At-Large Draft Final Report ccNSO Study Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs Workspace

Comment Close Date	Statement Name	Status	Assignee (s) and RALO(s)	Call for Comments	Call for Comments Close	Vote Announcement	Vote Open	Vote Reminder	Vote Close	Date of Submission	Staff Contact and Email	Statement Number
01.08.2013	Draft Final Report ccNSO Study Group on the Use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs	Adopted 10Y, 0N, 0A	Eduardo Diaz (NARALO)	08.07.2013	17.07.2013	n/a	18.07.2013 (ALAC Meeting in Durban)	n/a	18.07.2013	21.07.2013	Bart Boswinkel bart. boswinkel@icann.org	AL-ALAC-ST-0713-02-00-EN

Comment / Reply Periods (*)
Comment Open Date:
2 July 2013
Comment Close Date:
1 August 2013 - 23:59 UTC
Reply Open Date:
2 August 2013
Reply Close Date:
30 August 2013 - 23:59 UTC

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Brief Overview
Originating Organization:
ccNSO Study group on the use of country and territory names as
Categories/Tags:

- Policy Processes
- Top-Level Domains
- Transparency/Accountability

Purpose (Brief):
The treatment of country and territory names as Top Level Domains is a topic that has been discussed by theccNSO, GAC, GNSO, ALAC and the ICANN Board for a number of years.

Issues regarding the treatment of representations of country and territory names have arisen in a wide range ofICANN policy processes, including the IDN fast track, IDN ccPDP, and the development of the new gTLDApplicant guidebook.

It is in recognising the absence of the importance of country and territory names to a wide range of stakeholders, that the ccNSO Council convened the Study Group on the use of Country and Territory Names. The Study Group has completed its work and is now seeking feed-back and input from the ICANN community.
Current Status:
The Study Group informs the ICANN community of the results of its study and seeks public comment and feed-back on its draft Final report, in particular on its observations and recommendations.
Next Steps:
The Study Group will closely review all submitted comments to determine, at its reasonable discretion, whether the report needs to modified based on the comments received.

The Study Group expects to formally publish its Final Report in September 2013
Staff Contact:
Bart Boswinkel
Email Staff Contact

Detailed Information
Section I: Description, Explanation, and Purpose:
The Study Group on the use of Country and Territory Names ("the Study Group") was established by a resolution of the ccNSO Council on 8 December 2010. The Study Group was tasked with developing an overview of:

- The way in which the names of countries and territories are currently used within ICANN, be it in the form of policies, guidelines and/or procedures;
- The types of strings, relating to the names of countries and territories that currently used, or proposed to be used, as TLDs; and
- The issues that arise (or may arise) when current policies, guidelines and procedures are applied to these representations of country and territory names.

The Study Group is comprised of representatives from across the ICANN stakeholder community and conducted its work between May 2011 and June 2013.

In summary, the Study Group developed the following comments and observations:

- Throughout its deliberations, the Study Group observed an incredible level of complexity associated with any attempt to definitively categorize country or territory names, especially when such an effort includes multiple languages or scripts.
- A consistent observation was the inability of individual "lists" or resources to provide comprehensive, consistent or universal guidance regarding the various representations of country and territory names, in particular as a result of geo-political changes, the creation of new countries and the dissolution of others.
- ICANN's current policies and procedures (as they may relate to ccTLDs, IDNs or current and potential new gTLDs) do not afford consistent treatment of country and territory names. This may give rise to stakeholder and end-user confusion and uncertainty.
- ICANN's current policy framework (the Applicant Guidebook) for the introduction of new gTLDs affords an unprecedented level of protection for country and territory names, though notes that such protections are only confirmed for the first and current round of new gTLD applications.
- The current Fast Track and IDN ccTLD policy are restricted. The major restrictions are the requirements that:

    ○ the IDN ccTLD string is a meaningful representation in a designated language of the territory, and
    ○ only one string per designated language

    If adopted the IDN ccTLD policy should be reviewed in five years, which includes a review of these restrictions.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that the ccNSO Council establish a cross community working group to:
    ○ Further review the current status of representations of country and territory names, as they exist under current ICANN policies, guidelines and procedures;
    ○ Provide advice regarding the feasibility of developing a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SO's and AC's; and
    ○ Should such a framework be deemed feasible, provide detailed advice as to the content of the framework.

      The GNSO, ALAC and GAC should be invited to participate in such a WG.
- In light of the need for further work on the treatment of country and territory names, the complexity of the issue at hand and the aforementioned inconsistencies between various ICANN policies, it is also recommended that the ccNSO Council request that the ICANN Board extend the current rule in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook regarding the exclusion of all country and territory names in all languages, for consecutive rounds of new gTLD applications.

Section II: Background:
The treatment of country and territory names as Top Level Domains is a topic that has been discussed by theccNSO, GAC, GNSO, ALAC and the ICANN Board for a number of years.

Issues regarding the treatment of representations of country and territory names have arisen in a wide range ofICANN policy processes, including the IDN fast track, IDN ccPDP, and the development of the new gTLDApplicant guidebook.

References to country and territory names and their use are also present in guidelines such as the GAC's "Principles and Guidelines for the Delegation and Administration of Country Code Top Level Domains" and "Principles regarding new gTLDs", foundation documents such as RFC1591 and administrative procedures such as those followed by IANA, in accordance with ISO3166-1, in the delegation and redelegation of ccTLDs.

However, there has never been an overarching, cross-constituency study undertaken on how country and territory names are used across the ICANN community. There is no analysis of how the various rules and procedures relating to how country and territory names are used, whether there are inconsistencies between each, whether current frameworks are appropriate, and consideration of whether a more unified policy approach is required, or desirable.

It is in recognising the absence of such a study, and the importance of country and territory names to a wide range of stakeholders, that the ccNSO Council convened the Study Group on the use of Country and Territory Names.

In September 2011, the Study Group formally corresponded with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in order to seek UNESCO's expert views upon the use of country and territory names as they pertain to the internationalization of the Internet.

The approach was made in accordance with ICANN's Co-operation Agreement with UNESCO to promote linguistic diversity on the Internet, which was signed in December 2009.

Based upon this high-level agreement, Study Group members and UNESCO commenced work on developing a survey that could be circulated to UNESCO Member States. The survey was based upon the typology developed by the Study Group and was intended to serve as both a test of the typology and an exercise for gathering the expert input of UNESCO Member States on their perspectives relating to country and territory names.

It was determined that, for the sake of administrative and methodological expediency, the survey would be sent to a subset of Member States that display appropriate linguistic, script and geographical diversity.
Section III: Document and Resource Links:
The Interim Report can be found at:

http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-final-02jul13-en.pdf [PDF, 705 KB]

Additional Resources:

Further information on the Study Group is available at: http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unctwg.htm
Section IV: Additional Information:
Throughout the early stages of the Study Group's working schedule, group members also identified, and shared with other ICANN stakeholders, issues which were outside of the group's scope. These included:

- Developing a formal definition of what is and isn't a ccTLD
- Intervening in first round of the new gTLDs process
- Passing judgement on the effectiveness or appropriateness of previous policy approaches
- Making recommendations for additional protections for country and territory names
- Developing a definitive recommendation for how country and territory names should be treated in future policy processes.

It should be noted that the Study Group also determined that, in order to ensure its deliberations were expansive and comprehensive, it would address a very wide range of possible representations of country of territory names. As a guiding principle, the group attempted to capture and assess the many possible representations of the names of sovereign States that *may* bechosen, and how this would impacted, and be dealt with, by existing policy structures within ICANN.

However, the group stressed throughout its outreach to community members that this thorough approach was not, at any stage, an attempt to expand the definition of "country and territory names" in the ICANN policy context, nor an endorsement for the expansion of current protections.

Making these clarifications was an important part of the Study Group's preliminary work, as it helped set a clear focus and work plan for the group, prevented internal misunderstandings and also allayed some of the community's concerns and possible misunderstandings about the intended outcomes of the Study Group.

(*) Comments submitted after the posted Close Date/Time are not guaranteed to be considered in any final summary, analysis, reporting, or decision-making that takes place once this period lapses.

FINAL VERSION TO BE SUBMITTED IF RATIFIED

Please click here to download the PDF below.

FINAL DRAFT VERSION TO BE VOTED UPON BY THE ALAC

The ALAC recognizes the importance of the work carried by the ccNSO Study Group (ccSG) on the use of country and territory names and empathizes with its efforts in trying to shuffle through the complexity involved in categorizing them.

The ALAC supports all ccSG recommendations and urges the ccNSO Council to readily accept its advice that the ICANN Board extends the current rule in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook regarding the exclusion of all country and territory names in all languages, for consecutive rounds of new gTLD applications. This extension should remain until the feasibility of creating a definitional framework to provide consistent treatment of these names is determined.

The ALAC congratulates all members of the ccSG Team on the quality of this valuable work and thanks them for their time and efforts. We look forward to working with the ICANN Community to implement these recommendations.

FIRST DRAFT SUBMITTED

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