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Briefing Paper – Advisory Group approach to discussion (benefits and methods) to effectively and efficiently enhance access to zone file information (anticipating an environment with many gTLDs).

Issue: Individuals or entities (“interested parties”) seek zone file information for legitimate purposes including anti-abuse efforts, law enforcement activities, academic research, and intellectual property protection. Currently, interested parties must contract with each gTLD registry operator to obtain access to zone data. To support access, each gTLD registry operators allocates resources to administer and distribute its zone file to interested parties who agree to abide by the registry’s terms of service per an appendix to their Registry Agreement.

The ICANN process to expand the namespace to tens or perhaps hundreds of new gTLD could result in scaling challenges for interested parties to continue to collect and compile gTLD zone files for legitimate purposes. gTLD registry operators would continue to bear the costs of administering their zone file access provisions.

Questions: Describe the benefits of providing or need to provide efficient access to zone file data. What solutions are available to the community to increase the efficiency of zone file distribution for gTLD registries and interested parties and to safeguard the interests of all parties, including gTLD registries?

Process: ICANN will convene an advisory group to include gTLD registries and interested parties to produce a requirements statement considering both the vendors and consumers of gTLD zone data; and then identify how enhancements could be made to the current system for accessing gTLD zone files.

Elements to be considered:

1. What members of the community should be invited to participate in the advisory group?
2. What are the issues the advisory group should address?
3. What are potential solutions to the issues?
4. What are the legitimate uses of zone file access and who should have it?
5. What are the advantages of a centralized approach to zone file access as a potential solution?
6. What are the disadvantages of a centralized approach to access?
7. Registry operators currently vet users and monitor access to zone file data by responsible parties for legitimate purposes; could a centralized approach maintain such safeguards?
8. Can a centralized approach offer a more secure, stable and resilient alternative to the current approach?
9. What are the concerns to be considered if a centralized approach to access is established? For gTLD registry operators? For interested parties?