of work, to note any requirements for such cooperation.

The Integration Panel may reject a submission if a lack of such cooperation, where warranted, represents the risk to the security and stability of the Root Zone, such as the risk of later incompatibilities or diminished user experience under the principles set out in the Procedure.

In some circumstances, and with support from the affected communities, a Generation Panel may be established to handle multiple, related scripts.

2.6.3 Coverage of significant languages in a script

When creating the LGR for a script that is used by multiple languages, it is important to investigate as many issues relating to at least the major languages involved. Otherwise there is a risk that users of these languages will encounter problems in applying for or using IDN TLDs. If such problems were to cause incompatible changes to the LGR in the future, this would be a major breakdown of the process. Under the criteria outlined in the Procedure, the Integration Panel is unlikely to approve any script LGR where such due diligence has not been performed.

2.6.4 Data Format

The Integration Panel will have provided a final specification of the data format in which to express the result of the work of the Generation Panel on the [project website](#), together with detailed instructions. A draft of the [XML Specification](#) for expressing LGR data is available for review. Submissions by the Generation Panels are expected to be in this format, to facilitate the use of a suite of tools for review, cross checking and integration. Once the data is in the required format, the Generation Panel will formally submit a proposed LGR to the Integration Panel and at the same time submit the proposed LGR for public comment. The proposed LGR will be accompanied by an explanatory report summarizing key decisions and their rationales, especially highlighting areas which received substantial discussion or for which there is a remaining minority position. The report should also indicate whether there are unresolved issues, such as pertaining to any language community for which reliable data could not be obtained. Instructions for creating a report will be posted on the [project website](#) once they become available. ICANN will manage the public comment process and make the results available to the Integration Panel to be used in the review process.

The specification of the data format cannot be finalized until it is fully understood whether it meets the requirements of this process. This effectively means that a few Generation Panels will need to use a preliminary version of the data format. Should later format changes be required for the final specification, these panels may need to bring their submissions up to date.

2.6.5 Decisions

The Procedure gives rather wide latitude to Generation Panels on how to reach a decision:

"As a general rule, how a Generation Panel determines the output it will send to the Integration Panel is a management decision on the part of that Generation Panel, and is beyond the scope of this document. It is worth noting, however, that individual members of the Generation Panel who are dissatisfied with the recommendations sent to the Integration Panel will, like everyone else, have the opportunity to make their views known during the public comment period on the Generation Panel output. Since the Integration Panel is required to take such comments into account in its evaluation, as a practical matter the Generation Panel will need to take into consideration strong and principled objections from any Generation Panel member. This does not mean that true unanimity in the Generation Panel is always required."

While unanimity is explicitly **not** required in the decisions of a Generation Panel, a broad consensus should be aimed for, where possible. If a proposal reaches only the barest of majorities in its support, it is likely that this could adversely affect its review by the Integration Panel.

2.6.6 Submissions and Follow Up

"The Generation Panel, when it has completed its work, sends its proposals to the Integration Panel. At the same time, the Generation Panel's proposals are posted for public comment using the ICANN public comment procedures then prevailing."

Upon submission of a proposal to the Integration Panel, the Integration Panel issues a confirmation to the Generation Panel that it is in receipt of the submission. The Integration Panel will review the submission based on the criteria established in the Procedure (see in particular section B.4 of the Procedure) and is required to come to a unanimous decision on whether to approve the proposed LGR for integration into the Root Zone LGR. Note that this review by the Integration Panel may not be instantaneous, because the Integration Panel must be able to review submissions in context of submissions for other scripts, especially related scripts.

At any stage in the review, the Integration Panel may discover an issue that causes the proposal to not have the required unanimous support. The Integration Panel is not required to perform further analysis of the proposal at that point, but may simply declare that the proposal has been rejected.

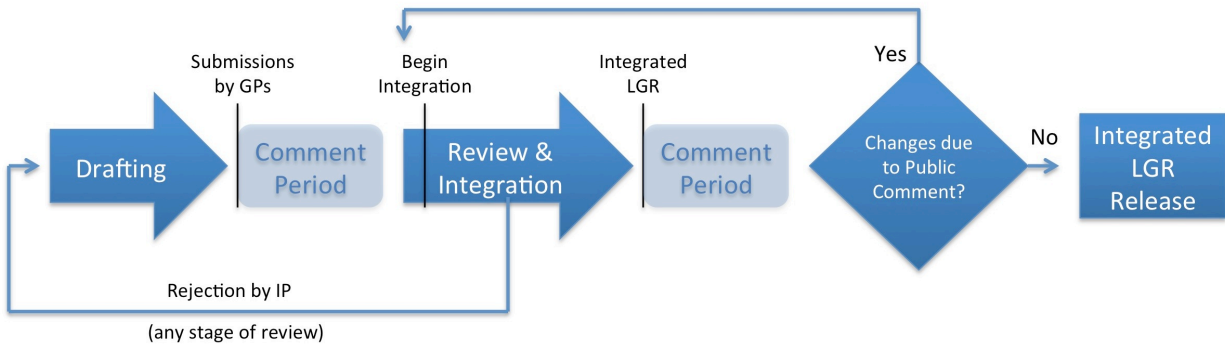
Any rejection of a proposal will be accompanied by formal justification for the decision as set forth in section B.4 of the Procedure. In addition, there may be informal suggestions for changes that would make a revised submission acceptable to the Integration Panel. All decisions of the Integration Panel as well as their justification will be available for public comment. The Generation Panel will be able to review these justifications as well as any public comments and will then need to come to a decision on how to proceed, whether to change the submission, provide better documentation and justification, or resubmit it as is.

If the review is positive, and no further changes arise out of the public comments, the submission of the Generation Panel will be integrated in a release of the integrated LGR for the Root Zone. At this point the work of the Generation Panel is done, except that it may be reconvened if changes to the Root Zone LGR, affecting the script area for the Generation Panel are needed, whether because the Unicode Standard has added new characters for that script or for any other reason.

See section B.4.5 of the Procedure for more details on this.

2.7 Work Flow and Time Line

The following diagram gives a schematic representation of the workflow from submission of a Generation Panel's proposal to final release of an integrated LGR for the Root Zone. The diagram only shows a single proposal but it must be understood that several proposals are to be processed in parallel, and that some review stages cannot happen without all proposals being available. Note that a rejection may happen at any time during the review process. Whether or not a proposal re-submitted after a rejection can be integrated into the original release of the LGR or must wait for a future release depends on timing. It is therefore advisable for a Generation Panel to engage in early discussions with the Integration Panel to discover potential problems before initial submission.



3 Panel Operations

Each Generation Panel is in charge of its own workflow. Generation Panels are expected to work expeditiously, but without compromising the goals and principles set forth in the Procedure. In some cases, it is expected that significant community pressure exists to meet the deadlines to be included in the initial revision of the LGR.

3.1 Timeline

It is anticipated that the first Generation Panels will be formed at various times during the second half of 2013. A tentative target date for a first Root Zone LGR is mid 2014; but it is anticipated that some Generation Panels may take longer to prepare an initial submission. Their work would be reflected in a subsequent revision of the LGR.

Under the Procedure, the Integration Panel may issue an integrated LGR whenever the criteria for issuing a Root Zone LGR are met. Under those criteria, it is unlikely that the IP will issue an LGR if closely related scripts are not covered simultaneously.

After an initial LGR covering a given script is released, the work of the Generation Panel for that script is done. However, there may be changes to Unicode or the Root Zone LGR in the future that make it necessary to review or revise the LGR for that script. In that case, the Generation Panel will be re-activated or re-constituted, as needed.

3.2 Meetings and Logistics

The work of the Generation Panels may require some face-to-face meetings

Each panel decides its own face-to-face and teleconference meeting schedule, including the frequency and location of these meetings. Funding for any face-to-face meetings must be secured by the members. In addition, regular, typically weekly telephone calls can be anticipated, with drafting work happening in between the meetings. Each panel is expected to secure communication logistics.

3.3 Reports

The Generation Panel is expected to issue public reports on its ongoing work on a quarterly basis as well as submit to public comment any submissions it makes to the Integration Panel. Reports and submissions for publication should be sent to invarianttlds@icann.org. The [project website](#), maintained and regularly updated by ICANN, will provide a central public location for these reports. ICANN will also manage the public comment process and make results accessible to both Generation Panels and the Integration Panel.

The Generation Panel maintains a current list of members and reports any desired changes to ICANN by sending updated information to invarianttlds@icann.org. In case of an addition, membership establishment guidelines will apply. The Generation Panel also maintains contact addresses for use by the public, ICANN and the Integration Panel on the [project website](#). The site will be maintained by ICANN staff based on information and updates submitted by e-mail by Generation Panel chair or designated representative.

3.4 Acting Secretary

While the Chair of the Generation Panel is formally responsible for issuing reports or submissions, this work may be delegated to another member, acting as secretary for the Generation Panel. When that is the case, the member acting in that capacity must be so designated and also listed as a contact.

4 Tools and other Support

4.1 Tools

ICANN is developing a set of tools to convert data in the LGR submission format, to and from formats more similar to existing IDN table formats. Once finalized, tools and corresponding tutorials will be made available on the [project website](#).

4.2 Other support

ICANN hosts a [project website](#) with sections dedicated to the Integration Panel and each of the formed Generation Panels.

The following mailing lists are provided by ICANN in support of the project:

- invarianttlds@icann.org : email address to contact ICANN staff on general matters related to the project, to submit Generation Panel statement of interests, work reports, updates, etc.
- LGR@icann.org : mailing list to facilitate communications between the Integration Panel, Advisors and Generation Panels on matters related to LGR work and submissions of LGR proposals; Integration Panel members and appropriate ICANN staff are automatically subscribed and receive postings directed to this address; Generation Panels' members will be automatically subscribed to this list once panels' memberships are established; public archives of mailing list communications are available at <http://mm.icann.org/pipermail/lgr/>.

- vip@icann.org : public mailing list for discussions on issues related to IDN Variant TLDs and the LGR; subscribe to this mailing list by completing: <https://mm.icann.org/mailman/listinfo/vip>; public archives of mailing list communications are available at <http://mm.icann.org/pipermail/vip/>.
- Upon request, ICANN will host a public mailing list for discussions among the members of a Generation Panel; the mailing list address will be made available on Generation Panel dedicated page along with its public archives.

5 Outline for proposal to establish a Generation Panel

The following is an outline of recommended topics to cover in the proposal to establish Generation Panel:

1. General information
 - a. Script for which the panel is to be established: List the ISO 15924 script code (from <http://www.unicode.org/iso15924/iso15924-codes.html>) plus the English and native names of script. If a panel is proposed for multiple scripts, the panel should list information for all scripts under each heading.
 - i. Principal languages using that script: List Language code and name for each (from ISO 639-3)
 - ii. Geographic territories or countries with significant user communities for the script, Are there related scripts? If so, which ones?
 - iii. This section should also include scripts that could be covered by a different panel, but are structurally or historically related.
2. Proposed initial composition of panel
 - a. List prospective chair and members
 - b. Provide details of members' relevant expertise and experience
 - c. Provide details of organizations represented
 - d. Provide details on the prospective panel's diversity: How are principal languages and significant communities represented?
 - e. Is this panel based on an existing working group? Please provide details.
3. Work plan
 - a. Suggested Timeline, listing of significant milestones: How soon can the panel start the work? How long would it take until a submission to the Integration Panel?
 - b. Proposed schedule of meeting and teleconferences
 - c. Anticipated need for logistic support, such as mailing list?
 - d. Does the panel expect to call on ICANN provided advisors? List types of expertise for which the panel will call on external advisors, if known.

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4. **Other information:** Provide additional information that could help ICANN review this proposal. ICANN may also request further information during the review of the proposal.