

4.2.11 Communications

- 4.2.11.1 *Explanation of Subject*

Implementation Guideline C states that:

ICANN will provide frequent communications with applicants and the public including comment forums.

There are at least a few aspects to communications. One aspect relates to ICANN's communications plan that sought to increase global awareness of the significant changes that the New gTLD Program represented. The intention was to target audiences beyond potential applicants, as the expansion of the DNS impacts more than just that particular audience. ICANN published a working draft of its communications plan in May of 2011¹, which was authorized by the ICANN Board to serve as the basis for ICANN's global outreach and education activities for the program².

Another aspect of communications is related to the processes to facilitate dialogue between applicants and ICANN, which was primarily supported through the Customer Portal, although ICANN also employed the use of webinars, roadshows, and sessions at ICANN meetings, among other methods, to facilitate dialogue between the community and ICANN.

Lastly, as noted in Implementation Guideline C, ICANN had need to support a mechanism to collect public comment, which it accomplished by establishing the Application Comments Forum³.

- 4.2.11.2 *Questions and Concerns Related to Subject*

The DG Members raised concerns primarily around the communications between ICANN and applicants and ICANN's outreach activities.

ICANN-Applicant Communications

DG Members noted issues with receiving answers to questions submitted through the Customer Portal, both related to the adequacy and consistency of the response as well as timeliness in delivery. In addition, members also felt that equal access to information could be improved, perhaps with the creation of a robust knowledge base. While ICANN created knowledge base

¹ ICANN's draft communications plan: <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/about/historical-documentation/matrix-plans>

² ICANN Board resolution approving the communications plan: <https://www.icann.org/resources/board-material/resolutions-2011-06-20-en>

³ Application Comments Forum available here: <https://gtldcomment.icann.org/comments-feedback/applicationcomment/login>

articles for the purpose of equal access to information, this approach may be less timely and expansive than a searchable knowledge base likely could be.

Some DG Members expressed concerns in the way that ICANN shared information, highlighting webinars in particular as potentially insufficient in properly distributing information.

The PDP-WG could consider reaching out to ICANN's GDD team to see whether they may have statistics on their ability to achieve Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and metrics to help the PDP-WG understand, for instance, what elements of the program may have induced the most customer support cases.

Outreach

The DG's concerns relating to ICANN's outreach efforts were primarily focused around the perceived lack of outreach to Developing Countries, providing the lack of Applicant Support Program uptake as evidence of these shortcomings. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.2.14 on Support for Applicants From Developing Countries.

In addition to that specific element, a potential PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures may want to consider suggesting targeted groups or sectors, communication methods, as well as metrics to help identify if the communications plan was effective. A PDP-WG may also want to consider what themes should be conveyed and to what parties, as it may be beneficial to customize messaging based on the needs of the particular demographic.

- *4.2.11.3 Relevant Guidance*
 - Implementation Guideline C
 - ICANN Draft Communications Plan - <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/about/historical-documentation/matrix-plans>
- *4.2.11.4 Rationale for Policy Development*

The DG did not anticipate policy development work directly related to Communications. However, a potential PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures may want to consider providing implementation guidance related to communication methods, goals for communications, success criteria, and other elements.