20 October 2021

Philippe Fouquart
Chair, GNSO Council

Re. Request for Continued Deferral of IDN Implementation Guidelines v4.0

Dear Philippe,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 August 2021 informing the ICANN Board of the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council's request to continue the deferral of Internationalized Domain Names (IDN) Implementation Guidelines version 4.0 (published at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/fouquart-to-botterman-18aug21-en.pdf), following the discussion on this topic between the ICANN Board and the GNSO Council on 24 June 2021.

IDN Implementation Guidelines, initially developed in 2003, have been updated multiple times for secure implementation of IDNs at the second level for the end users. The ICANN Board is concerned that delay in implementing the latest update to the Guidelines may continue to expose the end users to the potential security issues for IDN registrations at the second level, which version 4.0 is to address.

Therefore, the ICANN Board proposes that the GNSO expeditiously proceed to review and organize the 19 guidelines of the IDN Guidelines version 4.0 into two subsets:

1) those which are already part of currently applicable IDN Guidelines 3.0 and additional guidelines which do not overlap with topics included in the IDN Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) charter approved by the GNSO, and
2) the few guidelines which overlap with the topics included in the IDN EPDP charter.

Once the analysis is completed, the GNSO is requested to communicate these details to the ICANN Board, possibly by the end of November 2021.

The guidelines in subset (1) of IDN Guidelines version 4.0, that do not overlap with the IDN EPDP, would then be considered by the ICANN Board as the updated version 4.0 for implementation.

The remaining overlapping guidelines in subset (2) would be deferred until the GNSO's IDN EPDP working group has deliberated on these topics in coordination with the ccNSO and finalized the way forward. The review of these guidelines can then proceed coherently with the IDN EPDP recommendations. Once the IDN EPDP concludes, the GNSO could consult with the IDN Guidelines Working Group (which developed version 4.0 of the Guidelines), in case of any changes needed. Then, the ICANN Board can further consider updating the IDN Guidelines by adding the remaining guidelines in a subsequent version.

As the IDN Guidelines are applicable to both gTLDs and the ccTLDs, this approach immediately caters to the security of IDN implementations to the extent possible, while allowing the GNSO to proceed without concerns that the work may contradict with IDN EPDP.

The ICANN Board looks forward to the GNSO's consideration of this approach and further analysis to move forward with IDN Guidelines version 4.0.

Best regards,

Maarten Botterman
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors