Draft Implementation Plan for IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process

Please note that this is a discussion draft only. Potential IDN ccTLD requestors should not rely on any of the proposed details of the contained information as the program remains subject to further consultation and revision.

23 October 2008

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Module 1

General Introduction and Background Information

The present document is the Draft Implementation Plan for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process as requested by the ICANN Board at the ICANN meeting in Paris, June 2008.

The plan is based on the recommendations provided by the IDNC WG in their Final Report, as well as on public comments provided throughout the IDNC WG's online and public comment options.

The plan also contains elements that have been discussed publicly, but were not part of the recommendations from the IDNC WG. Decisions will need to be made about these elements in order for the Fast Track Process to be implemented in a sustainable way.

The plan is presented in modules that later will be further detailed and finalized for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process. The modules are:

Module 2: Fast Track Eligibility Requirements

Module 3: TLD String Criteria and Requirements

Module 4: Technical Committee Considerations

Module 5: Fast Track Request and Evaluation Process

Module 6: TLD Delegation Process

Module 7: Discussion of Additional Topics

1.1 Background Information

One of the most significant innovations in the Internet since its inception will be the introduction of top level Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs). These will offer many new opportunities and benefits for Internet users around the world by allowing them to establish and use domains in their native languages and scripts.

The topic of IDNs has been discussed in the ICANN community for a number of years. Initially, development was focused on enabling the introduction of IDNs as registrations under existing TLDs, but in the past year especially focus has shifted to be on broadening the characters repertoire available for use in top level strings.

Over the past years the introduction of IDN gTLDs has been discussed in the context and as part of the new gTLD program.

Historically top level strings have been divided into two main groups, the ccTLDs and the gTLDs.

While there is no technical difference from a DNS standpoint, this distinction continues to be relevant as the TLD character repertoire is being increased.

The consultation and discussion on introduction of IDN ccTLDs were initiated by the ICANN Board at its meeting in Sao Paulo (December 2006). The ccNSO and GAC were then requested, through a joint collaborative effort, in consultation as needed with the relevant technical community, to produce an issues paper relating to the selection of IDN ccTLDs associated with the ISO 3166-1 two-letter codes.

The ccNSO and GAC formed a joint IDN working group, which published and submitted to the ICANN Board a list of issues relating to the introduction of IDN ccTLDs in June 2007.

During consultations and discussions of the joint GAC and ccNSO IDN working group, it became clear that a number of countries and territories have a pressing need for IDN ccTLDs. This initiated a discussion of the provisions needed for an interim approach to IDN ccTLDs to meet near-term demands and to gain experience with mechanisms for selection and authorization of such TLDs that can inform a policy development process. The ICANN Board requested the ICANN community including the GNSO, ccNSO, GAC, and ALAC to work collaboratively to explore both an interim and an overall approach to IDN ccTLDs and recommend a course of action to the Board (ICANN meeting, San Juan, June 2007).

Following a ccNSO Council recommendation and broad support of the ICANN community including the GAC, GNSO and ALAC, the ICANN Board requested the chairs of the ALAC, ccNSO, GAC and GNSO to set-up the IDNC Working Group and appoint members to this group as soon as possible and, requested the IDNC Working Group when established to commence its work, in accordance with its Charter.

The IDNC WG was tasked to recommend mechanisms to introduce a limited number of non contentious IDN ccTLDs, associated with the ISO 3166-1 two-letter codes, to meet near term demand, while the overall policy is being developed.

At the ICANN meeting in Paris (June 2008) the IDNC Working Group submitted the Final Report to the Board, including statements of the GAC and ccNSO on the proposed methodology. At its meeting in Paris the Board resolved:

> *Resolved (2008.06.26.04), the Board thanks the members of the IDNC WG for completing their chartered tasks in a timely manner.*

> *Resolved (2008.06.26.05), the Board directs staff to: (1) post the IDNC WG final report for public comments; (2) commence work on implementation issues in consultation with relevant stakeholders; and (3) submit a detailed implementation report including a list of any outstanding issues to the Board in advance of the ICANN Cairo meeting in November 2008.*

Subsequently ICANN staff posted the IDNC WG Final report for public comments, and commenced the implementation work as directed. Following the public comment period staff posted a consolidated overview of the comments received and a document containing staff considerations regarding the comments received. As part of the implementation process ICANN also submitted letters to relevant public authorities and ccTLD managers to seek information on their interest in participating in the Fast Track process.

As presented in this Draft Implementation Plan, the Fast Track process can be implemented. However, there are some open issues that require further input from the community and need to be resolved, to complete the Draft Implementation Plan (as discussed in Module 7). ICANN staff is looking forward to additional community input and discussions on the current status of the Draft Implementation Plan, at the ICANN meeting in Cairo, Egypt, 1–7 November 2008 and beyond.

A full overview of activities related to the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process and implementation thereof can be viewed here: http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/

Module 2

Participation Eligibility Requirements

Participation in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process has been limited by the IDNC WG recommendations, as discussed in this module. The limitations have been decided through community consultations, as described in Module 1, and the primary reasons for making the limitations are that the process is experimental in nature and should not pre-empt the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO PDP (Guiding Principle B and F from the IDNC WG Final report). Further limitations are presented in Module 3.

2.1 ISO 3166-1 Representation

To be eligible to enter the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process the country or territory must be represented in the International Standard ISO 3166-1, Codes for the representation of names and countries and their subdivisions – Part 1: Country Codes. The exception to this requirement is the eligibility of the European Union, which has .EU delegated as a ccTLD but is not on the mentioned list.

A country or territory represented on the ISO3166-1 list is eligible for participating in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process and as such for requesting an IDN ccTLD string that fulfills the additional requirements set forth in Module 3.

2.2 ccTLD operator as requestor

If the operator for an IDN ccTLD request has been identified, either as an existing or proposed new ccTLD operator, the operator can act as the party requesting an IDN ccTLD. In such a case proof of support and approval from the country or territory corresponding to the relevant ISO 3166-1 entry must be provided.

Module 3

TLD String Criteria and Requirements

Limitations regarding TLD strings have been set in the process due to its introductory nature and in order to safeguard against pre-emption of the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO PDP. Limitations in this module are focused on criteria and requirements set for the TLD string itself and are defined here to guide the participants.

3.1 Language and Script Criteria

The conditions regarding the language and the script for the selected TLD string are as follows:

> The language must be an official language in the corresponding country or territory, and as such either have a legal status in the country or territory, or serve as a language of administration.

The language requirement is verified as follows:

1. If the language is listed for the relevant country or territory as an ISO 639 language in Part Three of the "Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of Geographical Names", United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (the UNGEGN Manual) (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm); or

2. If the language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant country or territory in ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10; or

3. If the relevant public authority in the country or territory confirms that the language is

   a. used in official communications of the relevant public authority; and

   b. serves as a language of administration.

4. Requests can only be made for strings in scripts other than Latin, that is other than the characters (a,…,z), either in their basic forms or with combining marks. Languages based on the Latin script are not eligible for the Fast Track process (in accordance with Guiding Principle D from the IDNC WG Final Report).

3.2 Meaningfulness Requirement

The selected string for the IDN ccTLD must be a meaningful representation of the official name of the corresponding country or territory. A string is deemed meaningful if it is in the official language of the country or territory and if it is:

- The name of the country or territory; or
- A part of the name of the country or territory denoting the country or territory in the selected language; or
- A short-form designation for the name of the country or territory that is recognizable and denotes the country or territory in the selected language.

The meaningfulness requirement is verified as follows:

1. If the requested string is listed in the UNGEGN manual then the string fulfills the meaningfulness requirement.
2. If the requested string is not listed in the UNGEGN manual, then the meaningfulness must be substantiated (for example) as follows:

   Submission and presentation of documentation from an internationally recognized linguistic expert or organization stating that the requested string meets the criteria.

3.3 Number of Strings per Country or Territory

The number of strings which a country or territory can apply for is purposely not limited to a certain number (in accordance with Guiding Principle G in the IDNC WG Final Report). However, a limitation is set as follows:

- *One string per official language or script per country or territory.*

3.4 Technical String Criteria

The technical criteria for the IDN ccTLD strings are equivalent to those for the IDN gTLD strings. Meeting all the requirements in this section does not guarantee acceptance of a prospective top-level string as the below is not an exhaustive list of all requirements or restrictions.

The IDNA protocol used for internationalized labels is currently under revision through the Internet standardization process. As such, additional requirements may be specified or requirements specified here may change or be removed as the protocol revision is being completed. The preference is to have the IDNA protocol revision completed before IDN TLDs are delegated,

however, if this is not feasible then the technical requirements may be stricter for the initial delegations. The current status of the protocol revision is documented at http://tools.ietf.org/wg/idnabis/ and additional updates can be found at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/rfcs.htm

3.4.1 General Technical Requirements

The following are general technical requirements that must be valid for the IDN ccTLDs in A-label format.

The A-label (i.e. the label as transmitted on the wire) must be valid as specified in technical standards for Domain Names: Implementation and Specification (RFC 1035); and Clarifications to the DNS Specification (RFC 2181). This includes the following:

- The label must have no more than 63 characters.
- Upper and lower case characters are treated as identical

The A-label must be a valid host name, as specified in technical standard DOD Internet Host Table Specification (RFC 952); and Requirements for Internet Hosts — Application and Support (RFC 1123). This includes the following:

- The label must consist entirely of letters, digits and hyphens.
- The label must not start or end with a hyphen

3.4.2 IDN Specific Technical Requirements

The following details technical string requirements with a specific emphasis on IDN requirements. Requestors for these internationalized top-level strings are expected to be familiar with the IETF IDNA standards, Unicode standards, and the terminology associated with Internationalized Domain Names.

The string must be a valid internationalized domain name, as specified in technical standards http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/rfcs.htm. This includes the following:

- Must only contain Unicode code points that are defined as "Valid" in The Unicode Codepoints and IDNA (Internet Draft "draft-faltstrom-idnabis-tables"), and be accompanied by unambiguous contextual rules where necessary.
- Must be fully compliant with Normalization Form C, as described in Unicode Standard Annex #15: Unicode Normalization Forms. See also examples in http://unicode.org/faq/normalization.html

- The string must consist entirely of characters with the same directional property.
- The string must not begin nor end with a digit (in any script).

The string must meet the relevant criteria of the ICANN Guidelines for the Implementation of Internationalized Domain Names. This includes the following:

- All code points in a single string must be taken from the same script as determined by the Unicode Standard Annex #24: Unicode Script Property.
- Exceptions to this are permissible for languages with established orthographies and conventions that require the commingled use of multiple scripts. However, even with this exception, visually confusable characters from different scripts will not be allowed to co-exist in a single set of permissible code points unless a corresponding policy and character table is clearly defined.

3.5 Clarifications of Changes to the IDNC WG Technical Recommendations

In a few instances the above technical requirements deviate slightly from what was recommended in the IDNC WG Final report. Some deviations in language are made because the protocol revision is still ongoing. Therefore additional adjustments can be expected to the technical requirements before these are considered final. ICANN staff will remain in close contact with the technical community as the implementation of the Fast Track process is progressing, to ensure that the technical requirements are consistent with the protocol revision efforts.

Original IDNC WG requirement	Revised Language
1. There is no mixing of scripts	All code points in a single string must be taken from the same script as determined by the Unicode Standard Annex #24: Unicode Script Property. Exceptions to this are permissible for languages with established orthographies and conventions that require the commingled use of multiple scripts. However, even with this exception, visually confusable characters from different scripts will not be allowed to co-exist in a single set of permissible code points unless a corresponding policy and IDN table is clearly defined.
Rationale: Given the fact that certain languages (for example Japanese) are expressed by using a mixing of scripts it was deemed inappropriate to completely prohibit mixing of scripts in a top level string, as long as adequate measures are in place to prevent unnecessary mixing of scripts. This is in line with the IDN Guidelines.	
Original IDNC WG requirement	**Revised Language**
2. No names that are shorter than two characters in non-ASCII are used	Not available in technical requirement language
Rationale: The determination as to whether a string consists of a minimum of two characters is not considered a requirement that the Technical Committee should be verifying. This will instead be verified immediately when ICANN receives the request for an IDN ccTLD string so that any factual errors against this requirement are found as quickly as possible, and corrected if the requestor wishes to do so. Staff may seek linguistic expertise if necessary; however this is anticipated to be the exception not the norm.	
Original IDNC WG requirement	**Revised Language**
3. It is demonstrated that the selected string in combination with the language/script table when being used, in for example e-mail addresses, URIs etc, does not create any rendering or other operational issues.	Not available in technical requirement language

Rationale:
This requirement has been moved to the Request Template, where the requestor is required to (i) accept that IDNs can cause rendering problems in certain applications and (ii) demonstrate that all due caution has been taken into account in development of the TLD string and associated registration policies to avoid such rendering problems.

Requestors can become further familiar with these kinds of problems by understanding the IDNA protocol and in particular via the proposed new version of the IDNA protocol – or by active participation in the IDN wiki where some rendering problems can be demonstrated and experienced.

One example of a rendering problem can be for the potential TLD registry operator to demonstrate that they have tested that the character "x" (first character in their proposed TLD) has rendering problems together with the character "y" (that might be the end of the 2nd level domain). Because of this, the registration policy for this TLD prohibits all 2nd level domains that end with "y".

Original IDNC WG requirement	**Revised Language**
4. Verification that the proposed code cannot be interpreted as any of the elements in the alpha-2 codes that is used by ISO 3166/MA (section 5.2 of ISO 3166-1:2006)	TBD

Rationale:
Proposal is to let the technical requirement stand as it is recommended, but apply support to the Technical Committee to allow them to align this confusability check with the process in the gTLD process and further to allow them to seek linguistic expertise in cases where there is doubt about confusability with ISO3166 strings. (See also discussions in Module 7).

Module 4

Technical Committee Considerations

The role and responsibility of the Technical Committee is to provide external and independent advice to the ICANN Board that, based on the documentation provided by the IDN ccTLD requestor, the selected string meets the technical criteria. If the Technical Committee finds that the selected string does not meet one or more of the criteria, the request for the IDN ccTLD with that particular selected string is not eligible under the Fast Track. However, the Technical Committee can seek further clarification from the requestor if such is deemed necessary, before making a decision on the requested string.

In line with the IDNC WG final report recommendation the external and independent "Technical Committee" should be appointed to conduct the technical due diligence and report to the ICANN Board.

ICANN has previously used the Registry Services Evaluation Process to evaluate proposed registry services such as introduction of DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC) in existing gTLD registries, rapid zone updates, DNS wildcard entries, partial bulk transfer, release of previously reserved second-level domain names, add-grace period limits, and abusive use policies. High-level technical expertise performs these evaluations.

ICANN believes it is similarly feasible to attract appropriate and adequate technical expertise to fulfill the duties of the Technical Committee.

4.1 Proposed Technical Committee Function

A core piece of the IDNC WG final report includes technical recommendations related to the stability and security of the TLD string itself. These technical requirements have been outlined in Module 2. While all requests in the Fast Track process will undergo a fast track admissibility check by staff, all requested strings will go through a Technical Committee review that has to be passed successfully in order for the requested IDN ccTLD string to continue through the Fast Track Process.

It is proposed that the Technical Committee as a whole conducts initial triage on the list of strings provided by ICANN staff.

If strings are identified by the Committee as needing further review, a 3 member panel is formed to conduct a DNS Stability Review.

The Panel will review the string and make a determination on whether the string will harm the Internet.

The Panel review will be conducted in 30 days or less (if possible)

If a determination is made that the string applied for is not in compliance with relevant standards or creates a condition that may adversely affect the throughput, response time, consistency or coherence of responses to Internet servers or end systems, then this decision is communicated to ICANN staff, and then to the requestor. The request for an IDN ccTLD cannot proceed with a decision against the string.

However, the technical panel may seek clarification from the requestor if deemed necessary.

Module 5

Fast Track Request and Evaluation Process

This module gives an overview of the process for requesting an IDN ccTLD under the Fast Track process, and includes instructions on how to complete and submit necessary material such as the required supporting documentation.

This module also discusses how to request help concerning the process, and the circumstances under which a submitted request can be withdrawn or terminated. A glossary of relevant terms is available online at: http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/idn-glossary.htm

5.1 General Overview

A general overview of the entire IDN ccTLD Fast Track process is presented in Figure 5.1. The three color-coded stages represent the three-stage methodology as recommended by the IDNC WG: the Preparation Stage; the Request and Evaluation Stage, and the Delegation Process Stage.

5.1.1 The Preparation Stage

In the Preparation Stage the requestor undertakes preparatory work to enter the Fast Track process. The primary preparation activities include identification of:

- the language(s) and script(s) for the IDN ccTLD string(s),
- selection of the string(s) and hence the name of country or territory for the IDN ccTLD(s), and
- the development of the associated IDN Table(s) and any potential variants as necessary for linguistic reasons.

In addition, it is in the Preparation Stage that the requestor develops the required documentation of endorsements. Documentation of endorsement need to include:

1. Support from the country or territory that the selected string is a meaningful representation of the country or territory name.
2. Support from the country or territory for the selected registry operator.
3. Support from the relevant script community(ies) for the IDN table.

It is recommended that the involvement of the participants in the country or territory should be documented in a similar manner as is required for a standard ccTLD delegation request, by the selected delegate; see http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/ for more details.

To support the requestors in their preparation efforts, ICANN will be launching a support function for those that need guidance or support in the development of elements related to their IDN Registration Policy.

5.1.2. The Request and Evaluation Stage

In the Request and Evaluation Stage, the requestor submits their request for an IDN ccTLD to ICANN. The request then undergoes the defined evaluation steps, including:

- Request Admissibility Process Review

- String Confirmation Process

- Publishing of String and Delegation Readiness Verification Process

The various steps in the Request and Evaluation Stage are described in further detail below in this Module.

5.1.3 The Delegation Process Stage

When the request has passed the Request and Evaluation stage successfully, it enters the Delegation Process Stage, where the standard IANA Delegation process is applied before the request for delegation can be submitted for approval by the ICANN Board.

The Delegation Process Stage is described in further detail in Module 6.

Once the request is approved by the ICANN Board the string is delegated in the DNS root, after which the IDN ccTLD operator can launch operations and start accepting registrations under the delegated IDN ccTLD.

5.2 Submission of an IDN TLD Fast Track Request

Requests for IDN ccTLDs can be submitted to ICANN starting [Fast-track opening date]. A template for the required information for such a request can be downloaded here [link to template].

Requests must be submitted to ICANN in signed hard copy format at the following address:

ICANN
4676 Admiralty Way Ste 330
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
USA

Attn: Request for an IDN ccTLD Fast Track

IDN ccTLD Fast Track requests can be submitted at any time from the start date and until the finalization of the ccNSO PDP on IDNs (in accordance with Guiding Principle A from the IDNC WG Final Report). The end date for submission of a Fast Track request will be announced as soon as it is known.

Requests for IDN ccTLDs are anticipated to be processed manually due to the currently expected volume of requests. The expected volume is based on replies ICANN received to the request for information (RFI) that in accordance with the IDNC WG recommendation has been sent out to all relevant authorities and ccTLD operators. The RFI aimed at gaining an understanding of the interest of individual countries and territories to participate in the Fast Track process. At the time of writing a total of 29 parties replied that they are interested in participation in the Fast Track process, whereas 23 parties replied that they are not interested in participating in the Fast Track process. Some respondents may be overlaps between ccTLD operators and governments.

A more detailed analysis of the responses to the RFI will be provided online at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/

5.3 ICANN Staff Support and Contact Functions

In order to support countries and territories in the participation in the Fast Track, several contact points and support processes will be made available as described as follows.

5.3.1 General Contact Details

ICANN Regional Liaisons and Fast Track processing staff are available to assist requestors with all phases of the Fast Track process.

Region-based contact details will be made available for Fast Track participants, to ensure that all regions are covered adequately and to ensure that inquiries can be responded to in a timely manner within all time zones.

Answers to the most common questions regarding the Fast Track process will be made available in a FAQ on the Fast Track web site at http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/

5.3.2 Specific IDN Support Details

To support the requestors in their preparation efforts, ICANN will launch a support function for those that need guidance or support in the development of elements related to their IDN Registration Policy.

Included in the IDN support process are the following elements:

1. Review and implementation of IDN Guidelines, including support for understanding the details of the following requirements:

   1.1. Implementation of IDNA protocol requirements

   1.2. Defining script/language and sets thereof

   1.3. Development of IDN table(s), including identifications of variants

   1.4. Posting of IDN table(s) in IANA repository

   1.5. Making all information available online

   1.6. Identification of stakeholders that need to be consulted

2. Support and description of various available options for decision-making on implementation issues, such as:

   2.1. How to determine which characters to support (protocol validity, user survey, variants)

   2.2. Development of general registration policy (such as first-come-first-serve, grandfathering and/or other pre-registration rights or intellectual property rights)

   2.3. Development of variant registration policy (such as bulk vs. block registrations)

   2.4. Definition of necessary tools and support functions related to registrar communication, support needs, and Draft Implementation Plans in general.

   2.5. Support to development of more technical necessary tool, such as Whois capabilities, IDNA conversions, and more

For the development of IDN Tables and the associated registrations policies it is further recommended that the requestor work with other language communities that are using the same scripts as basis for the languages they are planning to facilitate.

It is important to keep in mind that ICANN provides support and general assistance for the above matters. ICANN will not make legal or business decisions for countries or territories, nor for a potential or existing registry operator.

5.4 Termination Criteria for Submitted Requests

In several of the steps throughout the Fast Track process it is possible for the requestor to withdraw their request. It is also possible that a request will be terminated by ICANN due to a determination that the request contains certain errors.

Errors resulting in termination include the following:

1. The requested string is already a string delegated in the DNS
2. The requestor does not correspond to a listing in the ISO3166-1 list
3. The requested string consists of characters from the Latin script
4. The language represented is confirmed not to fulfill the language criteria in relation to the corresponding country or territory.

If such errors are discovered then the requestor is informed about this result and the Termination process is initiated. Details of the Termination Process are to be developed.

Other issues found with a submitted request may delay the determination of whether the requested string should be delegated or not. Such delaying factors could include: (i) the requested string is already applied for in the Fast Track process, (ii) the requested string is already applied for in the gTLD process, (iii) the request does not contain support from the corresponding country or territory, and (iv) the requested string is not included in the UNEGEGN manual and it is not otherwise substantiated that the string is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country or territory. In all such cases the requestor will be consulted for clarifications before any determination on the request is made.

5.5 Processing of an IDN TLD Fast Track Request

Requests for IDN ccTLD(s) submitted to ICANN will be subjected to a sequential series of manual evaluation reviews by ICANN staff and by outside appointed experts where required. Figure 5.1 outlines the overall process. The detailed processes are outlined in the following subsections and associated Figures.

5.5.1 Request Admissibility Process

The first activity that takes place after ICANN receives a request for an IDN ccTLD is the checking performed in the Request Admissibility Process.

In this step ICANN staff verifies that all elements required per the Fast Track Request Template have been included in the request, ensuring that there are no obvious administrative errors in the request.

This check is established to identify requests that are incomplete, as quickly as possible. If errors are found ICANN staff will provide such information to the requestor that will be able to provide additional information or withdraw the request and start over when ready. If no errors are encountered ICANN staff will provide

the requestor with a notification that the Request Admissibility Process is considered complete and passed.

5.5.2 String Confirmation Process

The next step is the String Confirmation Process. This process is outlined in Figure 5.3 (see Appendix 1, Module 5) and described as follows.

The String Confirmation process is initiated with a validation that the process for self-certification of linguistic requirements is completed. The requestor will be consulted if issues are found and clarification will be sought. ICANN Staff is working on providing a support function to the requestors for linguistic support. Details of this are yet not available.

Once the linguistic verification has been completed, the string and associated material will be provided to the Technical Committee (see Module 4 for details about the Technical Committee) and the technical string check is initiated. This is a detailed technical check where all technical requirements as described in Module 3 are applied and adherence verified. If technical issues are discovered in this review the Technical Committee can request clarifications from the requestor, alternatively the Termination Process will be initiated. See Section 5.4 above.

If no technical issues are revealed by the Technical Committee, the requestor is notified that the String Confirmation Process has been completed successfully and that the requested string now will be posted publicly.

5.5.3 Publishing of Requested String(s)

Following a successful outcome of the String Confirmation Process, the requested IDN ccTLD string will be posted publicly.

An area on the ICANN website will be dedicated to presenting strings that have reached this step in the fast-track process. RSS features of changes to this area will be made available.

5.5.4 Delegation Readiness Verification Process

When a request reaches this point all requirements in the Stage 2 process per the IDNC WG recommendations have been completed successfully. A delegation readiness verification report is produced by ICANN staff and provided to IANA staff. The requestor will be notified that the formal IANA delegation process can begin and what actions are necessary to take. The IANA Delegation process is described further in the next Module.

Appendix 1 to Module 5

Appendix 1: Figure 5.1: General Overview of the Fast Track Process; Stage 1: Preparation; Stage 2: Request and Evaluation; Stage 3: Delegation

Figure 5.2: String Confirmation Process

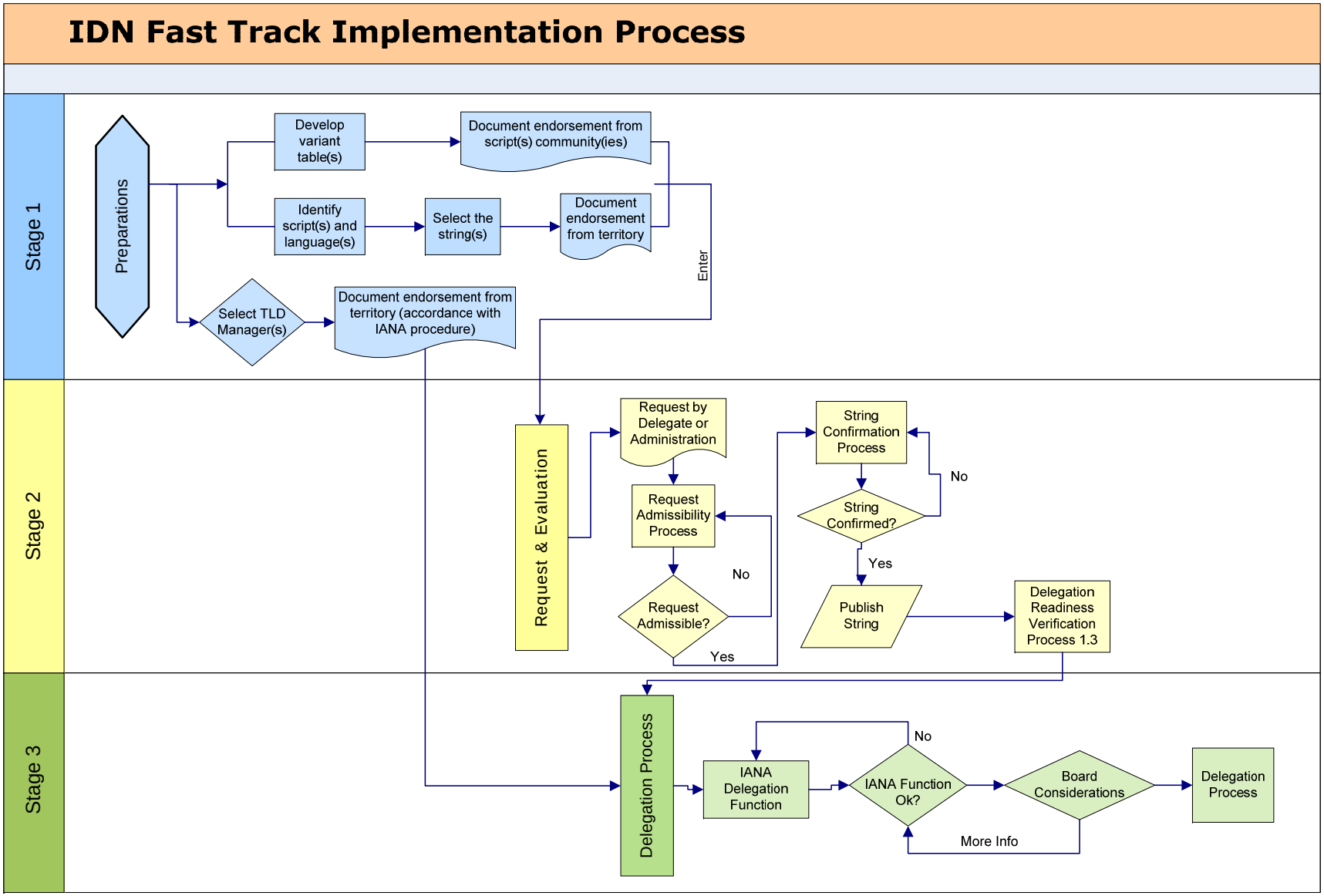

Figure 5.1: General overview of the Fast Track Process; Stage1: Preparation; Stage 2: Request and Evaluation; Stage 3: Delegation

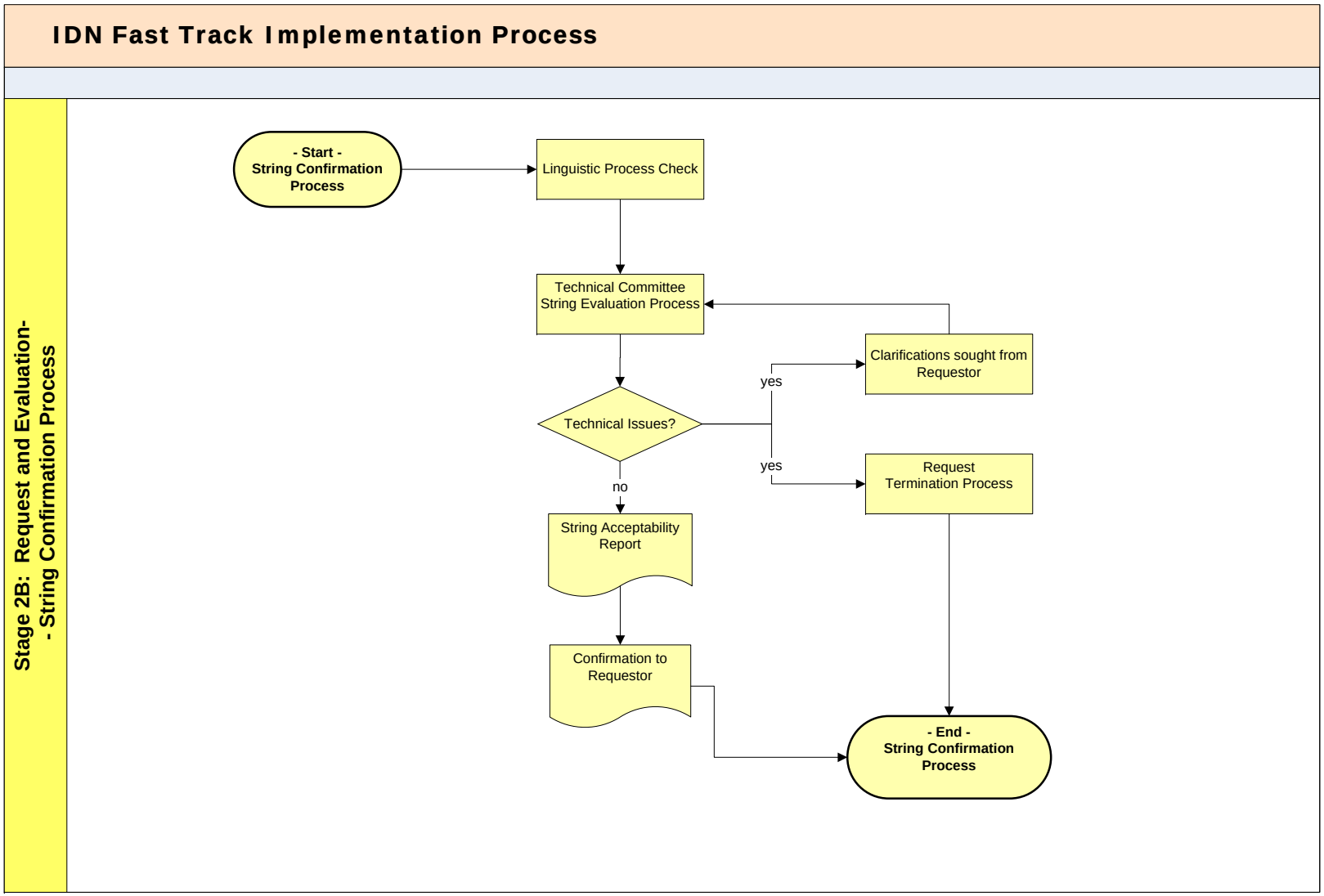

Figure 5.2: Stage 2B: String Confirmation Process –the technical criteria is verified and the linguistic process requirement is checked here.

Module 6

Delegation Process

ICANN currently maintains a process for delegating top-level domains as part of its management of the IANA functions (IANA). A guide to the delegation procedure for existing country-code top-level domains is described at http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/.This process remains largely applicable for IDN ccTLDs. This online document will be updated to reflect updated operational practices for IDN ccTLDs.

6.1 IANA Function

ICANN manages the IANA functions under a contract with the United States Department of Commerce. The IANA process of review for delegating an IDN country-code top-level domain will remain consistent with the process applied for existing country-code top-level domains directly derived from the ISO 3166-1 standard. The process will only be augmented to include the requirements in Module 5

ICANN staff will receive a request to delegate a country-code top-level domain, comprised of a formal template that explains what the delegation request is, as well as a bundle of supporting documentation. This supporting documentation must describe how the principles in RFC1591, ICP-1, and the GAC principles are supported. Some of these are:

6.1.1 Operational and technical skills

1.1 The prospective manager has the requisite skills to operate the TLD appropriately.

1.2 There must be reliable, full-time IP connectivity to the nameservers and electronic mail connectivity to the operators.

1.3 The manager must perform its duties in assigning domains and operating nameservers with technical competence.

6.1.2 Operator in country

1.4 The prospective manager supervises and operates the domain name from within the country or territory represented by the TLD.

1.5 The prospective administrative contact must reside in the country represented by the TLD.

6.1.3 Equitable treatment

1.6 The prospective manager must be equitable and fair to all groups encompassed by the TLD that may request domain names.

6.1.4 Community/Governmental support

1.7 The prospective manager has the requisite authority to operate the TLD appropriately, with the desire of the government taken very seriously.

1.8 Significantly interested parties in the domain should agree that the prospective manager is the appropriate party to receive the delegation

In addition to material that shows the requestor is suitable under these RFC 1591 defined criteria, the additional specific material relating to the evaluation described in the Module 5 must be provided. This will be satisfied by the Delegation Readiness report that describes the IDN-specific factors.

ICANN staff perform due diligence on the documentation provided in accord with the IANA review process defined in RFC 1591. If the request does not appear to adequately cover all of the areas, they will confer with the requestor who may provide further information. When ICANN staff deems the IANA due diligence evaluation is complete, it will package the request along with its assessment for ICANN Board review.

6.2 ICANN Review Process

All delegations and re-delegations of country-code top-level domains require ICANN approval in order to proceed. This role is expected to remain constant with the introduction of IDN ccTLDs.

At the conclusion of the IANA function evaluation, an assessment of the delegation request is made by ICANN.

ICANN evaluates whether requests are consistent with governing policies, and with ICANN's core values as set out in the ICANN Bylaws — to "ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems".

6.3 USG – DOC Review

After approval, ICANN executes its regular IANA function root zone change management process.

This change involves retesting the technical configuration of the supplied data from the requestor, and ensuring the name servers are correctly functioning. Once satisfied, the request is transmitted to the US Department of Commerce for authorization. Following this authorization, it is then implemented in the DNS root zone.

Module 7

Discussion of Additional Topics

This Module 7 contains a description of issues and topics that are relevant parts of the Draft Implementation Plan, but were not (fully) covered in the IDNC Final Report. It also includes the list of outstanding issues which the ICANN Board directed staff to produce in advance of the ICANN Cairo meeting in November 2008.

Most of the topics covered in this module are directly related to the overarching requirement to:

- Preserve the security and stability of the DNS
- Ensure compliance with the IDNA protocol and IDN Guidelines

In order to move forward with the planning process and to address the open issues and topics ICANN staff seeks input from the community, in particular at the Cairo meeting.

Topics included are:

1. Ensuring ongoing compliance with the IDN technical standards, including the IDNA protocol and the IDN Guidelines.
2. Possible establishment of financial contributions.
3. IDN ccTLD operator association to the ICANN community.
4. Compliance with consensus policies
5. Prevention of contention issues with existing TLDs and those under application in the gTLD process.

This Module proposes recommendations for the Fast Track process for community discussion to ensure that this is working in the best interest of the Internet Community.

ICANN Staff is expecting proactive conversations about the topics discussed in this module, during the ICANN meeting in Cairo, Egypt (November 2008).

7.1 Relationship between ICANN and IDN ccTLD operator

The IDNC WG Final Report is silent on the topic of the relationship between ICANN and the IDN ccTLD operator after delegation of the IDN ccTLD(s). However, the nature of such relationship is a matter that was considered extensively in the comments on and concerns raised with regard to the Final Report.

As part of the implementation of the Fast Track process, ICANN staff has evaluated the current program with ccTLD operators to achieve stable relations with an IDN ccTLD operator after introduction of the IDN ccTLD. Currently, ICANN has an ongoing program of voluntary Accountability Frameworks (AF).

The introduction of IDN ccTLDs will require that a number of additional technical aspects are taken into account to ensure the security, stability and resilience of the Domain Name System. In particular it will be necessary to ensure that the IDN ccTLD operator adheres to the IDNA protocol and IDN Guidelines on an ongoing basis.

Structuring the relationships between ICANN and the IDN ccTLD operator is therefore considered part of the Draft Implementation Planning. At this stage of the planning process, ICANN staff seeks additional input and guidance from the community to shape a mechanism that includes a general description of responsibilities of both ICANN and the IDN ccTLD operator, ensures compliance with the IDNA protocol over time, as well as compliance with associated standards, guidelines and other standards as they develop.

7.2 Financial Contributions

The IDNC WG Final report does not contain a recommendation concerning possible financial contributions related to the implementation of IDN ccTLDs. The community has discussed this topic and various viewpoints have been put forward proposing establishment of financial contributions.

ICANN staff is looking forward to continue this dialogue with the community, and to receive some feedback so that ICANN can reach a decision on this topic in a timely manner for the meeting in Mexico (March 2009.

7.3 Association of IDN ccTLD Operators with the ccNSO

Another topic not covered by the IDNC WG relates to the association of IDN ccTLD operators to the ccNSO.

When the ccNSO was established in 2003, the introduction of IDN ccTLDs was yet not envisioned. This factor, amongst others, is reflected in the membership definition of the ccNSO, which is too restrictive to accommodate IDN ccTLD operators.

Secondly, the structure of the ccNSO and its voting mechanisms, do not accommodate IDN ccTLDs. One of the issues addressed in the IDN ccNSO PDP is the need for adjustment of Article XI of the ICANN bylaws to include eligibility for IDN ccTLD operators as ccNSO members.

Although the ccNSO is open to members and non-members, the status of members in the ccNSO is different. For instance, ccNSO consensus policies, including the IDN ccNSO PDP outcome when implemented, are currently only applicable through the (voluntary) membership of the ccNSO.

Assuming that IDN ccTLDs will be operational before the conclusion of the IDN ccNSO PDP, an interim solution is desirable. ICANN Staff respectfully suggest that the ccNSO consider whether an interim solution might be feasible where the IDN ccTLD operators could, for example, be granted temporary advisory positions to the ccNSO. In that way, support to the finalization of the IDN ccNSO PDP can be facilitated in an adequate manner that includes covering the development of consensus policies for IDN ccTLD operators. Further mechanisms are also proposed to be in place to ensure and require compliance with consensus policies of the ccNSO, including the outcome of the IDN ccNSO PDP.

7.4 Discussion of Contention Issues with Existing TLDs and new gTLD Applications

Through the implementation efforts of the Fast Track process and the process for introduction of new gTLDs, a potential for contention has been identified between Fast Track requested IDN ccTLD strings and:

- Existing gTLD strings
- Existing ccTLD strings
- Proposed strings in new gTLD applications

These contention issues can be either that two or more strings are identical or so confusingly similar that they cannot coexist in the DNS.

Some cases will be covered as the process for introduction of new gTLDs requires government support if the proposed string represents a country or a territory. However, there could be rare cases where an applied generic string is identical or confusingly similar to a requested IDN ccTLD string, without the gTLD string being submitted for the same purpose as the IDN ccTLD string.

This issue is made more complex by the fact that Fast Track requests are confidential until the end of the request and evaluation stage (see Module 5) while all applications in the New gTLD Process are public as soon as the application period closes.

Efforts should be invested in both the Fast Track and the New gTLD Process to ensure ongoing and efficient communications between the participants in these processes at all stages to identify potential issues as early as possible in order to achieve a timely prevention or resolution of any issue.

At this stage of the planning process ICANN staff seeks further input and guidance from the community to shape mechanisms that will help minimize the possible occurrence of such contentions and effectively deal with any that could occur.

7.5 Proposed Evaluation of Fast Track the Process

In order to ensure that the fast Track process is functioning to the best interest of the Internet Community as a whole a review of the process is proposed as follows.

Every 12 months following the opening of the Fast Track Process ICANN staff should open for public comments on the functionality of the process. The public comment period should last a minimum of 45 days. Following the conclusion of the comment period, staff should analyze the received comments and seek community guidance and feedback on such comments, in particular from the ccNSO, GAC, GNSO, ALAC and the SSAC.

If necessary, based on these consultations, the Fast Track process can be modified to better suit the needs of the community. If such changes are implemented, a 1 month notice must be provided publicly with clear descriptions of what changes are introduced and what the impact will be for prospective IDN ccTLD operators.