



Addressing the global Internet

July 6, 2010

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CEO and President

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Dear Mr. Al Basheer,

Thank you for your letter of 4 May 2010, relating to the creation of a .arab top level domain (TLD). The letter arrived as we were finalizing the summary and analysis of comments received on a number of issues relating to the introduction of new gTLDs, and we believe the latest version [Draft Applicant Guidebook, version 4](#), addresses some of the issues you raise.

As you are aware, ICANN has engaged in a detailed and lengthy consultation process with all constituencies of the global Internet community regarding the introduction of new gTLDs, and continues to do so with the publication of the latest version of the guidebook for public comment.

In relation to the specific issues you raise in your letter, I provide the following:

New gTLD Registry Agreement

The latest version of the draft Registry Agreement has a special provision relating to Intergovernmental Organizations and Governmental Entities. This provision was based on the practical experience gained in negotiating the Registry Agreement with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) for .post. Information can be found in Module 5 of the Draft Applicant Guidebook, version 4.

Financial Instruments

As your letter indicates, the Guidebook requires securing a financial instrument to provide for on-going operations in the event of registry failure in order to protect the interests of registrants and users. The Guidebook lists the critical operations to be maintained and requires the applicant to provide an accurate estimated cost to maintain those operations. The costs should be based on the planned operations of the applied-for registry. The [Benchmarking of Registry Operations](#) paper was provided as background information. The costs of new registries may deviate from those of existing registries or from the information provided in the background document. The Guidebook seeks to encourage the development of accurate estimates and operational models.

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Enhanced protection for strings that are a meaningful representation or abbreviation of a country name or territory name

The protections provided under geographic names come in the form of acknowledging the sovereign rights attached to some names and requiring the applicant to provide a letter of support or non-objection from the relevant government or public authority. The guidebook states, "the requirement to include documentation of support for certain applications does not preclude or exempt applications from being the subject of objections on community grounds under which applications may be rejected based on objections showing substantial opposition from the targeted community."

In developing the process for geographic names, ICANN has relied upon on ISO or UN lists to assist with geographical definitions in the context of new gTLDs. As your letter indicates, .arab is not included on a UN or ISO list of geographical names, and is therefore not categorized as a geographic name. Our brief research of [itu.int/ITU-D](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D) and [itu.int/ITU-D/arb](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/arb) links and the list of ITU Administrative Regions: [http://www.itu.int/cgi-bin/htsh/mm/scripts/mm.world? languageid=1](http://www.itu.int/cgi-bin/htsh/mm/scripts/mm.world?languageid=1) did not immediately indicate authority upon which to expand the existing geographical name listing to include .arab.

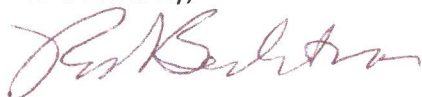
On the other hand, community priorities and preferences were developed by the GNSO as a policy specifically to address protections for communities such as the one you propose, which is borne out in the meeting minutes of the GNSO policy development discussions. It seems as though your organization has already garnered the support necessary to qualify as a community TLD, although that determination would be made by an independent panel in response to the .arab submission materials. The scoring mechanism was developed after considerable community discussion; however, any analysis or other materials that may lead to a different conclusion would be helpful as we continue to consider further comment

Communication Plan

As your letter recommends, the communication plan is targeted to reach a global audience, which will include IGOs and governments. ICANN has already sent a letter to the government of every country and territory listed in the ISO 3166-1 list as well as all ccTLD operators advising them that the new gTLD launch is contemplated. Your suggestion that IGOs be included is well taken, and future advisories will include IGOs.

The additions of community based TLDs will, we believe, enrich the namespace and user experience. It is one of the prime purposes for increasing the number of TLDs. We invite your comments on the [Draft Applicant Guidebook, version 4](#), and we too look forward to continued successful collaboration. The current public comment forum can be found here: <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/comments-4-en.htm>.

Yours sincerely,



Rod Beckstrom