



# Draft Implementation Plan for IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process

Please note that this is a discussion draft only. Potential IDN ccTLD requesters should not rely on any of the proposed details of the contained information as the program remains subject to further consultation and revision.

*Rev1.0: In this revision, clarification has been made to the IDNC WG position on IDN tables. The topic has been listed for public discussion in Module 7, and the deadline for submitting comments has been extended per the announcement following this document.*

*Rev2.0: In this revision, clarifications and updates have been made in accordance with public comments received on the previous version. In conjunction with this revision two papers, proposing implementation details on some open issues, have been released. All material is being posted to seek further community collaboration, in particular during the ICANN meeting in Mexico City, Mexico, March 1-6, 2009.*

*Rev2.0 is provided in both a redlined and a clean format.*

19 February 2009

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# Module 1

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## *General Introduction and Background Information*

This is version 2.0 of the Draft Implementation Plan for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process [as requested by the ICANN Board](#) at the ICANN meeting in Paris in June 2008.

The plan is based on recommendations provided by the [IDNC WG in its Final Report](#), as well as on public comments provided throughout the IDNC WG's online and public comment options.

The plan is presented in modules that will be further detailed and finalized for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process. The modules are:

Module 2: Fast Track Eligibility Requirements

Module 3: TLD String Criteria and Requirements

Module 4: Technical Committee Considerations

Module 5: Fast Track Request and Evaluation Process

Module 6: TLD Delegation Process

Module 7: Discussion of Additional Topics

To papers has been provided with supporting material to this plan:

- Proposed [Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers](#)
- Proposed [Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings](#)

### *1.1 Background Information*

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One of the most significant innovations for the Internet since its inception will be the introduction of top level Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs). These will offer many new opportunities and benefits for Internet users around the world by allowing them to establish and use domains in their native languages and scripts.

IDNs have been discussed in the ICANN community for many years. Initially, development focused on enabling the introduction of IDNs as registrations under existing top-level domains (TLDs), but in the past year especially focus has shifted to be on broadening the character repertoire available for use in top level strings.

Over the past years the introduction of IDN gTLDs was discussed in the context and as part of the new [gTLD program](#).

The consultation and discussion on the introduction of IDN ccTLDs was [initiated by the ICANN Board](#) at its meeting in São Paulo (December 2006). The Country Code Name Supporting Organization (ccNSO) and the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) were requested to collaborate, in consultation with the relevant technical community, to produce an issues paper on the selection of IDN ccTLDs associated with the two-letter codes described in the ISO 3166-1 standard.

The ccNSO and GAC formed a joint IDN working group, which published and submitted to the ICANN Board a list of issues relating to the introduction of IDN ccTLDs in June 2007.

Consultations and discussions of the IDN working group made it clear that several countries and territories have a pressing need for IDN ccTLDs. This realization initiated a discussion of the provisions needed for an interim approach to IDN ccTLDs to meet near-term demands and to gain experience with mechanisms for selecting and authorizing such TLDs that can inform a policy development process. The ICANN Board requested the ICANN community, including the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO), ccNSO, GAC, and the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), to collaboratively explore both an interim and an overall approach to IDN ccTLDs and recommend a course of action to the Board ([ICANN meeting, San Juan, June 2007](#)).

Following a ccNSO Council recommendation and broad support of the ICANN community, including the GAC, GNSO and ALAC, the ICANN Board asked the ALAC, ccNSO, GAC and GNSO chairs to set up an IDNC working group appoint its members and begin work in accordance with its [Charter](#) as soon as possible.

The IDNC WG was tasked to recommend mechanisms to introduce a limited number of non-contentious IDN ccTLDs, associated with the ISO 3166-1 two-letter codes, to meet near-term demand while the overall policy is being developed.

At the ICANN meeting in Paris (June 2008) the IDNC WG submitted its Final Report to the Board, including GAC and ccNSO statements on the proposed methodology. At its meeting in Paris the Board resolved:

*Resolved (2008.06.26.04), the Board thanks the members of the IDNC WG for completing their chartered tasks in a timely manner.*

*Resolved (2008.06.26.05), the Board directs staff to: (1) post the IDNC WG final report for public comments; (2) commence work on implementation issues in consultation with relevant stakeholders; and (3) submit a detailed implementation report including a list of any outstanding issues to the Board in advance of the ICANN Cairo meeting in November 2008.*

ICANN then posted the IDNC WG Final Report for public comments and began implementation as directed. Following the public comment period, ICANN posted a consolidated overview of the comments received and a document containing staff considerations of the comments received. During implementation, ICANN also submitted letters to relevant public authorities and ccTLD managers to seek information on their interest in participating in the Fast Track process.

This is the second revision of the Draft Implementation Plan. The two previous versions were posted right before and immediately following the ICANN meeting in Cairo, Egypt, 1–7 November 2008.

In preparing this revised Plan, ICANN took into consideration the comments received on the previous two versions; in particular public comments and input received through meetings, such as the ICANN meeting in Cairo on November 3–7, 2008. An analysis of these comments was released in a separate document together with this paper.

This revised plan, presents a Fast Track process that allows for IDN ccTLDs to be implemented. However, as outlined in the previous versions some open issues require further community collaboration. To attempt to resolve these issues, additional information have been included in this revised plan and two papers serving as proposed solutions on these open issues have been released.

- Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers
- Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings

All this material is being released to seek further community collaboration, in particular before and during the ICANN meeting in Mexico City on March 1–6, 2009. A public comment period for these papers will enable and document such community discussions. Comments received will be used to revise the plan in preparation of a Final Implementation Plan.

A full overview of activities and links to the materials related to the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process and its implementation can be viewed at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/>.

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# Module 2

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## *Participation Eligibility Requirements*

Participation in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process has been limited by the IDNC WG recommendations, as discussed in this module. The limitations were decided through community consultations, as described in Module 1. The primary reasons for making the limitations are that the process is experimental<sup>1</sup> in nature and should not pre-empt the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO PDP (Guiding Principles B and F from the IDNC WG Final Report). Further limitations are presented in Module 3.

### *2.1 ISO 3166-1 Representation*

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To be eligible to enter the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process, the country or territory must be represented in the International Standard ISO 3166-1 (Codes for the representation of names and countries and their subdivisions – Part 1: Country Codes). The exception to this requirement is the additional eligibility of the .eu for the European Union, which is exceptionally reserved on the ISO 3166-1 list and its scope extended in August 1999 to any application needing to represent the name European Union. See [http://www.iso.org/iso/support/country\\_codes/iso\\_3166\\_code\\_lists/iso-3166-1\\_decoding\\_table.htm#EU](http://www.iso.org/iso/support/country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists/iso-3166-1_decoding_table.htm#EU)

A country or territory represented on the ISO3166-1 list is eligible to participate in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process and to request an IDN ccTLD string that fulfills the additional requirements set forth in Module 3.

### *2.2 ccTLD Manager as Requester of an IDN ccTLD*

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Delegation requests are received by ICANN to appoint country-code top-level domains to a local manager (also known as a “Sponsoring Organization”). This manager may be the existing country-code top-level domain manager for ISO 3166-1 code, or a different entity. In either case, the organization must have the support from the country or territory corresponding to the relevant ISO 3166-1 entry, and must satisfactorily document this support in accordance with ICANN’s typical delegation evaluation procedures.

The evidence of support, or non-objection, from the relevant government or public authority is defined as a signed letter of

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that by “experimental,” the working group was commenting on the policy aspects of IDN introduction and not the technical aspects. IDNs have been tested in the root zone and technical implications of the introduction are generally well understood. All studies will be completed to ensure there is a full understanding that IDNs will have no deleterious effects on DNS interoperability, stability and security.

support, or non-objection, from the Minister with the portfolio responsible for domain name administration, ICT, foreign affairs or Office of the Prime Minister or President; or a senior representative of the agency or department responsible for domain name administration, ICT, Foreign Affairs or the Office of the Prime Minister.

The letter should clearly express the government or public authority's support, or non-objection, for the request.

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# Module 3

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## *TLD String Criteria and Requirements*

Conservative limitations for potential TLD strings have been proposed for this process due to its limited introductory nature and to safeguard against pre-empting the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO Policy Development Process. Limitations in this module are focused on criteria and requirements set for the TLD string itself and are defined here as a guide to participants.

### *3.1 Language and Script Criteria*

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The conditions for the language and script to be used for the selected TLD string are as follows:

The language must be an official language in the corresponding country or territory, and have legal status in the country or territory, or serve as a language of administration.

The language requirement is verified as follows:

1. If the language is listed for the relevant country or territory as an ISO 639 language in Part Three of the *Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of Geographical Names, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names* (the UNGEGN Manual) (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm>); or
2. If the language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant country or territory in ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10; or
3. If the relevant public authority in the country or territory confirms that the language is
  - a. used in official communications of the relevant public authority; and
  - b. serves as a language of administration.
4. Requests can only be for strings in scripts other than Latin; that is, other than the characters (a,...,z), either in their basic forms or with combining marks. Languages based on Latin script are not eligible for the Fast Track process (in accordance with Guiding Principle D from the IDNC WG Final Report).

### *3.2 Meaningfulness Requirement*

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The selected string for the IDN ccTLD must be a meaningful representation of the official name of the corresponding country



or territory. A string is deemed meaningful if it is in the official language of the country or territory and if it is:

- The name of the country or territory; or
- A part of the name of the country or territory denoting the country or territory in the selected language; or
- A short-form designation for the name of the country or territory that is recognizable and denotes the country or territory in the selected language.

The meaningfulness requirement is verified as follows:

1. If the requested string is listed in the UNGEGN manual, then the string fulfills the meaningfulness requirement.
2. If the requested string is not listed in the UNGEGN manual, then the meaningfulness must be substantiated, as in the following :

Submission and presentation of documentation from an internationally recognized linguistic expert or organization stating that the requested string meets the criteria.

ICANN is seeking external expertise in this area to further inform implementation of the process. Additional information will be made available as soon as it is obtained.

### *3.3 Number of Strings per Country or Territory*

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The number of strings that a country or territory can apply for is purposely not limited to a specific number (in accordance with Guiding Principle G in the IDNC WG Final Report). However, the following limitation applies:

- *One string per official language per country or territory.*

Given certain circumstances it is proposed to expand the concept of Guiding Principle G in order to meet the Fast Track Process intent of allocating strings for those countries and territories where an expressed need is demonstrated.

In limited cases it is suggested that identified variant strings will be allocated as top level string, such as for example in the case of traditional and simplified Chinese, see <http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-10feb09-en.htm>

The paper ("[Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings](#)") contains more details about how this expansion should be implemented, and has been posted together with this revised Draft Implementation Plan. Comments on this paper are sought in preparation for a Finalized Implementation Plan.

### 3.4 Technical String Criteria

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Meeting all the requirements in this section does not guarantee acceptance of a prospective top-level string, since the following subsections do not contain an exhaustive list of all requirements or restrictions. Technical requirements for IDN ccTLD strings and gTLD strings are equivalent and are established by technical standards developed by the IETF.

This section described technical criteria for strings only, requirements related to delegation (such as name server requirements) are considered in Module 6.

The IDNA protocol to be used for internationalized labels is under revision through the Internet standardization process (in the IETF). Following that revision completion in the IETF, additional requirements may be specified or the requirements specified here may be changed, in accordance with the finalized IDNA technical standard. The preference is to have the IDNA protocol revision completed before IDN TLDs are delegated; however, if this is not feasible then the technical requirements may be stricter for initial delegations. The current status of the protocol revision is documented at <http://tools.ietf.org/wg/idnabis/> and additional updates can be found at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/rfcs.htm>

#### 3.4.1 General Technical Requirements

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The following are general technical requirements that must be complied with for the IDN ccTLDs in A-label format.

The A-label (i.e., the label as transmitted on the wire) must be valid as specified in technical standards for *Domain Names: Implementation and Specification* (RFC 1035); and *Clarifications to the DNS Specification* (RFC 2181). This includes:

- The label must have no more than 63 characters. This includes the prefix (the four initial characters "xn--").
- Upper and lower case characters are considered to be syntactically and semantically identical.

The A-label must be a valid host name, as specified in technical standard *DOD Internet Host Table Specification* (RFC 952); and *Requirements for Internet Hosts — Application and Support* (RFC 1123). This includes:

- The label must consist entirely of letters, digits and hyphens.
- The label must not start or end with a hyphen.

#### 3.4.2 IDN Specific Technical Requirements

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This subsection details the specific technical string requirements for IDN strings. Requestors for these internationalized top-level strings

are assumed to be familiar with the IETF IDNA standards, Unicode standards, and IDN terminology.

The string must be a valid internationalized domain name, as specified in technical standards <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/rfcs.htm> or any revisions of this technical standard currently under consideration by the IETF. As a result, IDN-related technical requirements are subject to change. These are presented guidelines only and are not a complete statement of the requirements for IDNA specifications. The label:

- Must contain only Unicode code points that are defined as “Protocol Valid” and be accompanied by unambiguous contextual rules where necessary.
- Must be fully compliant with Normalization Form C, as described in *Unicode Standard Annex #15: Unicode Normalization Forms*. Examples appear in <http://unicode.org/faq/normalization.html>
- The string must consist entirely of characters with the same directional property. This requirement may change as the IDNA protocol is being revised to allow for characters having no directional property (as defined at <http://unicode.org/Public/UNIDATA/extracted/DerivedBidiClass.txt> ) to be available along with either a right-to-left or a left-to-right directionality.
- The string must not begin or end with a digit (in any script).

The string must meet the relevant criteria of the *ICANN Guidelines for the Implementation of Internationalized Domain Names*. This includes:

- All code points in a single string must be taken from the same script as determined by the *Unicode Standard Annex #24: Unicode Script Property*.

Exceptions to this guideline are permissible for languages with established orthographies and conventions that require the commingled use of multiple scripts. However, even with this exception, visually confusable characters from different scripts will not be allowed to coexist in a single set of permissible code points unless a corresponding policy and character table are clearly defined. Further, the IDN Guidelines contain a requirement for IDN registries to develop IDN Tables. The IDNC WG recommended the following for IDN Tables (for further discussion on this topic, see Module 7, Section 7.5):

*The language/script table to be used by the IDN ccTLD may already exist i.e. has been prepared by another Territory using the same language/script and was already submitted. In this case the selected delegate should indicate its intention to use that language/script table.*

*Territories using the same script are encouraged to cooperate in developing a language/script table, in accordance with IDN guidelines.*

Building on this recommendation from the IDNC WG Final report ICANN prepared and released a paper ("[Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top-level strings](#)"). See Module 7 for more details.

### ***3.5 Clarifications of Changes to the IDNC WG Technical Recommendations***

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In a few instances the technical requirements above deviate slightly from those recommended in the IDNC WG Final report. Some deviations in language exist because the protocol revision is still ongoing. Therefore, additional adjustments can be expected to the technical requirements before they are considered final. ICANN staff will remain in close contact with the technical community as the implementation of the Fast Track process progresses to ensure that the technical requirements are consistent with the protocol revision efforts.

## Overview of Technical String Requirement Changes

Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
1. There is no mixing of scripts	All code points in a single string must be taken from the same script as determined by the Unicode Standard Annex #24: Unicode Script Property.  Exceptions to this are permissible for languages with established orthographies and conventions that require the commingled use of multiple scripts. However, even with this exception, visually confusable characters from different scripts will not be allowed to co-exist in a single set of permissible code points unless a corresponding policy and IDN table is clearly defined.
<b>Rationale:</b> Given the fact that certain languages (for example Japanese) are expressed by using a mixing of scripts it was deemed inappropriate to completely prohibit mixing of scripts in a top level string, as long as adequate measures are in place to prevent unnecessary mixing of scripts. This is in line with the IDN Guidelines.	
Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
2. No names that are shorter than two characters in non-ASCII are used	Not available in technical requirement language
<b>Rationale:</b> The determination as to whether a string consists of a minimum of two characters is not considered a requirement that the Technical Committee should be verifying. This will instead be verified immediately when ICANN receives the request for an IDN ccTLD string so that any factual errors against this requirement are found as quickly as possible, and corrected if the requestor wishes to do so. Staff may seek linguistic expertise if necessary; however this is anticipated to be the exception not the norm.	
Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
3. It is demonstrated that the selected string in combination with the language/script table when being used, in for example e-mail addresses, URIs etc, does not create any rendering or other operational issues.	Not available in technical requirement language
<b>Rationale:</b> This requirement has been moved to the Request Template, where the requestor is required to (i) accept that IDNs can cause rendering problems in certain applications and (ii) demonstrate that all due caution has been taken into account in development of the TLD string and associated registration policies to avoid such rendering problems.  Requestors can become further familiar with these kinds of problems by understanding the IDNA protocol and in particular via the proposed new version of the IDNA protocol – or by active participation in the IDN wiki where some rendering problems can be demonstrated and experienced.  One example of a rendering problem can be for the potential TLD registry manager to demonstrate that they have tested that the character “x” (first character in their proposed TLD) has rendering problems together with the character “y” (that might be the end of the 2nd level domain). Because of this, the registration policy for this TLD prohibits all 2nd level domains that end with “y”.	
Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
4. Verification that the proposed code cannot be interpreted as any of the elements in the alpha-2 codes that is used by ISO 3166/MA (section 5.2 of ISO 3166-1:2006)	TBD
<b>Rationale:</b> Proposal is to let the technical requirement stand as it is recommended, but apply support to the Technical Committee to allow them to align this confusability check with the process in the gTLD process and further to allow them to seek linguistic expertise in cases where there is doubt about confusability with ISO3166 strings. (See also discussions in Module 7).	

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# Module 4

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## *DNS Stability Technical Panel Considerations*

The role and responsibility of the Technical Committee (referred to as the DNS Stability Technical Panel) is to provide external and independent advice to the ICANN Board about whether, based on the documentation provided by the IDN ccTLD requester, a selected string meets the technical criteria. If the DNS Stability Technical Panel finds that the selected string does not meet one or more of the criteria, the request for the IDN ccTLD with that particular selected string is not eligible under the Fast Track. However, the committee can seek further clarification from the requester, if necessary, before providing its findings on the requested string.

In line with the IDNC WG Final Report, the external and independent DNS Stability Technical Panel should be appointed to conduct technical due diligence and report to the ICANN Board.

Previously, ICANN used the Registry Services Evaluation Process to evaluate proposed registry services such as the introduction of DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC) in existing gTLD registries, rapid zone updates, DNS wildcard entries, partial bulk transfer, release of previously reserved second-level domain names, add-grace period limits, and abusive use policies. High-level technical expertise performs these evaluations.

ICANN believes it is similarly feasible to use the existing Registry Services Technical Evaluation Panel (RSTEP) experts and attract additional technical and linguistic expertise to fulfill the duties of the DNS Stability Technical Panel.

### *4.1 Proposed DNS Stability Technical Panel Function*

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A core piece of the IDNC WG Final Report includes technical recommendations for the stability and security of the TLD string itself. These technical requirements are outlined in Module 2. While all requests in the Fast Track process will undergo a fast track admissibility check by staff, all requested strings must successfully pass a DNS Stability Technical Panel review for the requested IDN ccTLD string to continue through the Fast Track process.

It is proposed that the DNS Stability Technical Panel conducts initial examination on the strings submitted by prospective IDN ccTLD managers.

If the panel determines that strings need further review, a smaller three-member panel will be formed to conduct a DNS Stability Review.

The panel will review the string and determine whether the string will adversely affect the security or stability of the DNS.

The panel review will be conducted in 30 days or less, if possible.

If the panel determines that the applied for string does not comply with relevant standards or creates a condition that may adversely affect the throughput, response time, consistency or coherence of responses to Internet servers or end systems, then this decision will be communicated to ICANN staff and to the requester. The request for an IDN ccTLD cannot proceed if there is a decision against the string.

However, the panel may seek clarification from the requester if necessary. An extended review is likely not to be necessary for a string that fully complies with the string requirements referenced in Module 3, section 3.4. However, the string review process provides an additional safeguard if unanticipated security or stability issues arise concerning a requested IDN ccTLD string.

ICANN acknowledges that comments received are requesting more details on the topic of formation of the DNS stability Technical Panel, such as the selection criteria for appointing members to this panel. The panel will be formed through an open solicitation or tender and more details will be provided as soon as possible.

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# Module 5

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## *Fast Track Request and Evaluation Process*

This module gives an overview of the process for requesting an IDN ccTLD under the Fast Track process, and includes instructions for completing and submitting required supporting documentation and other necessary materials.

This module also discusses how to request help concerning the process, and the circumstances under which a submitted request can be withdrawn or terminated. A glossary of relevant terms is available online at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/idn-glossary.htm>

### *5.1 General Overview*

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An overview of the entire IDN ccTLD Fast Track process is presented in Figure 5.1. The three color-coded stages represent the three-stage methodology as recommended by the IDNC WG: the Preparation Stage; the Request Submission and String Evaluation Stage, and the Delegation Process Stage.

#### *5.1.1 The Preparation Stage*

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In the Preparation Stage, the requester undertakes preparatory work to enter the Fast Track process. Primary preparation activities include identification of:

- The language(s) and script(s) for the IDN ccTLD string(s),
- Selection of the string(s) and hence the name of country or territory for the IDN ccTLD(s), and
- The development of the associated IDN Table(s) and any potential variants required for linguistic reasons.

In addition, at this time the requester develops the required documentation of endorsements. Documentation of endorsements must include:

1. Support from the relevant government or public authority in the country or territory that the selected string is a meaningful representation of the country or territory name.
2. Support from the relevant government or public authority in the country or territory for the selected registry manager.

As previously mentioned the evidence of support, or non-objection, from the relevant government or public authority is defined as a signed letter of support, or non-objection, from the Minister with the portfolio responsible for domain name



administration, ICT, foreign affairs or Office of the Prime Minister or President; or a senior representative of the agency or department responsible for domain name administration, ICT, Foreign Affairs or the Office of the Prime Minister.

The letter should clearly express the government or public authority's support, or non-objection, for the request.

The involvement of the participants in the country or territory should be documented as described above in a manner similar to that required for a standard ccTLD delegation request, by the requester. See <http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/> for more details.

To support the requesters in preparing requests, ICANN will be launching a support function for guidance and support in the development of IDN related aspects of the requesters' IDN registration policy.

### ***5.1.2 The Request Submission and String Evaluation Stage***

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In the Request Submission and String Evaluation Stage, the requester submits a request for the selected string to be accepted by ICANN as eligible to be a representation of the country or territory. The request undergoes the defined evaluation steps, including:

- Request Admissibility Process Review
- String Confirmation Process
- Publishing of String and Delegation Readiness Verification Process

The steps in this Stage are described in further detail in the following subsections.

### ***5.1.3 The Delegation Process Stage***

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After a request has successfully passed the Request and Evaluation stage, it enters the Delegation Process Stage, during which the standard IANA Pre-Delegation process is applied before the request for delegation can be submitted for approval by the ICANN Board.

The Delegation Process Stage is described in further detail in Module 6.

Once the ICANN Board approves a request, the string is delegated in the DNS root, after which the IDN ccTLD manager can launch operations and start accepting registrations under the delegated IDN ccTLD.

## ***5.2 Submission of an IDN TLD Fast Track Request***

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Requests for IDN ccTLDs can be submitted to ICANN starting [Fast-Track opening date]. A template for the required information for such a request can be downloaded at [link to template, to be developed].

Requests must be submitted electronically to [to be determined], with any supporting documentation additionally provided in original form (or certified copies), and in addition requests must be submitted to ICANN in signed hard copy format at the following address:

ICANN  
4676 Admiralty Way Ste 330  
Marina del Rey, CA 90292  
USA

Attn: Request for an IDN ccTLD Fast Track

The applicant will be provided with a reference number to be associated with their request, to be used in for any follow-up queries associated with the string evaluation. IDN ccTLD Fast Track requests can be submitted at any time from the start date and until the finalization of the ccNSO PDP on IDNs (in accordance with Guiding Principle A from the IDNC WG Final Report). The end date for submission of a Fast Track request will be announced as soon as it is known.

Requests for IDN ccTLDs are expected to be processed manually due to the currently expected volume of requests. The expected volume is based loosely on the replies ICANN received to the request for information (RFI). Last year, in accordance with the IDNC WG recommendation, ICANN sent letters to countries and territories informing them about the Fast Track process and asked them to indicate their level of interest. The RFI was to gain an understanding of the interest of individual countries and territories participating in the Fast Track process. ICANN received 74 responses, with a small number of respondents requesting confidentiality. Of the 74 responses (omitting a small number that asked their replied be kept confidential), 31 expressed interest in participating in the Fast Track process, representing a total of 15 different languages. The remaining respondents were not interested in participating at this time or would not be eligible to obtain an IDN ccTLD under the terms of the process.

A more detailed analysis of responses to the RFI is provided online at <http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-10feb09-en.htm>

## ***5.3 ICANN Staff Support and Contact Functions***

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To support countries and territories in participating in the Fast Track, several contact points and support processes will be made

available. These support functions, described in greater detail in the following subsections, will be available to prospective IDN ccTLD managers in their preparation phase and again after the requested IDN ccTLD is delegated.

Potential conflicts - during the entire evaluation process, requesters must not approach, or have any other person or entity approach on their behalf, any ICANN staff member, any ICANN Board member, or any person associated with the evaluation process, including any evaluators, experts, examiners, or reviewers retained by ICANN.

ICANN will provide contact details to which applicants can submit enquiries on the process.

The exception to this case would be when or if a requester is approached by ICANN or its agents for clarification of information in the submitted request. In addition, some communication will occur during the standard ICANN function for delegation of the IDN ccTLDs and for providing root management services.

### ***5.3.1 General Contact Details***

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ICANN Regional Liaisons and Fast Track program office will be available to assist prospective IDN ccTLD managers in the Preparation Stage of the Fast Track process.

Region-based contact details will be made available for Fast Track participants to ensure that inquiries are responded to promptly within all time zones.

Answers to the most common questions about the Fast Track process will be made available in a FAQ on the Fast Track website at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/>

### ***5.3.2 Specific IDN Support Details***

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To support the requesters in preparing requests, ICANN will be providing a support function containing guidance and information in the development of elements related to requesters' IDN registration policy. This support function will be available in the Preparation Stage and again to an IDN ccTLD manager following delegation of the requested IDN ccTLD.

The following elements will be included in the IDN support process:

1. Review and implementation of IDN Guidelines, including support for understanding the details of the following requirements:
  - 1.1. Implementation of IDNA protocol requirements
  - 1.2. Defining script or language and sets thereof
  - 1.3. Development of IDN Table(s), including identifications of variants

- 1.4. Posting of IDN Table(s) in the IANA repository
- 1.5. Making all information available online
- 1.6. Identification of stakeholders that need to be consulted
2. Support and description of various available options for decision-making on implementation issues, such as:
  - 2.1. How to determine which characters to support (protocol validity, user survey, variants)
  - 2.2. Development of general registration policy (such as first-come-first-serve, grandfathering or other preregistration rights or intellectual property rights)
  - 2.3. Development of variant registration policy (such as bulk vs. block registrations)
  - 2.4. Definition of necessary tools and support functions related to registrar communication, support needs, and implementation topics in general.
  - 2.5. Support to development of more technical necessary tool, such as WHOIS capabilities, IDNA conversions, and more.

In developing IDN Tables and associated registrations policies, requesters are encouraged to work with other language communities that are using the same scripts as the basis for the languages they plan to facilitate.

ICANN will provide support and general assistance in these matters. ICANN will not provide legal or business advice for countries or territories, or potential or existing registry managers.

#### ***5.4 Termination Criteria for Submitted Requests***

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Several of the steps in the Fast Track process allow for a requester to withdraw a request. It is also possible that ICANN will terminate a request if the request contains certain errors. Errors resulting in termination include the following:

1. The requested string is already a string delegated in the DNS.
2. The requester does not correspond to a listing in the ISO3166-1 list.
3. The requested string consists of characters from the Latin script.
4. The language represented does not fulfill the language criteria for the corresponding country or territory.

If such errors are discovered, the requester will be informed of this result before the Termination Process is initiated. Details of the Termination Process are to be developed.

Other issues arising from a submitted request may delay the determination of whether the requested string should be delegated. Such delaying factors could include: (1) the requested string is already applied for in the Fast Track process, (2) the requested string is already applied for in the gTLD process, (3) the request does not contain support from the corresponding country or territory, and (4) the requested string is not included in the UNGEGN manual and it is not otherwise substantiated that the string is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country or territory. In all such cases the requester will be consulted for clarifications before any determination on the request is made.

While contention between strings is not expected and is unlikely to occur, the proposed procedure and rules for resolving such cases are described in Module 7, section 7.4.

## ***5.5 Processing of a Fast Track Request***

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Requests for IDN ccTLD(s) submitted to ICANN will be subjected to a series of manual evaluation reviews by ICANN staff and by outside appointed experts where required. Figure 5.1 outlines the overall process. The detailed processes are outlined in the following subsections and associated figures.

### ***5.5.1 Request Admissibility Process***

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The first activity after ICANN receives a request for an IDN ccTLD is a check performed on the admissibility of the request.

Here, ICANN staff verifies that all elements required in the Fast Track Request Template are included in the request, ensuring that there are no obvious administrative errors in the request.

This check identifies requests that are incomplete as quickly as possible. ICANN staff will inform the requester of this error, and the requester will be able to provide additional information at this time or withdraw the request and start over at a later time. If no errors are encountered, ICANN staff will notify the requester that the Request Admissibility Process is complete and passed.

### ***5.5.2 String Confirmation Process***

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The next step is the String Confirmation Process. This process is outlined in Figure 5.3 (see Appendix 1, Module 5) and is described in the following paragraphs.

The String Confirmation Process begins with a validation that the process for self-certification of linguistic requirements is complete. The requester will be consulted if issues are found and clarification will be sought. ICANN is developing a linguistic support function for requesters. Details of this support function are yet not available.

Once linguistic verification has been completed, the string and associated material will be forwarded to the DNS Stability Technical Panel (see Module 4 for details) and the technical string

check will begin. This is a detailed technical check in which all the technical string requirements referenced in Module 3 are applied and adherence verified. If technical issues on the selected string are discovered in this review the panel can request clarification from requester. If clarifications are either not sufficient or cannot be provided, the Termination Process will be initiated. See Section 5.4.

If the DNS Stability Technical Panel review reveals no technical issues the requester is notified that the String Confirmation Process is successfully completed and that the requested string will be posted publicly.

### ***5.5.3 Publishing of Requested String(s)***

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Following a successful outcome of the String Confirmation Process, the requested IDN ccTLD string will be posted publicly.

The ICANN website will contain an area dedicated to presenting strings that reach this step in the Fast Track process. RSS features of changes to this area will be made available.

### ***5.5.4 Delegation Readiness Verification Process***

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At this point all Stage 2 process requirements under the IDNC WG recommendations are considered successfully completed. ICANN staff will prepare a delegation readiness verification report for IANA staff. The requester will be notified that the formal IANA delegation process can begin and what further actions are necessary. The IANA delegation process is described further in Module 6.

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# *Appendix 1 to Module 5*

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Appendix 1: Figure 5.1: General Overview of the Fast Track Process; Stage 1: Preparation; Stage 2: Request Submission and String Evaluation; Stage 3: Delegation

Figure 5.2: String Confirmation Process

# IDN Fast Track Implementation Process

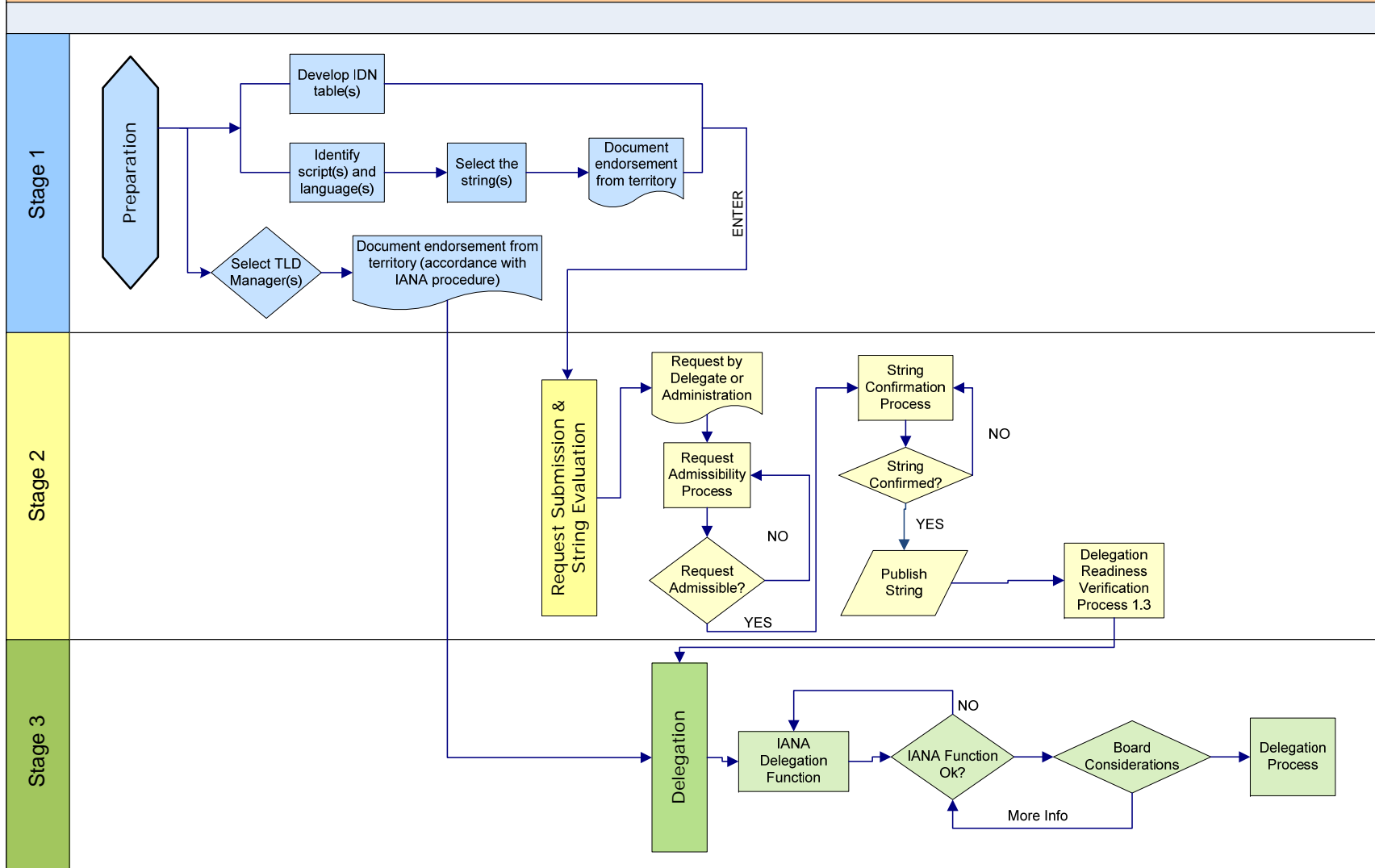


Figure 5.1: General overview of the Fast Track Process; Stage1: Preparation; Stage 2: Request Submission and String Evaluation; Stage 3: Delegation Process



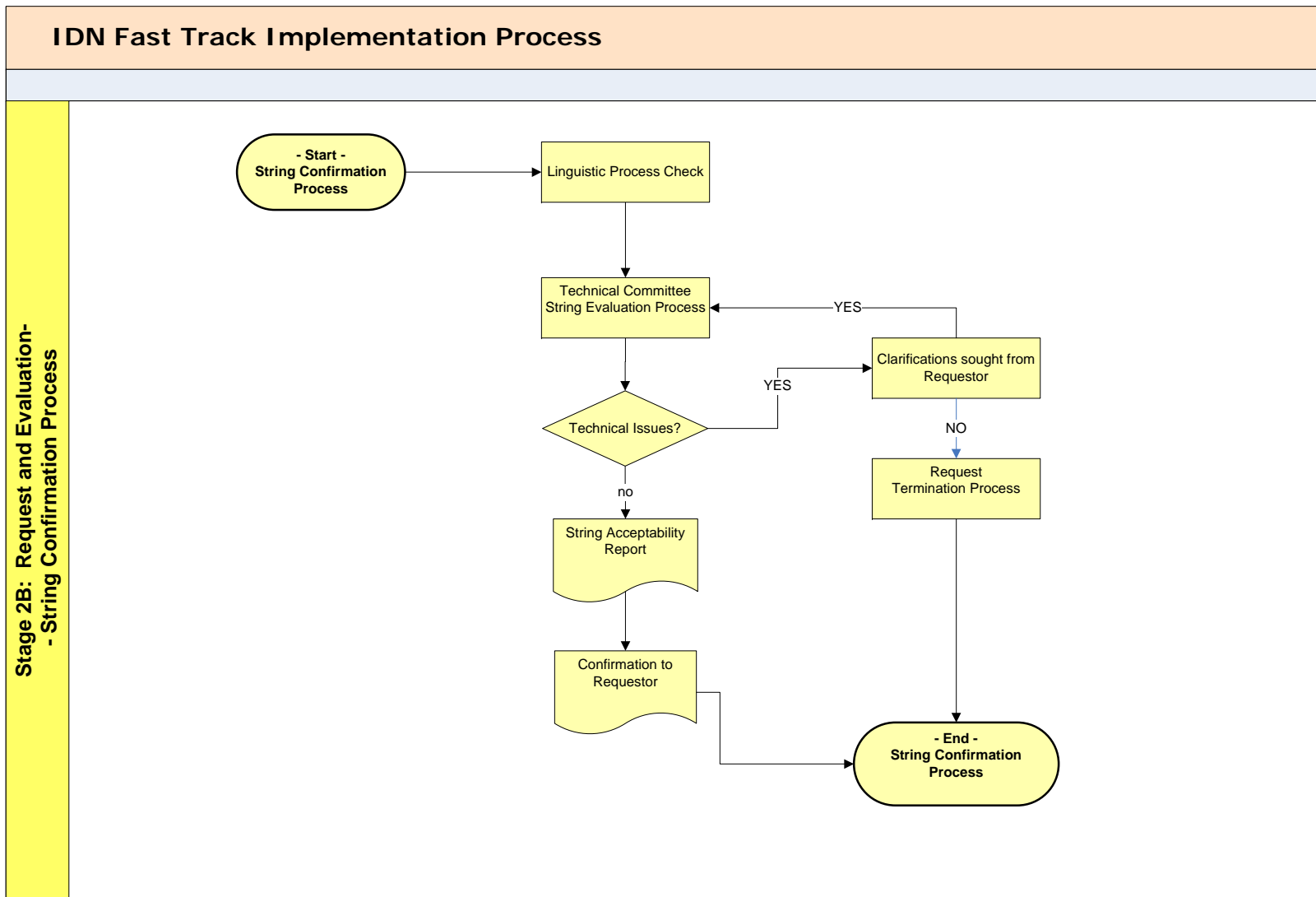


Figure 5.2: Stage 2B: String Confirmation Process –the technical criteria is verified and the linguistic process requirement is checked here.

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# Module 6

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## *Delegation Process*

ICANN maintains a process for delegating top-level domains in its execution of the IANA functions. A guide to the delegation procedure for existing country-code top-level domains is described at <http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/>. This process remains largely applicable to IDN ccTLDs. The online document will be updated to reflect updated operational practices for IDN ccTLDs.

### *6.1 IANA Function*

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ICANN manages the IANA functions under a contract with the United States Department of Commerce. The IANA function process for delegating an IDN ccTLD will remain consistent with the process for existing ccTLDs directly derived from the ISO 3166-1 standard. The process will be augmented only to include the requirements in Module 5.

In this process, ICANN staff will receive a request to delegate a ccTLD that is composed of a formal template explaining the delegation request together with supporting documentation. This supporting documentation must describe how the principles in RFC1591, ICP-1, and the GAC principles are supported. Some of these principals are:

#### *6.1.1 Operational and Technical Skills*

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- 1.1 The prospective manager has the requisite skills to operate the TLD appropriately.
- 1.2 There must be reliable, full-time IP connectivity to the name servers and electronic mail connectivity to the managers.
- 1.3 The manager must perform its duties in assigning domains and operating name servers with technical competence.

#### *6.1.2 Manager in Country*

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- 1.4 The prospective manager supervises and operates the domain name from within the country or territory represented by the TLD.
- 1.5 The prospective administrative contact must reside in the country represented by the TLD.

### ***6.1.3 Equitable Treatment***

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- 1.6 The Registry manager shall operate the IDN ccTLD in a manner that allows the TLD community to discuss and participate in the development and modification of policies and practices for the TLD.

### ***6.1.4 Community/Governmental Support***

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- 1.7 The prospective manager has the requisite authority to operate the TLD appropriately, with the desire of the government taken very seriously.
- 1.8 Significantly interested parties in the domain should agree that the prospective manager is the appropriate party to receive the delegation.

In addition to material that demonstrates the requester suitability under these RFC 1591 criteria, requesters must provide the additional specific material relating to the evaluation described in the Module 5. This requirement will be satisfied by the Delegation Readiness report that describes the IDN-specific factors.

ICANN will perform due diligence on the documentation provided in accordance with the IANA review process defined in RFC 1591. If the request does not adequately cover all areas, they will confer with the requester, who may provide further information. When ICANN deems the IANA due diligence evaluation complete, it will package the request and its assessment for ICANN Board review.

## ***6.2 ICANN Board Review Process***

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All delegations and re-delegations of ccTLDs require ICANN Board approval to proceed. This approval is expected to remain constant with the introduction of IDN ccTLDs.

At the conclusion of the IANA function evaluation, of the ICANN Board will assess the delegation request.

The ICANN Board will evaluate whether requests are consistent with governing policies and with ICANN's core values set out in its bylaws to "ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems."

## ***6.3 US Government Authorization***

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After approval of a request, ICANN will execute its regular IANA function root zone change management process.

This change involves retesting the technical configuration of the data supplied by the requester, and ensuring that name servers function correctly. Once satisfied, the request will be transmitted to the US Department of Commerce for authorization. Following this authorization, it will be implemented in the DNS root zone.

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# Module 7

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## *Discussion of Additional Topics*

This module contains a description of issues and topics that are relevant parts of the Draft Implementation Plan, but were not fully covered in the IDNC Final Report. It initially included the list of outstanding issues the ICANN Board directed staff to produce before the ICANN Cairo meeting in November 2008. This list has now been updated with proposed positions and proposed implementation details (based on public comments) and in some cases with references to external papers with proposed implementation details.

Most of the topics covered in this module relate directly to the overarching requirements to:

- Preserve the security and stability of the DNS
- Ensure compliance with the IDNA protocol and IDN Guidelines

Topics included are:

1. Ensuring ongoing compliance with the IDN technical standards, including the IDNA protocol and the IDN Guidelines.
  - a. Updated with a proposed arrangement between ICANN and potential IDN ccTLD managers. This proposal is released in a separate paper: [Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers](#), see section 7.1.
2. Possible establishment of financial contributions.
  - a. Updated with preliminary principles suggesting that some contribution should be required from IDN ccTLD managers to offset program costs, see section 7.2.
3. IDN ccTLD participation in the ICANN community.
  - a. Updated, proposing a mechanism for the short-term participation of IDN ccTLD managers in continued IDN policy activities, see section 7.3.
4. Prevention of contention issues with existing TLDs and those under consideration in the gTLD process.
  - a. Updated with a proposed set of rules to be applied in rare cases where contention might exist, see section 7.4.

## 5. IDN Table Procedure

- a. Updated with a [proposed process](#) for how IDN Tables should be managed at both second and top level. See section 7.5.

ICANN is actively soliciting additional community collaboration on the updates made in this version of the Implementation Plan. The feedback will play a key role in shaping the Final Implementation Plan. It is intended to presentation the final Plan at the ICANN meeting in Sydney (June 2009). However, this date is at risk. The issues described here must be resolved in order to publish the Implementation Plan as ‘final.’”

### *7.1 Relationship between ICANN and IDN ccTLD Manager*

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The IDNC WG Final Report does not cover the relationship between ICANN and the IDN ccTLD manager after delegation of the IDN ccTLD(s). However, the nature of such relationship was considered extensively in the comments received and concerns raised in the IDNC Final Report.

Therefore the need, and possible mechanisms, to formalize the relationship between ICANN and the IDN ccTLD manager has been considered part of the Draft Implementation Plan.

Since ccTLDs were introduced the circumstances and environment has changed considerably. This includes an increasing demand for transparency and accountability, increased need to ensure the security and stability of the Internet for the benefit of the local and global community, and demand to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the entities involved in the function of the DNS.

The introduction of IDN ccTLDs will require that a number of additional technical aspects are taken into account to ensure the security, stability and resilience of the Domain Name System. In particular it will be necessary to ensure that the IDN ccTLD manager adheres to the IDNA protocol and IDN guidelines on an ongoing basis and until a full PDP process can be completed for cc IDNs.

ICANN staff sought input and guidance from the community to develop a formal arrangement that included a general description of responsibilities for both ICANN and IDN ccTLD managers. This community input indicated that there should at least be a mechanism to ensure that all IDN managers adhere to the IDNA protocol over time, as well as compliance with associated standards, guidelines and other standards as they develop.

The Draft Fast Track Implementation Plan proposes a “Documentation of Responsibilities” (DoR) between the IDN ccTLD

manager and ICANN. The DoR is intended to document the roles and responsibilities of both the IDN ccTLD manager and ICANN, particularly to ensure adherence with the relevant standards and guidelines during the phase of fast track deployment and pending the conclusion of the IDN ccPDP (Policy Development Process for the longer term introduction of IDN ccTLDs).

A separate paper entitled "*Documentation of Responsibilities between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD managers*" provides more detail on this issue and includes a draft DoR for consideration.

Comments are sought on the various elements in the proposed [Documentation of Responsibilities](#).

## 7.2 Financial Contributions

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The IDNC WG Final report contains no recommendation about possible financial contributions for implementing IDN ccTLDs. The community discussed this topic and various viewpoints were put forward proposing establishment of financial contributions.

ICANN is looking forward to continuing this dialogue with the community, and to receiving feedback so that resolution can be reached on this topic in a timely manner. While working toward resolution, there are some preliminary statements that can be made regarding financial contributions in general.

As a not-for-profit organization, ICANN strives for fair and equitable cost recovery to fund its services, seeking appropriate frameworks to recover costs from the communities it serves. The principle of fair and equitable cost recovery is also applicable when ICANN develops new services. With new services come new costs; the only question is the manner in which those costs are funded. Should the costs of new services be absorbed by current ICANN contributions, or should beneficiaries of new services pay for them? In certain cases, it was decided that new programs must be fully self-funded, most notably, the New gTLD Program. In other cases, new services are funded through ICANN's regular budget process; for example, ICANN's DNSSEC work.

Formal and informal feedback on required contributions by IDN ccTLD managers is divided. Some point to ccTLDs predating ICANN, and that the existing model of voluntary contributions for ASCII ccTLDs should be extended to new IDN ccTLDs. Others note that IDN ccTLDs are new entities not covered by existing country code policy, and that their funding should come from the managers of these new TLD registries. This is a financial issue in that new costs will certainly be incurred from the IDN program that

must be funded, and an issue that touches on the relationships between the new IDN ccTLD registries and ICANN.

While parallels can be drawn between current ccTLD managers and potential IDN ccTLD managers, it should be recognized that the circumstances and environment has changed since ccTLDs were first introduced into the DNS. There is an increasing demand for transparency and accountability, an increased need to ensure the security and stability of the Internet for the benefit of the local and global community, and demand to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the entities involved in the function of the DNS.

Given that the Fast Track program is a new program created specifically for new IDN ccTLD managers and their Internet users, some contribution should be required from IDN ccTLD managers to offset its program costs. Still, this remains a Module 7 discussion issue in this Implementation Plan draft because more discussion is required before finalizing recommendations contributions, including feedback on required contributions, the cost components and levels that should be considered in a cost recovery mechanism, how contribution levels might be set, and possible exceptions to required contributions.

### *7.3 Association of IDN ccTLD Manager with the ccNSO*

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Another topic not covered by the IDNC WG report relates to the association of IDN ccTLD managers to the ccNSO.

When the ccNSO was established in 2003, the introduction of IDN ccTLDs was yet not envisioned. As such the membership definition of the ccNSO is too restrictive to accommodate IDN ccTLD managers, and the current structure and voting mechanisms also do not accommodate IDN ccTLD managers.

This issue: whether IDN ccTLD managers can become members of the ccNSO, will be addressed in the IDN ccNSO PDP.

Although the ccNSO is open to members and nonmembers, the status of members in the ccNSO is different. For instance, ccNSO consensus policies, including the IDN ccNSO PDP outcome when implemented, are only applicable through the voluntary membership of the ccNSO.

Assuming that IDN ccTLDs will be operational before the conclusion of the IDN ccNSO PDP, an interim solution is desirable. ICANN suggests that the ccNSO consider whether an interim solution might be feasible by which IDN ccTLD managers could, for example, be granted temporary advisory positions to the ccNSO. In that way, support for the finalization of the IDN ccNSO PDP can be facilitated in a way that covers the development of consensus policies for IDN ccTLD managers. Further mechanisms are also proposed to be in place to ensure compliance with ccNSO consensus policies, including the outcome of the IDN ccNSO PDP.

From the comments received on this topic, it is anticipated that the ccNSO will provide an interim solution to ensure that adequate experience and expertise in IDN implementation is included in the ongoing work on the ccNSO PDP on IDNs. This is a reasonable short-term solution and therefore this topic no longer needs to be a subject of discussion.

#### ***7.4 Discussion of Contention Issues with Existing TLDs and new gTLD Applications***

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During implementation of the Fast Track process and the process for introducing new gTLDs, a potential contention has been identified between Fast Track requested IDN ccTLD strings and:

- Existing gTLD strings
- Existing ccTLD strings
- Proposed strings in new gTLD applications

These contention issues can involve two or more strings that are identical or are so confusingly similar that they cannot coexist in the DNS.

Some cases will be covered as the process for introducing new gTLDs requires government support if the proposed string represents a country or a territory name. However, in rare cases, an applied for generic string could be identical or confusingly similar to a requested IDN ccTLD string, without the gTLD string being submitted for the same purpose as the IDN ccTLD string.

This issue is made more complex by Fast Track requests being considered confidential until the end of the request and evaluation stage (see Module 5) while all applications in the New gTLD Program are public as soon as the application period closes.

While contention situations between Fast Track requests and new gTLD applications are unlikely to occur, ICANN received several comments on this topic revealing that it is necessary to:

- Have adequate coordination in place between the two processes to identify any strings that are in conflict (i.e., identified as very similar) as early as possible.
- Have an adequate procedure in place to determine, in the case of contention, which application prevails over the other(s).

In response to these comments, ICANN proposes the following rules and thresholds to benefit the Fast Track applicant as much as possible because the Fast Track applicant is requesting a country or territory name.

Assessments of whether strings are considered in conflict with existing or applied-for new gTLD strings are made in the technical



validation step for Fast Track requests and in the initial evaluation step for new gTLD applications. The following supplemental rules are proposed to adequately address contention cases between the processes.

- A. A gTLD application that is approved by the ICANN Board will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.
- B. A validated request for an IDN ccTLD will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.
  - For the purpose of contention, an IDN ccTLD string is validated once it is confirmed that the string is a meaningful representation of the country or territory and that the string has passed the Technical Committee evaluation.
- C. Upon receipt of an IDN ccTLD request, if contention is identified with a new gTLD application not yet approved by the ICANN Board, the new gTLD application will be placed on hold and the IDN ccTLD request will prevail, provided it passes validation. However, if both parties have the requisite government assent, both applications will be placed on hold until the contention is resolved through agreement between the parties.

## 7.5 IDN Table Procedure

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An IDN Table is a list of all those characters that a particular TLD registry supports beyond the twenty-six letters of the basic Latin alphabet (a-z), ten digits (0-9), and the hyphen (-). If any characters in a table are considered to be variants of each other (essentially meaning "the same as"), this is indicated next to each character in a variant group. The term "variant" designates orthographic equivalence on the character level, such as that between "æ" and "ae" in "encyclopædia" and "encyclopaedia", but not in the broader sense that pertains to the variant spelling of words, as "encyclopaedia" vs. "encyclopedia" or "color" vs. "colour".

An IDN Table will typically contain characters that either represent a specific language, or are taken from a specific script without particular reference to any of the languages that are written with it. The term "IDN Table" as it is used here, corresponds to what in previous contexts was referred to as a "variant table", a "language variant table", a "language table", or a "script table".

In accordance with the IDNC WG Final Report and consistent with the IDN Guidelines, an IDN Table identified is required for IDN registries. The table must indicate the script(s) or language(s) it is

intended to support and any variant characters as defined above must be identified in the table.

The IDNC WG Final Report says that countries and territories using the same script are encouraged to cooperate in developing a language/script table in accordance with the IDN guidelines. Based on the IDNC recommendation and on the input and comments received on this topic, ICANN prepared a paper ([Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings](#)) providing proposed implementation details on this subject. The paper provides definitions of IDN Tables and character variants. The benefits to TLD registries that plan to introduce IDNs (either at the second or top level) are described. The paper also proposes an outline for developing an IDN Table and a methodology for how ICANN should use the IDN Tables provided in the criteria for the TLD allocations and management.

The paper is posted in conjunction with this revised Draft Implementation Plan, and comments are sought in preparation for a finalized Implementation Plan.

## ***7.6 Proposed Evaluation of Fast Track the Process***

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To ensure that the Fast Track process functions in the best interests of the entire Internet community and for the benefit of registrants, the following review process is proposed.

Every 12 months following the opening of the Fast Track process, ICANN should open a period for public comment on the functionality of the process. The public comment period should last at least 45 days. At the conclusion of the comment period, ICANN should analyze the comments received and seek community guidance and feedback on such comments, in particular from the ccNSO, GAC, GNSO, ALAC and the SSAC.

If necessary, based on these consultations, the Fast Track process can be modified to better suit the needs of the community. If such changes are implemented, a one-month notice must be provided publicly, containing clear descriptions of the changes that are introduced and their impact on prospective IDN ccTLD managers.

Based on the comments received on this topic ICANN will schedule a review of the Fast Track process as proposed. Depending on the time required to complete the ccNSO PDP on IDNs, one or more such reviews may take place.