

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AC/AM
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Fadi Chehadé
Chief Executive
ICANN
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536
USA

29th November 2012

Dear Mr Chehadé,

Comments regarding ICANN's proposed draw and release mechanisms for gTLDs

I am writing to express the concern of the Welsh Government regarding ICANN's proposals for the draw and release mechanism for gTLDs.

As you will be aware, Nominet has applied to become the registry of two new gTLDs - .CYMRU and .WALES. These gTLDs are intended to provide a space on the Internet for the people and businesses of Wales and those people and businesses who wish to address a Welsh audience. The Welsh Government has provided a clear letter of non-objection, as required by the application process and we are keen to see these domains delegated as soon as possible.

We have reviewed ICANN's latest proposals for the draw and release mechanism for the new gTLDs and we are concerned that these proposals may unfairly and inappropriately disadvantage the applications for .CYMRU and .WALES.

Appropriate priority for government-backed geographic applications

We understand that a number of applicants and interested parties have already expressed the concern that insufficient priority has been given to geographic applications that are being operated for the public benefit. The Welsh Government shares this concern. ICANN is proposing to prioritise applications using International Domain Names (IDNs) which, I understand, include a number of applications that are purely commercial in nature. The Welsh Government believes that geographic applications that have government backing and are to be operated for the public benefit should receive similar priority to IDNs which meet the same criteria. We believe that these geographic applications are just as important as IDNs in ICANN's efforts to provide an online space for underrepresented or excluded groups internationally.

We do not object to the use of a "lottery" mechanism to set the order that applications are handled with a specific group of applications, but we believe that the current proposals prioritise the interests of some commercial organisations above the legitimate interests of the people of Wales and other geographic areas.

Linking the approval process for .CYMRU and .WALES

The application by Nominet for both .CYMRU and .WALES reflect the name of the country in both of its official languages; Welsh and English. Having two TLDs will allow Welsh consumers and businesses to express their identity and pride in whichever of these languages they choose.

My understanding is that the two registries will be separate but linked through identical administrative policies. To launch them separately risks excluding those members of the Welsh community who may prefer to use either Welsh or English in their domain name and therefore Nominet is committed to launching the two TLDs at the same time.

Nominet have told me that the applications for the two TLDs are, in all material respects, identical, and they will be run and maintained on the same systems. It therefore seems appropriate and efficient for ICANN to deal with the applications and delegation process in parallel in order to facilitate a concurrent launch.

I hope that you are able to take these comments into account and to finalise a draw and release mechanism that gives appropriate priority to geographic gTLD applications and recognition of the linked nature of the .CYMRU and .WALES domains. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

CARWYN JONES

cc Lesley Cowley, Nominet