

21 May 2021

RE: Next Round of New gTLDs

Cole Quinn
President, Brand Registry Group (BRG)

Dear Mr. Quinn,

On behalf of the ICANN Board, I would like to thank you for your [letter dated 23 April 2021](#), in which you conveyed the Brand Registry Group's (BRG) interest in proceeding toward subsequent rounds of new generic top-level domains (gTLDs).

The Board agrees that the ICANN community's work during the Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group (SubPro PDP WG) has been commendable. As you note, ICANN org and the ICANN Board have followed the Working Group's progress over the past five years and provided input, most recently via our respective comments on the Draft Final Report.¹

You state in your correspondence that many of the operational requirements for a future new gTLD program are already in place and that we are "not starting with a blank slate". The Board agrees that the experience from the 2012 round will be an important asset for possible subsequent rounds. We also believe that significant work lies ahead of us: the 2012 Applicant Guidebook must be updated with more than 100 outputs from the SubPro PDP WG; we will need to apply lessons learned from the previous round, many of which are documented in the 2016 [Program Implementation Review](#), and appropriate resources for implementing and conducting subsequent rounds must be put in place. At present it appears that WG recommendations will benefit from an Operational Design Phase (ODP) to provide the Board with information on the operational implications of implementing the recommendations. As part of such an ODP, the Board may also task ICANN org to provide an assessment of some of the issues of concern that the Board raised in its comments on the Draft Final Report, as well as those topics that did not reach consensus and were thus not adopted by the GNSO Council. The outcome of such an assessment could also add to the work that would be required before launching subsequent rounds.

¹ ICANN Board comment on SubPro Draft Final Report: <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/botterman-to-langdon-orr-neuman-30sep20-en.pdf>; ICANN org comment on SubPro Draft Final Report: <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/swinehart-to-langdon-orr-neuman-30sep20-en.pdf>.

As part of the Board’s deliberations on the policy recommendations in the Final Report, it will consider whether such policy is in the best interests of the ICANN community or ICANN. The Board recalls from previous rounds that interest does not always translate into applications, and applications, in turn, do not always translate into delegations or continued operations of new gTLDs. We noted with interest, therefore, your mentioning that “significant demand” exists among brand owners for a future new gTLD round. We appreciate your insight and encourage you to provide as much information as you can during a possible ODP. This will allow ICANN org to gauge demand more precisely and design the scale of internal operations as well as the funding model as accurately as possible.

The Board notes your views regarding [SAC114](#). We are aware of discussions that took place during ICANN70 and the Board is in communication with the Security and Stability Committee (SSAC) and its leadership, as per the ‘Understand’ phase of the [Board Advice Process](#). As with all advice items received, the Board will treat SAC114 in accordance with that process.

Again, we thank the BRG for its constructive input and look forward to continuing this discussion.

Sincerely,



Maarten Botterman
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors