

CWG-UCTN: Second Progress Report (draft)

Cross-Community Working Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs
16 June 2016 (V1)

Purpose of Progress Report

This progress report provides a concise summary of the CWG's achievements to date and an overview of its upcoming milestones. The report is intended to inform the community and encourage any interested party to contribute to its work and discussions.

Please note that the community is welcome to join the CWG's meeting during ICANN53 on [Monday, 22 June 2015, 13:00-14:30](#) local time.

Decisions of the CWG-UCTN

1. The CWG has confirmed that the policies identified by the [Study Group](#) are up-to-date, including its typology (see [First Progress Report](#)).
2. The CWG has decided that its substantive discussions should focus on 2-letter codes, 3-letter codes and full length of country and territory names for use as top-level domains.
3. CWG members agreed to draft a Straw Man Options Paper structured along the three substantive issues that guide its discussions. The paper also contains a background section on the historic development of country and territory names as top-level domains (both in code and full-length form).
4. The CWG has reached out to the GAC's Working Group on the Protection of Geographic Names in the new gTLD Program to facilitate coordinated policy development wherever possible.

Working Progress To Date

2-LETTER CODES

The CWG has used its Straw Man Options Paper to collect important, historical background information, to provide an overview of existing policies, and to lay out potential options for future policy recommendations. The focus of these discussions has been 2-letter codes—currently exclusively allocated as country code top-level domains. The CWG has encouraged members to put forward their views on the issue of 2-letter codes as top-level domains to understand better the various views currently represented among its members.

Arguments from members supporting the existing policy that 2-letter codes in US-ASCII script are exclusively allocated as country code top-level domains and should not become part of any new generic top-level domains include (but are not limited to):

- Prevent user confusion resulting from a significant change in policy as the distinction between ccTLDs and gTLDs will become blurred

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- As new countries are created, ‘their’ ccTLD might no longer be available if it has been previously allocated as a gTLD
 - Brand-building efforts of ccTLDs will be depreciated by opening 2-letter codes to gTLDs

Arguments pointing to the benefit of opening 2-letter codes to the gTLD space include (but are not limited to):

- Allowing equal treatment between 2-letter IDN codes and 2-letter US-ASCII codes
- As some ccTLDs operate effectively as gTLDs, the distinction between the two has become blurred already
- Would allow two-letter trademark holders (e.g. VW or HP) to obtain ‘their’ top level domain

DEFINITIONS

Moreover, the CWG is in the process of completing a list of definitions in relation to the use of country and territory names as top-level domains. This list has also been added to the Straw Man Options Paper. All definitions are still works in progress and include:

- Country Codes: Standard (i.e. ISO) lists of 2 and 3 letter abbreviations of country names;
- ISO 3166-1: The international standard developed, and maintained by the International Standards Organization (ISO).

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GAC’S WORKING GROUP ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES IN THE NEW GTLD PROGRAM

Due to the remit proximity with the GAC Working Group on Geographic Names in the New gTLD Program, CWG members have reached out to their GAC colleagues. A comment explaining the CWG’s views on the GAC’s efforts was submitted in December 2014. There was also an exchange of views during meetings at ICANN52. In addition, GAC members have been repeatedly invited to attend CWG meetings—and have done so on numerous occasions. One concern is that the potentially overlapping remits of the two groups might lead to conflicting policies being developed. CWG members are aware of this issue and will continue to reach out to the GAC and coordinate efforts as much as possible to allow for coordinated work efforts to take place. Meetings during ICANN53 are planned, and GAC members have been invited to join the CWG for its public meeting.

Next Steps

At its meeting during ICANN53, the CWG will continue its discussion on two-letter codes. Once the CWG has agreed on a preliminary way forward on this issue, the members will tackle 3-letter codes. The CWG is contemplating sending a request for input to all of ICANN's supporting organizations and advisory committees on 3-letter codes to gather an overview of opinions and thereby kick-start its substantive discussion.

Close relations with the GAC will be maintained to facilitate coordination wherever possible. The current timeline projects that the CWG will present an initial proposal on both 2-letter and 3-letter codes during ICANN54. An Initial Report that also includes the use of full-length country and territory names as top-level domains will be completed in time for ICANN55.

Background

In March 2014, the ccNSO and GNSO Councils adopted the [Charter of the CWG](#). According to the Charter, the objective of the CWG is to draw upon the collective expertise of the participating SOs and ACs and others. Based on the initial analysis of the ccNSO Study Group on the Use of Names of Countries and Territories as TLDs, the CWG then set out to:

1. Further review the current status of representations of country and territory names, as they exist under current ICANN policies, guidelines and procedures;
2. Provide advice regarding the feasibility of developing a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SOs and ACs;
3. Provide detailed advice as to the content of the framework, should such a framework be deemed feasible.

The scope of the CWG is limited to representations of names of countries, territories and their subdivisions, listed on or eligible to be listed in the Alpha-2 code of the International Standard for country codes and codes for their subdivisions (ISO 3166-1), and the use of these country and territory names as top-level domains. Out of scope of the CWG's remit and therefore excluded from discussions are:

1. Other geographical indicators, such as regions;
2. The use of country and territory names as second or other level.

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