

## INFORMATION FOR GOVERNMENTS

### New gTLD Program in Brief

ICANN will begin accepting applications for new generic Top-Level Domain names in January 2012. Because this is an important change to the Internet domain name system, we developed this fact sheet to provide basic information about the program for governments.

What is a gTLD? gTLD stands for generic Top-Level Domain and is an Internet top level name such as .com, .net or .org. Right now there are roughly two dozen gTLDs, but soon, there could be hundreds.

Any established entity located anywhere in the world can apply to form and operate a new gTLD Registry. **Applications will be accepted from 12 January to 12 April 2012. Learn more at <http://icann.org/newgtlds>.**

### Why New gTLDs?

- New generic Top-Level Domains will help to promote competition in the domain-name market while ensuring Internet security and stability.
- The decision to introduce new gTLDs followed a detailed and lengthy consultation process with all constituencies of the global Internet community and a wide variety of stakeholders - including governments, individuals, civil society, business and intellectual property constituencies, and the technology community.
- When the program launches its three-month application round on 12 January 2012, ICANN expects a diverse set of applications for new gTLDs, including Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs).

### Potentially Controversial or Sensitive gTLDs

- All applicants are encouraged to identify potential sensitivities in advance of application submission, and to work with the relevant parties (including governments) beforehand to mitigate concerns related to the application.
- Information on applications submitted will be publicly available on ICANN's web site. A government may contact an applicant to try to address any concerns directly.
- ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) may issue an "Early Warning" to ICANN regarding an application that has been received. This provides the applicant with an indication that the application is seen as potentially sensitive or problematic by one or more governments, but does not in itself constitute a basis for rejection of the application.

### Public Objection Process

- The objection and dispute resolution process is designed to protect certain interests and rights, provide a path for formal objections during the evaluation of applications, and allow a party with standing to have its objection considered before a panel of qualified experts.
- A formal objection can be filed only on four grounds:
  - String Confusion: The applied-for gTLD is confusingly similar to an existing TLD or to another applied-for gTLD in the same application round.

- Legal Rights: The applied-for gTLD infringes the existing legal rights of the objector.
  - Limited Public Interest: The applied-for gTLD is contrary to generally accepted legal norms of morality and public order that are recognized under principles of international law.
  - Community: There is substantial opposition to the gTLD application from a significant portion of the community to which the gTLD string may be explicitly or implicitly targeted.
- A government may elect to file an objection under this process or may do so through the GAC.
  - Funding from ICANN for objection filing fees, as well as for advance payment of costs, is available to individual national governments in the amount of USD 50,000 with the guarantee that a minimum of one objection per government will be fully funded by ICANN if requested. Funding covers costs payable to the dispute resolution service provider, not other costs such as fees for legal advice.

### **Geographic Names**

- An application for a gTLD that is a country or territory name will not be approved.
- Some types of applied-for gTLDs are considered geographic names and must be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. These include: capital city names, sub-national place names, continent or UN region names, and city names, where the applicant declares that it intends to use the gTLD for purposes associated with the city name.

### **How to Apply**

- Any organization may apply for a new gTLD. Applying involves responding to a number of financial, technical and operational questions.
- An evaluation fee of USD 185,000 is required with the application. Refunds are available in some cases where an application is withdrawn.
- The Applicant Guidebook outlines the evaluation criteria and requirements. All applications will be assessed against these published criteria. It can be found online at <http://icann.org/newgtlds>.
- Successful applicants will enter into a Registry Agreement with ICANN. Certain provisions in the agreement are labeled as applicable to governmental and intergovernmental entities only.

### **Call to Action**

- Because this change to the Internet domain name system will have implications for every country and for many people and organizations, we are asking governments to help us raise awareness of this opportunity by communicating directly with their constituents in the business community, potential applicants, the technology community and other organizations.

### **About ICANN**

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) was formed in 1998 to coordinate the Internet's unique identifiers around the world. Without that coordination we would not have a single global Internet. It is a not-for-profit, public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers. ICANN doesn't control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it doesn't deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet's naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet.