Expedited Policy Development Process on Internationalized Domain Names Initiation Request	
a. Name of Council Member/SG/C	This Initiation Request is submitted to the GNSO Council by the Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) EPDP Charter Drafting Team, consisting of the following members: ● Dennis Tan Tanaka (RySG) - Drafting Team Chair ● Donna Austin (RySG) ● Edmon Chung (RySG) ● Jeffrey J. Neuman (GNSO Liaison to the GAC) ● Juan Manuel Rojas (GNSO Councilor - NPOC) ● Mark W. Datysgeld (GNSO Councilor - BC) ● Maxim Alzoba (GNSO Councilor - RySG) ● Tomslin Samme-Nlar (GNSO Councilor - NCUC) During its meeting on 21 October 2020, the GNSO Council agreed to establish a Drafting Team to develop both a draft charter and an Initiation Request for an EPDP on IDNs. The Drafting Team kicked off its meetings on 8 December 2020 and submitted the draft EPDP charter and the Initiation Request for the GNSO Council's consideration on 10 May 2021.
b. Origin of issue (e.g. previously completed PDP)	On 14 March 2019, the ICANN Board approved a set of recommendations developed by ICANN org on how to allocate IDN variant TLD labels. The ICANN Board requested that the GNSO and ccNSO take into account those IDN variant TLD recommendations while developing their respective policies to define and manage IDN variant TLDs for the current TLDs and future TLD applications. The ICANN Board further requested that the GNSO and ccNSO keep each other informed of the progress in developing the relevant details of their policies and procedures to ensure a consistent solution for IDN variant gTLDs and IDN variant ccTLDs. On 15 August 2019, the GNSO Council IDN Variants Scoping Team started to develop recommendations for the GNSO Council's consideration on how to address the IDN variant TLD recommendations. In addition, the Scoping Team also considered issues in the Final Proposed Draft version 4.0 of Internationalized Domain Name ("IDN") Implementation Guidelines ("IDN Guidelines v. 4.0"), for which the ICANN Board had agreed to the GNSO Council request to defer its adoption.

	In January 2020, the ICANN Board approved the [Recommendations for the Technical Utilization of the RZ-LGR](#) on how to employ the [RZ-LGR](#) to determine valid IDN TLDs and their variant labels. The ICANN Board requested that the GNSO and ccNSO take into account those RZ-LGR Technical Utilization recommendations while developing their respective policies to define and manage IDN variant TLDs for the current TLDs and future TLD applications. At its meeting on 23 January 2020, the GNSO Council discussed the [Final Report](#) from the Scoping Team, which suggested tackling IDN related issues in two tracks: Operational Track and Policy Track. The Policy Track has two main objectives: i) to deliberate on the <u>definition</u> and <u>management</u> of IDN variant TLDs, and ii) to deliberate on the change process of the IDN Guidelines and any policy issues related to the IDN Guidelines v. 4.0 identified by the Operational Track Team (consisted of members in the GNSO Contracted Parties House) and agreed upon by the IDN Guidelines Working Group. In considering the mechanism in carrying out the Policy Track work on IDNs, the GNSO Council agreed with the Scoping Team's suggestion that an Issue Report is likely not needed in order to initiate the work, and an EPDP is the desired approach. This EPDP is expected to develop its recommendations by building on the existing body of policy work, research, and analysis on the IDN subject, with a focus on the completed GNSO New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP recommendations under Topic 25 on IDNs and other relevant topics, which have been adopted by the GNSO Council in February 2021 and forwarded to the ICANN Board for adoption. See items c-d for more details regarding the previously completed IDN related work that serve as the origin of this EPDP.
c. Scope of the effort (detailed description of the issue or question that the EPDP is expected to address)	This EPDP is expected to provide the GNSO Council with policy recommendations on: i) the definition of all TLDs and the management of variant labels to facilitate the delegation of variant gTLDs in the root zone while achieving the security and usability goal of variant labels in a stable manner; and

ii) how the IDN Implementation Guidelines, which Contracted Parties are required to comply with, should be updated in the future.

Notwithstanding the former and subject to GNSO Council approval, the mission and scope of this EPDP may be expanded specifically as a result of the Operational Track. This EPDP is expected to provide the GNSO Council with recommendations to resolve issues for policy considerations in the IDN Implementation Guideline 4.0, IF and WHEN such issues are identified by the Operational Track Team and agreed to by the IDN Guidelines Working Group.

This EPDP is expected to develop its recommendations by building on the existing body of policy work, research, and analysis on the IDN subject, with a focus on the GNSO New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP recommendations under Topic 25 on IDNs and other relevant topics, which have been adopted by the GNSO Council in February 2021 and forwarded to the ICANN Board for adoption.

The SubPro PDP recommendations were developed by taking into account other previous policy work on IDNs, including the IDN Variant TLD Implementation staff paper ("Staff Paper") and Recommendations for the Technical Utilization of the Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR) ("TSG recommendations"). See more information about the previous work on IDNs in Appendix B of the IDN Variants Scoping Team Final Report.

As a result, the charter questions were developed based on the following principles and framework:

- This EPDP should not revisit SubPro recommendations in the context of future new gTLDs, but will consider questions asking whether such recommendations should be extended to existing gTLDs;
- Where SubPro does not have a recommendation that corresponds to the Staff Paper/TSG recommendation, the charter will include questions about the impact of such recommendations on both future and existing gTLDs;
- The SubPro Implementation Review Team (IRT) and this WG (including its future IRT) should coordinate on addressing implementation issues to achieve, to the extent possible, consistent solutions for new and existing gTLDs. To be clear, coordination does not mean that this WG cannot independently consider certain question that impact both future and existing

	TLDs or arrive at its own conclusion, but means that whichever group is first to develop a solution or recommendation for such question, such group should inform the other group to ensure a consistent implementation can be developed to the extent possible.
d. Description of how this issue meets the criteria for an EPDP, i.e. how the EPDP will address either (1) a narrowly defined policy issue that was identified and scoped after either the adoption of a GNSO policy recommendation by the ICANN Board or the implementation of such an adopted recommendation; or (2) new or additional policy recommendations on a specific GNSO policy issue that had been scoped previously as part of a PDP that was not completed or other similar effort, including relevant supporting information	In accordance with the Expedited GNSO policy Development Process Manual, an EPDP may be initiated by the GNSO Council to provide new or additional policy recommendations on a specific policy issue that had been substantially scoped previously, such that extensive, pertinent background information already exists.[1]
	As noted in item c of this Initiation Request, this EPDP is expected to develop its recommendations by building on the existing body of policy work, research, and analysis on the IDN subject, with a focus on the GNSO Council adopted recommendations from the GNSO New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP, as well as previous policy work on IDNs, including the Staff Paper and TSG recommendations.
	Those recommendations had already been scoped previously as part of the SubPro PDP and other policy efforts that were completed. The extensive, pertinent background information on the issue of IDN variant definition and management can serve as a proxy for what would normally be contained in a GNSO Final Issue Report.
	The GNSO Council IDN Variants Scoping Team reached the same conclusion that an Issue Report is likely not needed in order to initiate the IDN Policy Track work, and an EPDP is the desired approach.
	As noted in item b, in considering the mechanism in carrying out the Policy Track work on IDNs, the GNSO Council agreed that those issues have been substantially scoped previously and agreed to adopt the Scoping Team's suggestion for an EPDP as the desired approach. As a result, during its meeting on 21 October 2020, the GNSO Council established the Drafting Team to develop a Charter and an Initiation Request for an EPDP on IDNs.
	Therefore, the criteria for an EPDP has been met.

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[1] See "Section 1. GNSO EPDP - Applicability" in the Annex 4 - Expedited GNSO Policy Development Process Manual: https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-4-epdp-manual-24oct19-en.pdf
See GNSO Operating Procedures Annex 4 - Expedited GNSo Policy Development Process Manual, Section 3: https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-4-epdp-manual-24oct19-en.pdf

e. If not provided as part of item d, the opinion of the ICANN General Counsel regarding whether the issue proposed for consideration is properly within the scope of the ICANN's mission, policy process and more specifically the role of the GNSO	In determining whether the issue is within the scope of the ICANN's mission, policy process, and more specifically the role of the GNSO, the ICANN General Counsel's office have considered the following factors: **Whether the issue is within the scope of ICANN's mission statement** The ICANN Bylaws state that in relation to ICANN's mission to ensure the stable and secure operation of the DNS, ICANN: *(i) Coordinates the allocation and assignment of names in the root zone of the Domain Name System ("DNS") and coordinates the development and implementation of policies concerning the registration of second-level domain names in generic top-level domains ("gTLDs"). In this role, ICANN's scope is to coordinate the development and implementation of policies:* ● *For which uniform or coordinated resolution is reasonably necessary to facilitate the openness, interoperability, resilience, security and/or stability of the DNS including, with respect to gTLD registrars and registries, policies in the areas described in Annex G-1 and Annex G-2; and* ● *That are developed through a bottom-up consensus-based multistakeholder process and designed to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique names systems.* *The issues, policies, procedures, and principles addressed in Annex G-1 and Annex G-2 with respect to gTLD registrars and registries shall be deemed to be within ICANN's Mission.* The work on the definition of all TLDs and the management of variant labels may allow for the introduction of variant TLDs in relation to ICANN's mission, "uniform or coordinated resolution is reasonably necessary to facilitate the openness, interoperability, resilience, security and/or stability of the DNS." The ICANN Board also resolved to request that the GNSO and ccNSO take into account the IDN variant TLD recommendations and the RZ-LGR Technical Utilization recommendations while developing their respective policies to define and manage IDN variant TLDs for the current TLDs and future TLD applications.

See GNSO Operating Procedures Annex 4 - Expedited GNSo Policy Development Process Manual, Section 3:
https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-4-epdp-manual-24oct19-en.pdf

Whether the issue is broadly applicable to multiple situations or organizations

Policy that would allow the introduction of variant gTLDs would affect applicants, some existing registries, registrars, registrants and end-users, so the issue is broadly applicable to multiple situations or organizations.

Whether the issue is likely to have lasting value or applicability, albeit with the need for occasional updates

Without this policy development, variants at the top-level will not otherwise be allowed in the gTLD space.

Whether the issue will establish a guide or framework for future decision-making

Policy development on this issue could allow for an ongoing mechanism to allocate variants in the future.

Whether the issue implicates or affects ICANN policy

Policy recommendations on this issue would represent the first on this specific issue. However, IDNs are already an element of the New gTLD Program and IDN gTLDs were delegated as part of the 2012 round of the New gTLD Program. In that respect, this issue implicates existing gTLD policy, but is also connected to policy development completed in the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP. The SubPro PDP made a limited number of recommendations under Topic 25 related to future variant labels at the top and second levels, which have been adopted by the GNSO Council in February 2021 and forwarded to the ICANN Board for adoption. The recommendations to be developed by the IDNs EPDP may also have implications on other ICANN policies and procedures, such as the transfer policy, dispute resolution procedures, and trademark protection mechanisms.

ICANN General Counsel's Opinion

The ICANN General Counsel has confirmed that the proposed issue is properly within the scope of the ICANN's mission, policy process, and more specifically the policy development role of the GNSO.

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f. If not provided as part of item d, the opinion of ICANN staff and their rationale as to whether the Council should initiate the EPDP on the issue	Not applicable (see item d)
g. Proposed EPDP mechanism (e.g. WG, DT, individual volunteers)	The proposed EPDP mechanism is an EPDP Working Group on IDNs.
h. Method of operation, if different from GNSO Working Group Guidelines	This Working Group will follow the method of operation as detailed in the GNSO Working Group Guidelines. Notably, this Working Group will employ a "Representative + Open" model, consisting of Members, Participants, and Observers. Each of the following groups are invited to appoint up to three Members: RySG, RrSG, IPC, BC, ISPCP, NCSG, ccNSO, ALAC, GAC, SSAC, and RSSAC.
i. Decision-making methodology for the proposed EPDP mechanism, if different from GNSO Working Group Guidelines	This Working Group will follow the decision-making methodology as detailed in the GNSO Working Group Guidelines. The GNSO Working Group Guidelines apply in full and Consensus designations are therefore the responsibility of the Work Group Chair and are to be made in accordance with the consensus levels described in Section 3.6 of the Working Group Guidelines. Notably, due to the "Representative + Open" model of this EPDP Working Group, consensus calls or decisions are limited to Members who may consult as appropriate with their respective appointing organizations. However, for the purpose of assessing consensus, groups that do not fulfil their maximum membership allowance should not be disadvantaged. The Working Group Chair shall ensure that all perspectives are appropriately taken into account in assessing Consensus designations on the final recommendations. For consensus building purposes, the Working Group Leadership, Working Group Members, and GNSO Council Liaison are expected to review the Consensus Playbook which provides practical tools and best practices to bridge differences, break deadlocks, and find common ground within ICANN processes; potential training related to the Consensus Playbook

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	may be provided for Working Group Leadership, Members, and GNSO Council Liaison.
j. Desired completion date and rationale for this date	The Working Group is expected to deliver its work plan to the GNSO Council as its first deliverable. The work plan is expected to include a proposed sequence to address the topics covered in this charter, a map of dependencies among these topics, as well as a realistic estimated time frame to complete its work.

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https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-4-epdp-manual-24oct19-en.pdf