

Subject: Re: WT4 CQ Data Request

Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 at 6:51:25 PM Pacific Standard Time

From: Christine Willett

To: Steve Chan

CC: Julie Hedlund, Emily Barabas

Dear Steve,

Thank you for the email further describing the request for Clarifying Questions (CQs) from the Work Track 4 (WT4) team. We fully support the efforts of the WT4 team in identifying improvements to the New gTLD Program application questions from the 2012 New gTLD round.

Based upon our review of the request made by the WT4 team, we have identified a few options to address this request. To inform WT4's discussions, we have also provided timing, resource, and budget implications associated with each option. These options are:

1. Compile and share existing information and resources regarding application questions and clarifications

ICANN org could compile and share the documentation and resources that have previously been published or provided to applicants to assist them with application submission and CQ responses. This would include items such as Applicant Advisories, CQ counts by Application Question, etc.

Feasibility: Though not budgeted, we anticipate that this option would be low-cost, require minimal staff effort, and the results could be provided within a few weeks of the request.

2. Org staff perform review of CQs

ICANN org to collate and review the population of CQs, and provide a summary of areas for which CQs were issued.

Feasibility: We anticipate that this option would incur significant cost in staff effort and time. Heavy involvement of staff with a high-level of expertise and knowledge of the application evaluation criteria would be needed in order to perform the work. However, as program activities have been largely completed, staff supporting the program have been reduced to accommodate current program operations. Current work would need to be re-prioritized in order to free up staff to work on this task. Results would likely take several months to generate once work had started.

3. 3rd Party Review of CQ Process

A 3rd party consultant could review the CQ process and summarize the challenges experienced by applicants as well as make recommendations for possible changes to the application questions to minimize the need for CQs in future New gTLD rounds. This would be a minimal review of the CQ process and would not include detailed analysis and breakdown (metrics) of the entire population of CQs. ICANN org would likely need to consider the use of application data for such analysis in light of GDPR.

Feasibility: This option would be a higher cost solution and is currently not budgeted. It would require appropriate approval for budget allocation from the New gTLD Program budget. This would require some staff involvement to support the vendor activities. The current level of staff supporting the program have been reduced to accommodate current program operations. In order to accommodate this effort, current work would need to be re-prioritized in order to free up staff to work on this task. Once begun, this effort is estimated to require 3-6 months to complete.

4. **Solicit recommendations from the panel evaluation firms**

ICANN org could forward questions submitted by the WT4 team to the firms that performed technical panel evaluations. The firms could be asked to list challenges identified during the evaluation process as well as recommendations for improving the application questions.

Feasibility: This would be a relatively low-cost option. There might be some difficulty in contacting the original members of the evaluation team as that work was performed several years ago. The requests could be sent to the evaluation firms soon after the WT4 team submits their questions to ICANN org. If able and willing to respond, the evaluation firms could respond within a few months of receiving the request.

5. **Survey of applicants to solicit feedback on application questions**

WT4 could perform a survey of the 2012 round applicants to solicit feedback on challenges experienced. This could be performed via a tool, such as Survey Monkey, or via a public comment forum or solicitation of feedback via current ICANN systems. A similar survey of applicants was performed for the Competition, Consumer Trust & Consumer Choice Review Team (CCTRT) to gather information about the application submission process.

Feasibility: If the WT4 team were to develop the survey questions, this could be a relatively low-cost option. Basic response data could be provided to WT4 for analysis. The staff requirements for this would also be relatively low, presuming that an existing tool or process for collecting feedback is utilized. This solution could likely be launched within a few weeks, pending development of the survey questions by WT4. Several weeks should also be provided for applicants to respond to the survey. Should WT4 wish to engage the professional support of a survey design expert to draft survey questions, or additional support to aggregate or analyze responses, this would require engagement of a third-party vendor and the appropriate approval for budget allocation from the New gTLD Program budget.

We welcome the opportunity to work with WT4 on this effort. Should WT4 wish to further discuss or move forward with any of these options we stand ready to participate in discussions.

Best Regards,
Christine

Christine A. Willett
Vice President, Operations
Global Domains Division
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

From: Steve Chan <steve.chan@icann.org>
Date: Monday, November 20, 2017 at 8:23 PM
To: Christine Willett <christine.willett@icann.org>
Cc: Julie Hedlund <julie.hedlund@icann.org>, Emily Barabas <emily.barabas@icann.org>
Subject: WT4 CQ Data Request

Dear Christine,

We worked with the WT4 leadership to pull together a description of their request. I had formulated this draft with the specific request WT4 initially submitted (i.e., full CQs for public questions and the count of CQs for non-published questions), but it seems at this stage that they are not beholden to getting the information in such manner and they've changed the request accordingly. Please let us know if you have any questions and if there is anything we might be able to do to assist.

Work Track 4 (WT4) is aware that a very large number of clarifying questions were sent to applicants during the 2012 New gTLD Round, indicating that improving the clarity of the questions should result in less clarifying questions for future applications. The Work Track originally requested a copy of all of the clarifying questions issued by the evaluation panels and the corresponding responses from applicants. This was believed to enable WT4 to pinpoint the deficiencies in the base evaluation questions to greatly reduce the apparent disconnect between what was asked for in the AGB, what the applicant provided in response, and what the evaluators expected.

We understand that some challenges were identified in making that information available at this time.

It was then suggested by ICANN Org that an independent third party could be able to perform this analysis and provide to WT4, but it is our understanding that such a request would cost ICANN Org a good amount of money that has not been budgeted.

We are therefore asking for your help and assistance in coming up with other ways to review the clarifying questions and responses in line with the goal of improving the clarity of questions, which in turn would result in reducing the need for as many clarifying questions.

Best,
Steve

Steven Chan
Policy Director, GNSO Support

ICANN
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536
steve.chan@icann.org
mobile: +1.310.339.4410
office tel: +1.310.301.5800
office fax: +1.310.823.8649

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