

### 4.3.1 Reserved Names

- 4.3.1.1 *Explanation of Subject*

In support of the PDP on the Introduction of New Generic Top-Level Domains, the GNSO Council created the Reserved Names Working Group (RN-WG), which was tasked with developing recommendations regarding the role and treatment of reserved domain names at the first and second level within New gTLDs. The RN-WG worked to develop a set of reserved names definitions that would apply:

- At the top-level regarding gTLD string restrictions;
- At the second-level as contractual conditions, and;
- At the third-level as contractual conditions, where applicable.

The RN-WG reviewed, considered, and integrated recommendations found in the GAC Principles Regarding New gTLDs<sup>1</sup> and the IDN-WG Final Report<sup>2</sup>, eventually developing a set of final recommendations, available in the group's final report, published in May of 2007<sup>3</sup>. This report was reviewed and the recommendations were updated at ICANN29 in Puerto Rico, in particular affecting recommendations related to IDNs. These final recommendations were then integrated into the PDP on the Introduction of New Generic Top-Level Domains, where they can be found in the Final Report under Term of Reference - Selection Criteria, section 4, regarding Recommendation 5. Recommendation 5 states very simply that:

*Strings must not be a Reserved Word.*

The 2007 Final Report provides the specific top-level, second-level, and third-level string restrictions.

The implementation of Recommendation 5 was not merely a list of strings that applicants were prevented from applying for and instead, were integrated into a number of elements regarding the string reviews described in the AGB. For instance, while there was a list of top-level reserved names in section 2.2.1.2.1 of the AGB, the RN-WG recommendations also guided the development of the technical string requirements in section 2.2.1.3.2 of the AGB on string composition for ASCII and IDN strings as well as the Geographic Names requirements in section 2.2.1.4.2 of the AGB.

- 4.3.1.2 *Questions and Concerns Related to Subject*

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<sup>1</sup> GAC Principles Regarding New gTLDs: <https://archive.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/gac-principles-regarding-new-gtlds-28mar07-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> IDN-WG Final Report: <http://gnso.icann.org/en/drafts/idn-wg-fr-22mar07.htm>

<sup>3</sup> RN-WG Final Report: <http://gnso.icann.org/en/issues/new-gtlds/final-report-rn-wg-23may07.htm>

The Reserved Names list and string requirements were intended to provide a measure of certainty to applicants in selecting their strings, which given the inability to change their string after application submission, was of utmost importance. It was acknowledged that these provisions might not be fully comprehensive, as evidenced by the existence of the DNS Stability review described in section 2.2.1.3.1 of the AGB.

DG members noted that the string requirements should be re-examined, to determine if the policy could be changed in regards to things like special characters, 2 letter strings, single letter strings, etc. The DG also noted that the requirements around geographic names may require debate as well, as issues were encountered around certain strings, especially those that related to geographic regions or regional indicators as identified in the GAC's Beijing Communiqué from 2013<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, country or territory names were unavailable in the 2012 New gTLD Program round per the guidance in section 2.2 of the GAC Principles Regarding New gTLDs:

*ICANN should avoid country, territory or place names, and country, territory or regional language or people descriptions, unless in agreement with the relevant governments or public authorities.*

A potential PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures could consider collaborating with other parts of the ICANN community, such as the GAC or ccNSO in particular, in determining if strings described above should be allowed and if so, what requirements would be needed to govern that process. The PDP-WG should also consider the work of the Cross-Community Working Group on Use of Country/Territory Names as TLDs before reaching any conclusions.

- *4.3.1.3 Relevant Guidance*
  - Recommendation 2
  - Recommendation 5
  - Reserved Names Working Group (RN-WG) Final Report - <http://gnso.icann.org/en/issues/new-gtlds/final-report-rn-wg-23may07.htm>
  - Excerpts from RN-WG Report - <http://gnso.icann.org/en/issues/new-gtlds/excerpts-gnso-reserved-names-wg-report-22oct08.pdf>
  - GAC Principles Regarding New gTLDs - <http://gnso.icann.org/en/issues/new-gtlds/pdp-dec05-fr-parta-08aug07.htm>
  - Cross-Community Working Group on Use of Country/Territory Names as TLDs - <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/ccwg-unct.htm>
  - Protection of IGO-INGO Identifiers in all gTLDs - <http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/igo-ingo>
  
- *4.3.1.4 Rationale for Policy Development*

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<sup>4</sup> GAC Beijing Communiqué:  
[https://gacweb.icann.org/download/attachments/27132037/Beijing%20Communique%20april2013\\_Final.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1365666376000&api=v2](https://gacweb.icann.org/download/attachments/27132037/Beijing%20Communique%20april2013_Final.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1365666376000&api=v2)

If a potential PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures recommends that material changes are needed to Recommendation 5 or the composition of the Reserved Names list, as noted in Specification 5 of the base agreement, and its usage within the program, policy development is likely needed.