Simplifying the Process

The new gTLD ~~round~~ application round opened on 11 January 2012, generating 1930 applications, a victim of its success. Since the first delegations began on 23 October 2013 some 1000 new gTLDs have been delegated and it is estimated that by the end of 2017 all applications will have come to the end of their "lifecycle"[1][1]. While thorough reviews of the overall operation and implementation of the programme have been, are and will continue to be carried out, the assessment of the CCT review team on the effectiveness of the application and evaluation process is that useful improvements have been identified and should be introduced in any future expansion of gTLDs.

It would be useful to better assess the costs and benefits to applicants of expansion of the gTLD space. While the application fee (set at an amount that is revenue neutral to ICANN) alone does not appear to have been a major barrier to entry (with the possible exception of some potential applicants from the global south), there are clearly significant costs to applicants to prepare and submit applications, review and apply the terms and conditions of the Applicant Guidebook, follow objection and review procedures, adapt to public policy requirements etc. Depending on technological developments and future innovations, the benefits and attractions of owning and using new gTLDs may diminish or may increase. In any event, an approximate assessment of expected costs compared to expected benefits (possibly according to type of applicant) would give a better ICANN and the gTLD community a better overview of the potential demand and likely uptake of future gTLDs.

While the ICANN report Program Implementation Review of 29 January 2016 provides a valuable overview and assessment of the application and evaluation process under the new gTLD programme, it could be benefit from an *update in early January 2017 to further refine, and possibly add to, its conclusions and recommendations based on additional experience during 2016*.

Commented [1]: Opinion not supported by data that should be deleted.

Commented [2]: I don't see what this has to do with the application and evaluation processes. A cost benefit analysis of the program would take into account much more than simply the application and evaluation phases. I also don't think that it is appropriate for the CCT-RT to ask ICANN to perform this analysis. Rather, this falls more appropriately under policy development. Even there, it would have to include some very specific direction as to how to perform the analysis.

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[1] See ICANN report on Program Implementation Review (29 January 2016), p. 10