



February 6, 2003

**To: M. Stuart Lynn
President and CEO
ICANN**

Re: .Travel TLD

Dr. Lynn:

The dialogue on a .travel TLD among the travel industry has evolved significantly since ICANN's initial RFP and IATA's application for .travel.

The ICANN Board was correct in rejecting the IATA's 2000 proposal. While it is the largest industry leadership organization, with acute systems strength, its mission is to "serve airlines". IATA's 2001 initiative to create the Travel Partners Corporation was a solid step forward in addressing the "representativeness" issue. The 2002 partnership with Tralliance was another evolutionary step in adding marketing acumen to a potential .travel proposal. The ICANN Board must ask themselves; What would another year bring in evolution?

As your Board intuitively concluded, the travel industry does not revolve solely around an airplane. You would be correct to deduce the industry is not exclusively centric around a travel agent. Further, the consumer's first travel decision is *Where*, not which supplier. The .travel TLD, if to be used, should follow consumer thought and be free-market driven. The world's largest industry revolves around the smallest destination.

Approximately 85% of the travel industry suppliers (1.5m) are owned by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). You have not heard their basic needs. The majority of these entrepreneurs do not belong to a travel industry association. However, each operates within a given destination(s), and each destination has a government-endorsed and supplier-recognized leadership organization. These leadership organizations know of every reputable supplier, institution, and tourism stakeholder within their destination's geography. The distribution of .travel TLDs should be aligned to the most local tourism destination authority and, where possible, to ccTLDs to localize name disputes and add a logical identification of suppliers.

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Your *Plan for Action* is to be admired. Relatively speaking, Patrick Murphy and Ron Andruff have rapidly closed major gaps preparing for what will be a highly demanded TLD. However, the .travel TLD award decision does not have a ticking clock, and, judging by the progressive actions taken in 2001 and 2002, more evolution can be assumed.

The Travel Industry is not only the largest industry, but it is perhaps the most fragmented and culturally complex of all industries. It is suggested ICANN give the .travel decision more time to evolve.

Best wishes on your post-ICANN endeavors.

Respectfully,

Edward L. Beauchamp
Founder
World Tourism Foundation