

26 July 2017

RE: Registry Stakeholder Group's letter regarding new gTLDs

Mr. Paul Diaz
Chair, Registry Stakeholder Group

Dear Mr. Diaz,

The ICANN Board appreciates the 9 June 2017 letter from the Registry Stakeholder Group that outlines the Registry Stakeholder Group's request for the Board to set the opening of the application process for additional gTLDs in the last quarter of calendar year 2018.

As the Registry Stakeholder Group is aware, previous commitments were made for certain activities to be completed before considering when to open another application process for gTLDs, including:

- ⦿ A review of the effects of the New gTLD Program on the operations of the DNS root system
- ⦿ A review of the trademark clearinghouse
- ⦿ A review of the Uniform Rapid Suspension (URS) system
- ⦿ A review of the impact of the New gTLD Program on competition, consumer trust, and consumer choice

In addition, the Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group is working to determine how additional gTLDs will be introduced.

While the first three reviews are completed, the last one and the PDP are still underway. The Board is monitoring the community's work, the timing of which is determined by the community. Once the community completes its work, the Board will consider the community's recommendations to introduce additional new gTLDs. Without the final findings and recommendations from the review and PDP, the Board won't be able to determine what needs to be done prior to the opening of another application process.

The Registry Stakeholder Group's letter suggests that by setting a date for the opening of another application process, the Board will provide the community with a target date to work toward. Although the Board setting a date would achieve this, doing so might contravene the multi-stakeholder process that allows for the community to have the necessary discussions to arrive at consensus, and to determine the timing of their own work.

The Registry Stakeholder Group's letter also suggests that drafting of the Applicant Guidebook could be done while PDP discussions are in process so that the application process could begin shortly after the PDP Working Group completes its work. Some amount of preparatory work could be done in parallel to the PDP Working Group's discussions. However, full implementation can't begin until after the Board considers the policy recommendations. There also needs to be adequate time for ICANN org to operationally prepare once the requirements in the Applicant Guidebook are finalized, and for communication and outreach about the application process.

Lastly, the Registry Stakeholder Group's letter disputed the inclusion of some activities on the Program Reviews and Policy Timeline as prerequisites. This timeline provides an aggregated view of activities related to new gTLDs and associated timelines defined by the community. The timeline is not intended and should not be read as definitive timing of the opening of the application process for additional gTLDs.

The Board appreciates the Registry Stakeholder Group's continued engagement and contributions to the Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group discussions to define and shape the introduction of additional gTLDs.

Sincerely,



Dr. Stephen D. Crocker
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

cc: Göran Marby, President and CEO, ICANN