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ICANN Transcription

IDNs EPDP

Thursday, 13 October 2022 at 13:30 UTC

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DEVAN REED: Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. Welcome to the IDNs EPDP call taking place on Thursday, 13th October, 2022 at 13:30 UTC. In the interest of time, there will be no roll call. Attendance will be taken by the Zoom Room. We do have apologies for Anil Kumar Jain. All members and participants will be promoted to panelists for today's call.

Members and participants when using the chat, please select everyone in order for everyone to see the chat and so it is captured in the recording. Observers will remain as an attendee and will have view only chat access. Statements of interest must be kept up to date. If anyone has any updates to share, please raise your hand or speak up now.

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information can be found on the IDNs EPDP Wikispace. Recordings will be posted shortly after the end of the call. Please remember to state your name before speaking for the transcript. As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multistakeholder process are to comply with the expected standards of behavior. Thank you and back over to our Chair Donna Austin to begin.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Devin, and welcome everybody to our IDN EPDP call for today. We are going to go through some-- nothing new today. I guess it's a message that I have for you. Just a little bit of a rehash of some things that we've talked about previously. So, I guess, we'll just get started. Just Arial is going to take us through a review of the project plan that we talked about yesterday, not yesterday, last week.

And just to frame this a little bit, the leadership team had some discussion about it after our call last week. We're actually going to float the idea that we do two final reports. So we'll do a final report for Phase 1 and a final report for Phase 2 rather than do initial reports for Phase 1 and Phase 2 and then have a final report.

So what I'd like folks to think about today is when you see what Ariel is going to put to the group is that by doing two final reports rather than one that covers off Phase 1 of Phase 2, the timeline that we talked about last week is going to expand again.

And there's going to be some optics around that that are going to look very favorably on our work. But I think from a pragmatic perspective, it is the best way for us to go forward, but it's not the

leadership's call, it is something we want to have the group on-site for. So that as your chair, my preference is to do this as two final reports.

And I think that's the most practical and sensible way to do it because it means that we can at least get those top-level questions dealt with and bundled up and put to Council. Council can consider them and they could go to the Board. So at least we're getting one chunk of work out of the way while we're not really in the best position to look at the second level charter questions until we have substandard work done by the CPH take ups group.

So have that in the back of your mind as Ariel goes through the revised project plan. And also I'm very much aware that we need to deal with the optics of how blowing project timeline out we'll have on the community and also the Council. I'm sure that there's some councilors that we'll be very concerned about why it's going to take so much longer to do this work than originally planned, but I'd also like folks to keep in mind that when we did come up with the plan originally, it was really just a finger to the wind to see how long we thought that it would take this group to consider the charter questions. And obviously, what we thought originally was very, very, very optimistic.

So I think now that we've got 12 months of work under our belt, we're in a better position to map how long it actually takes us to do the work. Of course, having said that, what Arial has built into the timeline is very conservative as well. And part of the reason we've done that is because we don't want to be in a position of making these project change requests every three or four months. So it is

conservative. So while there's a sticker shock with the dates, they are conservative. So what we're hoping to do is we'll promise a certain date, but hope that we'll get there before that date. So our aim will be to get the work done quicker than we're promising.

The other thing that I heard yesterday is that the transfer policy, the transferred PDP, is they're concerned about their timelines seeping and not meeting their posted dates. So they are actually moving to two meetings a week to make up the time. And I'm not going to propose that we do that just now, but what I want folks to think about is that there may be times through our conversations in the future where it will be helpful to have two meetings a week.

So rather than go down the path at the moment of saying I want to hold two minutes a week now because I think that will help us get through the work, I want to be a little bit more selective about that. And as we have conversations if there are a little bit tricky and we need the time that Ariel to set us up, provide us a context, then it may make sense that we set aside an hour for that, and then we have an additional hour in that week so that we can have our conversations. So I do want people to start to think about how we can do our work a little bit. If we do our work a little bit differently, will that speed up our process? So lots to think about here.

Ariel is going to take through the revised project plan. And there's revision in the dates because we're now thinking of doing two final reports. One to cover off top level and one to cover off second level rather than having the initial report for the top level, sitting doing nothing for what could be six, eight, nine months. Let's try to wrap that up, and then we can start on second level. So with that as context, I'll hand it over to Ariel. Over to you Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks very much, Donna. This is Ariel. So I think Donna did a really good job providing a context and a generous thinking behind the project change. And before I take you through the two final reports approach, I just want to give you a general understanding if we still do the one final report, but two initial reports, how the time will look like. And also, I want to note that last week we talked about this particular approach. But this time, I want to give you a more accurate estimate because we are building some additional time considerations. So that will potentially stretch the time to even just for one final report.

So back to this one faced approach with two initial reports and one final report, again, it's a conservative estimate. So one thing one additional time we are consider adding is review the operational input from ICANN org. So I think all of the folks know that the ICANN org, the GDS team is doing a review in coordination with some relevant departments, and they will provide operational implementation related input to our stable recommendations. So that work is ongoing and then it's expected to wrap up very soon.

And then we probably will receive the input definitely before the end of this year. That's for sure. So once they get their inputs, it will be preferred that this group dedicate some time to consider them. So that make sure our draft recommendations published for Public Comment is the best product that already taking to consideration the operational aspect of things. So that's why we have the second bullet point here to add 10 weeks for reviewing operational input. We may not need that time, but I think this is

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more realistic estimate. How much time is preferred to so we have sufficient time to review all these.

And then the other piece that probably won't need extended time for conducting is the data collection exercise. Right now the only known channel is the CPH TechOps team. So thanks again to Dennis for leading that effort. And we know from him that he's going to start socializing this idea with the TechOps team during a CP summit in November.

And we basically put November 2022 as the starting point for this data collection effort. And due to the number of charter questions at the second level that may need data, even just anecdotal. We try to give it more time for the CPH ops team to a TechOps team to do that. And then it's possible we'll also need to explore other channels or venues to collect data. So the allocation right now is eight months for data collection.

And that also take off the pressure, per se, that the group can start deliberating the second level questions after it finishes the top level related deliberation. So we don't have the expectation that there's any parallel work that needs to be done for the second and top level. We just want to have a clean break between these two. So that's the TechOps team have more time to provide us the data. And then once the data collection is done, then the group will be also ready to deliberate the second level questions. So that's the third bullet point is seeing additional time building for data collection.

And then in terms of deliberation of second level questions, last week we talked about the estimate is two weeks per question.

And then we try to be honest with ourselves. And based on our track record, that seems to be a very ambitious score. So in this updated version, we are trying to build in three weeks per charter question. So that will extend the time for the collaboration for second level related questions.

And then finally, for the finalization of all final recommendations because for this particular approach, it's one final report. So likely the group will need more time to finalize all of the top level and second level recommendations. So we have building 18 weeks to do that work. But it's a conservative estimate we may not need that time. But just said, I want to give the group the flexibility to have that period time to finalize all the recommendations.

So for this one-phased approach, now some key milestone dates that we projected for initial report part one the Public Comment can be published probably as late as 21st of April. Maybe we can do this earlier. So that's the first date. And then for part two of an initial report public common, that's January 3rd 2025.

So you see it's pushed out compared to the version you saw last week. It's due to the additional time that we are building to the project plan. And then finally, for the final reports submission, if we just do one final report, it will be 29th of August 2025. That's still conservative estimate. We're very hopeful that we can finish that earlier. But this is what we think is practical at this point.

And now I want to take you through the second option, which is the one that Donna focused on, is the two faced approach. We will have two initial reports and two final reports. So Phase 1 focusing on top level and Phase 2 focusing on second level. And

because we'll have two phases, that means that additional time is required because we need more time to process the two Public Comments and also develop the two final reports. It's some process related to that. So we need to build in the timeline for that.

So the overall timeline will be extended compared to the first option. But another thing to keep in mind is that if you remember when we say finalizing all the final recommendations, for the first approach we may require 18 weeks to do that, but because we're breaking the working to two chunks, so the time needed to finalize each phase, our final recommendations may be shorter.

So in this project plan for the two-Phased approach, we are putting 12 weeks for finalizing each phase of final recommendations after Public Comment. And, yeah, that's a conservative estimate again.

And then the other timeline extension that I mentioned earlier in the one-phased approach also applies to this two-Phased approach to means that for each phase, we need to build in time for the group to review ICANN org's inputs. And then also the data collection effort, also we have eight months periods for doing that. And then the second level charter question deliberation, we allocate this three weeks per question. So that's the same as their first approach.

And now you look at the key milestone dates projection, so for the Phase 1 initial report Public Comment that's the same as the first option, is 21st of April, 2023. We can get that published maybe even earlier. And then the final report for Phase 1 what we

projected in terms of the day to submit to the Council will be 3rd November 2023. We can probably get that done earlier too, but at least just let folks know that by the end of next year we should have the final recommendations for top level finalized and submitted it to the Council for consideration.

And then for Phase 2 initial report Public Comments, that date is pushed out compared to the first option that you saw. We projected 25th of April 2025. We can't get those Phase 2 preliminary recommendations published for Public Comment. And then in terms of the final report for Phase 2, what we projected is the 7th of November 2025. So the end of 2025, we can get Phase 2 final reports submitted to the Council. So this is definitely a conservative estimate, but it's probably better to under promise and over deliver than the opposite. So that's what we have calculated.

And then there's another important caveat I want to mention is that the Phase 1 projection, the dates is probably more accurate than Phase 2 because we are already pretty much done with the charter questions under Phase 1, so we probably have more confidence in terms of when to publish the initial report and when to submit to the Council for the final report. We'd probably have more confidence for the dates that we projected here.

But for Phase 2, because the group won't start deliberation on these charter questions until November 2023, these projection dates are subject to change based on how the group actually progresses in Phase 2. So it doesn't forbid us to submit another project change request. So I want to just note it here for Phase 2 the dates may be slightly stick the finger in the wanes situation,

not as accurate as Phase 1 one, so just to keep that in mind. And I think, yeah, I see that Jeff, your comment, but I guess I can stop here now and see whether folks want to speak up yet.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks Ariel. So a couple of points I want to make. So the project plans to Council is a relatively new thing that has been introduced.   One of the reasons that we're taking a very conservative approach here and the time frames do look very alarming is that we don't want to be in the position of having to provide project change requests to the Council every time that we slip a deadline. And we deliberately put off making a project change request earlier in the year because we didn't think we had enough information to be able to plan this out appropriately.

So one of the things we're doing here and I'm reasonably confident that these dates that you see in front of you perhaps with the exception of the initial report for Phase 1 are very conservative. Well, what I'm hoping is because this EPDP is representative across the community with perhaps the exception of SSAC, and because we're taking the time to get input from ICANN org along the way, so we're expecting some feedback in the near term from ICANN org on some of the recommendations where we think the recommendation is pretty stable.

So we're expecting some feedback from them in the near term. That when we put the initial report out, it should be in relatively good shape. And what I mean by that is that the Public Comment period shouldn't at least say too many comments that are going to be substantive and require us to do substantive work. And if my

hope ends up being a reality, then the final report should be submitted to Council well before November. Because we won't have to have substantive discussions to make substantive changes to the initial report to come up with the final report. So that's one thing.

Phase 2, I'm sure we're going to hit, well, I would hope that we're going to hit with-- I'm going to put this on to Dennis and the CPH TechOps group. But if they can do considerable work that puts us in a place where we can get through that same entity principle boundary, then we should be in a position of getting some substantive work done through 2024. So that's my hope with that.

So, Jeff, to your question about, and I understand the optics here, and I understand that the work that we're doing could impact on the timeline for a next round. So the leadership team did have a discussion with Karen's team, Karen Lantz's team. Karen is responsible for the operational design phase around the SubPro recommendations. So we have had a conversation with Karen. And recognizing that the operational design assessment that Karen is doing should be provided to the board in December of this year.

We still don't know what the next steps in that process should be. But in the conversation we had with Karen yesterday, I think it was yesterday, I'm not going to say that the timeline that we presented wasn't concerning because I can't say that. But what I can say is that the leadership team is aware of the dependency of our work on the next round.

And we will maintain that contact with Karen and her team to make sure that we're not getting too far removed from what's happening with next round and whatever time lines they come up with. So that there are no time lines for a next round yet. They're our best guesses by people, but it's still an unknown quantity as well.

So I can't say with any clarity. That's not the word. There's still some unknowns with the next round timeline, and we will do our best not to impede that. We are cognizant of that. We are cognizant of the fact that this is a dependency of moving forward with the next round, the work that we're doing. And we will do our level best to make sure that we're not getting in the way of that.

That the next round is waiting on us to complete our work. So we're cognizant to that. The work that we're doing with ICANN org at the moment, they're reviewing our recommendations as we go. So I hope that rather than put out an initial report and have ICANN org provide comments that are going to blow things up, our initial report will be stable from the perspective that we've already considered the ICANN's org input.

And that's why I'm hoping that the time between the Phase 1 initial report and the Phase 1 final report isn't going to be that time between April and November. I'm hoping that we'll be able to push that final report up. So if that is context and sorry to keep you waiting for so long, Jeff, but over to you.

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JEFFREY NEUMAN: Yeah. No problem. This is Jeff Newman. So we do have aboard liaison on this call, and I'm not putting Edmon under any pressure at this point. But I think it may be good for Edmon to go back to the Board and get-- You know, it's one thing to hear from policy and even GDS that they don't think this would impact the next round, but I think this is a Board level discussion.

And I think this is something that the community is probably going to want assurances of what you're saying. I mean, I get it. This takes time. And I think we got started what, in 2021. So I know PDPs can take four years. But I think that if we're required to do things, I would like to see us beat this timeline to the extent we can. I know we're trying to be ultra conservative, but unfortunately, when we're conservative, we tend to just meet those conservative deadlines, if at all.

I think we need to try to be more aggressive, especially with Phase 2. Then it would maybe help. I know I need to go back and review the stuff that needs to be done in Phase 2 that's different than Phase 1. But this is not going to send it. It's more than just optics, I think, here. It's the reality of your and another board member saying that the reason they want to do this round is for additional IDN top level domains.

And, yes, we're making it possible more in theory with Phase 1 to do the delegations, but the delegations of top levels without the ability or the contractual language needed for the second levels may not be sufficient. So I'd love some more assurances to the extent we can socialize this and to the extent we can do better. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Devan. I completely understand your comments that I have the same concerns. You know, as I discussed the preamble to Ariel I suppose is we need to think about ways that we can do this work quicker. Not really about efficiency. We're pretty efficient with that time. We need to understand how we can do these things quicker.

So if at some point we need to go to the Council and say, we need two days face-to-face to try to work through some of these issues, can you help us with that? We will do that. So that if there's an opportunity to build on to the front end or the back end of an ICANN meeting to allow us to do that, we will do that. So there are things that we need to explore to help us do this work quicker. So that's something else that we need this group to think about as well. Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG: Yeah. I have been here. Thank you, Donna. And, Jeff, no problem, looking to respond. I guess, speaking in the rare case as Board liaison, you probably know my general answer. Yes, we will take this back to the Board, especially the IDN working group at the Board to consider this, and so thank you for bringing it up specifically. Then we will specifically look at it and perhaps give an earlier imprint like a feedback on this particular issue.

That being said, now speaking personally, I guess, in the last round, without the IDN variance, it didn't stop the last round from happening. So I think it is fair to say that it is not that it has set

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some sort of a precedence already. And I think the way that it is phased out is actually quite nicely done. And I actually personally, I think, it's a good approach.

I do note that the longer timeline that it looks at right now, but as Donna said, I also think that it's somewhat conservative, and I agree with Jeff that we probably can aim to beat that. But laying this out is probably useful for the community to understand that this is something that will require some hashing out some difficult issues. And I do note that part of Phase 2, if I'm not mistaken, is to look at the IDN implementation guidelines as well, which is also a very important part of the discussion. So hopefully, that helps.

And I note that both Sarmad and Michael are consistently on the call. So they will be providing, especially through Sarmad, information to the Board for consideration. And we hope to provide a bit more thoughts earlier on back to this group given that this is now identified as quite an important item to consider.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Edmond. Jennifer, was it Jennifer? I think you had a question in that chat. So Jennifer noted in the chat, would there be nothing in Phase 2 work that would impact the next round. So my assumption had been that because we were talking about second level domains and that's the way that we split the charter questions into two phases was that there wouldn't be any implication for the Phase 1 work that we were doing, but having spoken to Karen yesterday and also conversations we've had at the leadership level, we said that even though the second level topics wouldn't kick in necessarily until after delegation, there are

questions that in the applicant guide book where the applicant we'll need to explain some of the machinations for how things would work at the second level. So some of those second level questions will impact on the application process itself and the development of the application guideline.

Now I think, and Justin or the team, correct me if I'm wrong, some of that that'll be hashed out in an implementation review team for SubPro and also our Phase 1 recommendation. So there's still is a little bit of time there because, obviously, the implementation of SubPro is a considerable chunk of work, and I'm not sure what the time line for that is. So there's many moving parts here.

And I think we're aware of most of them, but what we don't have for the SubPro work and the IRT and future work there is their timeline. Nobody has that yet. So that's a little bit of an unknown quantity. And perhaps once we know that, we can have another look at this.

So do we have comments from others? I appreciate that when I have a conversation with the Council next week, I'm going to receive a lot of pointed questions from Councilors who are going to be concerned along the same lines that is what Jeff has raised. And it's not just saying, well, this is very conservative and I'm going to get this around the wrong way.

But we're hoping to do better than what's on your screen. I don't know that that's going to satisfy some of the Councilors. So I guess we could go with just do one final report. But I don't think that timeline helps us much, does it Ariel? Because even then it would be in August 2025. So I don't think that really helps us. I

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think from a pragmatic perspective, two final reports is that the better option for us. Ariel, go ahead.

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah. Actually, you said what I wanted to say because if you look at the two approaches, August 29th, 2025 is the projected submission dates for a final report from one-phased approach. And then 7th of November 2025 is the two-Phased approach. So it's only two months of saving. And the main reason is that if we do one final report, it's understandable that some of the group will need more time to finalize all of the recommendations taking into account the Public Comment. So that period is extended for the one faced approach. So ultimately, it's not a huge difference between these two approaches.

But then the advantage for two-Phased is that at least we get one chunk to work out of the way and then that can be considered by the Council and be considered by the Board, the top level recommendations. And then it's a problem we're eligible in that way than giving them a huge load of recommendations to look at altogether. That's my take of this.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. One of the unknown foresee is we don't know how long it will take the TechOps, the CPH TechOps group to look into the operational challenges for same entity at the second level. But, Dennis, I understand that there'll be a substantive, well, maybe not substantive, but there will be conversations around that

at the CP Contractor Party Summit that will happen the first week in November.

So my hope is that we can get a better sense of how long it will take the contractor party's TechOps group to work through that. So we've set aside eight months, I think in our planning, but maybe that work will be done much sooner than that.

You know, maybe there's a possibility that we could have a smaller group working on the Phase 2. So the Phase 2 charter questions at the same time as we're finalizing the final report for phase works. And maybe we can do those two things in parallel, and that would certainly speed up the timeline. So we could go to the Council and we could say that we'll have the Phase 2 final report earlier in 2025.

We could promise the initial report perhaps in November 2024. But we just don't know how long that pace of work would take. So I guess, Christian, that we could ask Dennis is, I think we need to submit the project request form to Council on the 7th of November this year. So not 2025, but 2022.

But maybe, Dennis, you'll have some information for us following the summit that we can feed into our thinking on the dates for the initial report for Phase 2. And maybe we can push that. The initial report up to at least be in 2024, which might give people a little bit of comfort.

So I guess a question that we do need answered by the working group is, do we want option one or option two? And I will say is my chest preference is that we go with option two, to have two

final reports, but I really need to hear from the rest of you whether that's acceptable or not. I mean, we can take this to the list, but we'd need responses by Friday.

So do people want to take this to the list? Because I know that there is some coordination that needs to be done, but we need to. Devan is saying we could do a poll if people want to do things that way, but I know that there is resistance to doing polls.

Okay. I'm not hearing anything. So I'll assume that people are thinking about this. So I'm going to take it to the list, but I will need a response by Friday. [00:44:46 -inaudible] on the interdependencies, some of that is unknown at this time. Okay, let's do a poll. Devan, if you can set a poll up just for option one or option two. And then we'll have it confirmed on the mailing list.

DEVAN REED: Excuse me. A poll for right now or a poll, like, a doodle on the mailing list.

DONNA AUSTIN: Pull for right now if you can set that.

DEVAN REED: Okay.

DONNA AUSTIN: I understand that most of you are representing different groups, but maybe if we can just do it as a straight poll of participants with

the understanding that there'd be follow-up from the groups on the list. So I just want to get a sense now with a way we're leaning.

DEVAN REED: Right. I have the poll ready now. Launching.

DONNA AUSTIN: I will not be voting.

DEVAN REED: Oh, I'm sorry. One moment. I have to select that panelists can vote.

DONNA AUSTIN: That right. Because we're in a different room.

DEVAN REED: Yeah. All right. Does that work now? Yes. Right now we have 11 responses of option two. There are 23 people on the call and four staff. Do you want to give it a few more minutes to see if anyone else responds?

DONNA AUSTIN: Did you say 11 [00:48:25 –inaudible], Davan?

DEVAN REED: Now 12.

DONNA AUSTIN: 12. Okay. Ariel if you can see the poll can you?

DEVAN REED: Yeah. Oh, yeah, Devan, please go ahead.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. All right. So I'm going to say that it looks like folks are selecting option two. We will confirm that on the list. So look for an email from Ariel to the list just to confirm from each representative group what their preferred option is. All righty. Thanks, folks. So appreciate that this is a challenge we're going to do our best to beat these milestone dates.

And if anybody's got any ideas about how we can do this work, get through the work quicker on all these. And as I said, if we need to go to Council at some point and say we'd like to have a two-day dedicated session for this EPDP team for these reasons, then I'd be happy to do that as well. Nigel, go ahead.

NIGEL HICKSON: Yes, good afternoon. Thank you very much. And apologies for bad sound on that. I'm traveling. I just wondered whether a consideration had been given to having a sort two to three day retreat or a two day retreat. If in your view and the view of the experts like Ariel, etc., sort of face-to-face work could speed up some of the processes. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Nigel. We actually haven't had discussion about that, but I think it's something that the leadership team can have a look at and see whether we think there's value in doing so. Obviously, getting a team together for a two or three day period is a substantive effort. And there's got to be funding for that. So it would be a challenge, but if we can make a case for it, we will.

And when I talk to the Council on the 20th, it's certainly something that I could flag that perhaps there are ways that we can get through this work quicker. One of them being face-to-face meeting, and we can see how receptive the Council is to that. I don't know how the budget works. That's not for me to work out, but it's certainly a discussion we can have with Council.

All righty. We've got other work to get through. So thanks for that. We won't make any decisions until the email confirmation has come in, but I think we're headed down the path of option two. So, Ariel, can we move to whatever's next on the agenda?

ARIEL LIANG: Oh, actually, next one is not this. Let me stop sharing. The next one is discussing the language, the rational language for recommendation 2.6, and thanks again to Satish who circulated some ALAC's revision, who suggested edits for this item. I'm hoping everybody can see my screen. I'll just maximize it a little bit more.

So this recommendation 2.6 is about applicants. They're asked to demonstrate their ability to manage primary IDN, gTLD, and apply for variants from a technical and operational perspective.   And

also, the main added here is not the recommendation itself, but the rationale language for this one. So I just want to read out what ALAC team proposed.

So this highlighted part is what's is being discussed. So the sentence here is, "Therefore, the applicant will be required to respond to additional application questions to address why they seek to activate those variant labels in addition to the primary new gTLD i.e. necessity and expected usage of the variant labels as well as how it plans to manage the sets operationally to achieve this security and usability goals for their sets in a stable manner. This would contribute to ensuring a good user experience." So that's the suggested edits, especially the green part from ALAC team.

The main issue, I guess, was this sentences. RySG doesn't feel comfortable mentioning user experience, this kind of phrases because there's a lot of unknowns with regard to managing variants at the top level and the recommendation itself doesn't mention user experience. So the rationale shouldn't expand the recommendation. So I think that's the main concerns from RySG. They had some other proposed wording that doesn't include these elements. And then from ALAC perspective, they believe mentioning these items is important because it's already included in the charter language. So I think I can put the comment up.

So in a charter, it says the EPDP is expected to provide GNSO Council with policy recommendation. One, the definition of all gTLDs 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. So

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basically, they copied part of the charter requirement, the language in the charter, and then reflected that in the proposed language in the rationale to be consistent. So that's their suggestion in terms of the rationale product 2.6.

And then in addition to that, ALAC team also proposed another implementation guidance. It's a submission by applicants of supporting information must allow for a consistent and meaningful evaluation by evaluators with the requisite expertise. And they responded that this implementation guidance was born out of Dennis were RySG's comment that the last two sentences in this rationale part has the expectation that applicants' responses will be a critical component in the evaluation process and evaluators are expected to assess these responses so they believe adding this implementation guidance will enhance the clarity while that part is mentioning the rationale. So that's some suggested added from ALAC team, and I thought Dennis has his hand up.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Ariel, for that, prep. Dennis Tan for the record. The outset, I think we are coming closer to a happy middle ground. Let me say that. But I have a few observations on the latest iteration. So those turns, usability goals-- I mean, and let me say, right, we we're moving away from expecting or expectations of ratio operators to manage consistent user experience. I think that was the key aspect of our reservation. But we are moving away from that. So that's good. But just wanted to add a few observations in terms of the usability goals and the good user experience.

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It is true that the charter calls those out without defining those terms. So it's important to look at what the context is in which those terms are used. Right? And so in that sense, usability goals, in big part, the usability goal is to allow variant TLDs because they have been prohibited from application.

And so part of the SubPro loop topic on IDN variant TLD and the IDNs EPDP is to allow a framework and management framework to allow those in the root zone. So that that's one. Right? That's how this effort is addressing the usability goals, allowing TLD variant to be introduced delegated into the root zone managed by operators in a safe stable manner.

In terms of the good user experience, that's also not defined term, but the context in which good user experience is being used is in the context of how IDN tables are set up, design and set up. Right? And talking about the consistent production of variant labels, there are the two tables that belong for or fall under variant TLDs. They need to be consistent in terms of producing the same set of variant labels update. They don't need to behave the same way. You can think about it in this terms, right?

The production of the variant set need to conform with the symmetry and sensitivity properties of variance, and that's how you ensure IDN tables of variant gTLDs are producing the same set of variance labels, but they do not need to behave the same and that relates to the disposition volumes.

So you can have one IDN table variant to allocable whereas in the other one, set to block. And that's just the way how the script might work. And you can think of using the simplified traditional

and Chinese examples, right? In a simply Chinese TLD, you would expect that simplified second level domain names are going to be allocable, whereas the traditional one block.

But the opposite will happen in the traditional Chinese gTLD, where second level labels are going to be allowed to be allocated or whether it's a simplified block. So as so long we are referring back to the context of how those terms are being used, yeah. I mean, the latest iteration looks something that we can get behind on.

So that's on one part. The additional observation on the implementation guidance that that's new text. So two comments here. One is, and maybe just before, it should not be that the submission of the applicant that will allow for a consistent and meaningful evaluation, but rather, the process and requirement should set up the evaluation process for a consistent and predictable outcomes. So it's the other way around, not the submission by the applicant will define the consistence, but the other way around is the process and the requirements that the applicants need to conform with that will set up the process for success.

But I'm waiting these, and I think that that's the intention. Right? But I would question and maybe Satish and the ALAC team can clarify. But I read this as every single step throughout the evaluation process need to be a meaningful evaluation. Otherwise, what would we want to evaluate any minor, right, either financial, technical, operational or TLD variant labels, necessity, justification.

And the other part is that in every single step of the way, we would expect that the expertise required to evaluate those process is a step. So what have you is the right one. So I just want to understand why we need to emphasize those two aspects of the evaluation step process. Because otherwise, I would expect them to happen regardless. So there's that. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. Satish, or anyone from the ALAC team, do you have any response to Dennis?

SATISH BABU: Thanks, Donna. This is Satish for the record. I know that most of my colleagues have put some reason to drop out of this call today. But I think the basic idea is that we're in integration. This is the first time you're doing it. So because it's the first time, there is no precedent to fall back upon. So we have actually chosen to explicitly mention this so that it is there is guidance for why implementation is happening. That is the short answer. But if you want a longer explanation, I can check with my colleagues and then get back to you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Satish. I think Dennis' comment on the implementation guidance, I agree that perhaps what is more important is that the evaluation of IDN applications should be consistent. Right? And I don't think there's any way, there really isn't a way to ensure that what the applicants provide by way of supporting information is consistent unless there is a technical

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format that needs to be followed. And I think to Dennis' point, that's not something that is possible. So I think the implementation guidance does need some reconsideration. Satish.

SATISH BABU: Thanks, Donna. So I mean, we fully understand the point raised by Dennis as this is not about the submission itself, but it's the process that has to accommodate these things. So if it helps, we can think of substituting process instead of submission date. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Satish. So I guess we'll wait to hear back from the ALAC team on this. And Ariel, I guess, this isn't something that ICANN org is looking at the moment because it's not a stable recommendation. I just wondered whether they had any thoughts on this.

ARIEL LIANG: This is Ariel. Actually, I do believe they have looked at this because the recommendation text hasn't been changed. The main part is the rationale that has been discussed by the team. So I believe they actually did take a look at 2.6 itself. They may have some additional operational inputs. So we just have to see what they come back with. So yeah.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. All right. Thanks, Ariel. Do we have any other text we need to consider?

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah. This is it. This is it. And I think we could move on to the string similarity hybrid model. So I don't know. Donna, would you like me to? Can I set this up to kick off the discussion or would you like to drive it?

DONNA AUSTIN: So what Ariel's done is put together the comments that we've received in response to the question of whether the groups are supporting or not the string similarity hybrid model. So Ariel, if you can just quickly go through that. Because we've only got 20 minutes left. But the focus of what I want to discuss is given that most seem to be supporting string similarity mostly there are some things that we want to pull out so that the registries noted that the operational aspect wasn't considered by the small string, the string similarity small team.

So we want to focus on that, not so much on the string similarity hybrid model itself. So, Ariel, if you can just run through that and then maybe we can have just a bit of discussion about the operational and then how we manage that. Thanks, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah. No problem. So this is just as a refresher, but I think everybody remembers what the hybrid model means. And I just want to quickly note that we have got submissions from the ALAC,

the GAC, the NCSG, RySG, and IPC. Although for the IPC's piece, that's not official position, I guess, based on Jeff's email, but they did express some views. So again, appreciate everybody's contribution to that.

And as what Donna just mentioned, we haven't seen objection or opposition to the hybrid model. So ALAC, GAC, and NCSG clearly supported the hybrid model. That's what we have seen from this submission. And for RySG, we didn't see objection, but we did see some additional considerations. The group properly want to deliberate down. And so I just want to quickly highlight a few points, mentioning Dennis email.

So the point one is the string similarity process should not rely solely on the output of the RZ-LGR for visually confusable labels, but it may use it as an input to determine the basis for comparison. That's point one. And then point two is that the careful considerations should be given to the implementation to achieve consistency and predictability of outcomes. So that's consistent with what Donna said, is a small group already clarified when they consider the hybrid model, they didn't deliberate on the operational aspect of that. So therefore careful consideration should be given to implementation.

And then the third point mentioning Dennis email is the RySG suggests that the anticipated procedure should identify and remove mixed-script labels from further consideration to avoid unnecessary work. So I think the blocked label, that term, we probably need to further clarify that only includes blocked and valid label, not mixed-script label because they're typically not allowed and also not valid. So we're probably going to clarify that

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further. And I also saw Jeff, he has his hands up. I'm wondering, Jeff, do you have comment about RySG's position or words about IPC?

JEFFREY NEUMAN: IPC, but you can go. So just continue to a good stopping point.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Okay. Sounds good. So for IPC, so Jeff shared some views even though group hasn't discussed this completely. So they're concerned that hybrid model needs to have an exception process. So I think there's some latest exchange between Michael and Jeff on the mailing list.

So I think that clarifies that if a brand has a name that happens to be confusingly similar to a blocked variant of another string that has been delegated, then that branch should be able to overcome any potential string similarity review related, I guess, outcome or considerations. So that's one of the example why IPC believe of exception process is important. And another points mentioning GAP's email is they believe the risk of misconnection is extremely low. So that's, I think, some of the viewpoints shared by IPC and I can refer to Jeff further elaboration.

JEFFREY NEUMAN: Yeah. So I just wanted, thanks, this is Jeff Neuman, just to elaborate, because you said there seems to be no objection. I think the view that I've collected so far is that without an exception process, there is not support for the hybrid model. So I don't want

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to make it sound like there's support and then all of a sudden, there's no exception, and the IPC is down as having supported it. I think just want to make that clear. Support, conditioned on the fact that there should be exceptions. So I think that's important.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Jeff. I think Ariel's right. There's probably no objection, but I think the support is conditional not just for the IPC, but I think the registries have reservation, I think even the ALAC. The view is open to they understand that there could be problems with implementation. So I think the support that we have is conditional for most. Edmon, go ahead.

EDMON CHUNG: Yeah. Edmon here is speaking personally. I want to understand this a little bit better because from what I understand, the hybrid model doesn't create the situation. The hybrid model actually allows the brand owners to then object to situations that may, I mean, object to applications that may create this situation in an earlier round.

So they cannot get to it based on the hybrid model potentially. What does cause this is the implementation of the root zone LGR as it is put in place. So in order for this so called exception to be the case, then we need to change the roots root LGR such that it does not create the non-allocate variant as a variant at all. Because that is what is the limiting factor, not the hybrid model. At least that's my understanding. I want to make sure it's not misunderstood.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Edmund, Jeff.

JEFFREY NEUMAN: Yes, thanks, Donna. And I think it's unrealistic to expect an IP owner is going to be paying attention to the blocked variants of every string that's delegated in the previous round such that it could object. And we haven't even agreed that an objection based on a blocked variant would block the primary from going through. That's not even something we've even entertained yet. So I don't think that's realistic and meant to say that a trademark order can object in a previous round if it believes a blocked variant is confusingly similar to its trademark. It's just not going to happen.

And then again, so I'm not sure of the distinction you're making between. The hybrid model is basic what we're using as a comparison for confusing similarity. And if we're using a blocked variant as a comparison and a string similarity to a new application, then that's what's causing the problem. And there was an example Ariel had on the slides, I remember seeing that, there was an artist and there was a blocked variant of a string that looked like an artist.

I don't know if you can bring that back up. So it seems like it's a very real possibility. If someone could think of it that quickly to come up with an example, I think that that's something we need to address. So, like in that slide, and thank you, I see it's being pulled up. I think there should be the ability to say-- well, let's wait till the slide comes up so we can see the actual example.

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DONNA AUSTIN: It was actually a table example, wasn't it, Jeff?

JEFFREY NEUMAN: Say that again, sorry.

DONNA AUSTIN: It was actually one of the examples in the table that had the arrows going everywhere, not the misconnection.

ARIEL LIANG: No. No. I think it's this one that's on screen.

JEFFREY NEUMAN: The site tells you, yeah, I think this might be it. Right? It was a blocked variant. This may be it. Yeah. I don't know. I just remember seeing it. But anyway, so in this example, remember string similarity to a previous round, it's got no kind of -- that's it, if you're found to be similar, you're automatically kicked out. It's not like two applications in the same route where it goes to contention resolution.

So this, I think, look, if there's an actual brand here that happens to be confusingly similar to a block variant, I don't see how there's --there might be initial what we would call the trademark world initial confusion, but that initial interest confusion is obligated once the consumer realizes the difference. Anyway, I'll just leave it at that. And if there's questions, I can address it.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Jeff. We've only got nine minutes left, so Edmon and Maxim if you can be quick. And I'm going to propose a path forward here. Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG: Edmon here. So very briefly, thank you, Jeff, for the clarification. In that case, so then I think when we talked about the hybrid model, we also who talked about the ability to appeal, and that would provide the exception process. So I think I would be in agreement in that direction then. And about objecting in an earlier round, I think it's yeah, maybe it's not easy, but at least what the hybrid model also allows is that it allows for that objection to happen.

That's the point. Whether they utilize it or not is a different thing. And if their objection is unsuccessful, that also means that in the next round, then the appeals would be sustained even if it's aligned as a similar, visually similar case because then the previous determination has already said that it's not visually similar because the objection didn't sustain. So in either case, the hybrid model actually, I think takes care of it in a nicer way. So I just want to, you know.

DONNA AUSTIN: Maxim.

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MAXIM ALZOBA: Maxim Alzoba for the record, do you hear me?

DONNA AUSTIN: Yes. We do.

MAXIM ALZOBA: If this idea of the exception for the trademark is passed, we need to ensure that there is some period which describes how all the trademark is. Because to avoid gaming in institutions where parties, some parties registered trademark for the sake of getting TLD and later selling it with the contract as it was seen in the past, this kind of balance should be added. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Maxim. Jeff, very quickly.

JEFFREY NEUMAN: Yep. Thanks. And totally agree with Maxim. We don't want gaming. Just I don't want to call this an appeal because the appeal in SubPro had a very different meaning. The appeal was that the decision was wrong and that it's very different. I think it needs to be separately stated that there's an exception process or maybe a rebuttal presumption or however we want to say it. But it shouldn't be called an appeal because that'll confuse the different standards that were indicated by SubPro. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Jeff. Maxim, old hands, I'm assuming. Okay. All righty. So thanks everybody. So I think the next step that I want to take with this is we from the outset, we've always been mindful of whether how implementable our recommendations are. And I think throughout the discussion we've had on the hybrid metal model and also the options one, two, and three that we had prior to the small team getting together. One of the concerns, was can this be implemented? Or what's the impact on the process if we got on this path?

So for the next steps on this, now that we have general support for the hybrid model as acceptable with some exceptions. We mentioned before that ICANN org is reviewing our recommendations those that are stable to assess, well, actually, I'm not sure what they're assessing, but I'm sure they're taking into account whether our recommendation can be implemented or some of the challenges that might come up as part of implementing the recommendation. So I understand that ICANN org has started to do some work on the hybrid model. Not that we have recommendation text as such, but we do have general support for the hybrid model.

So what I want to do as a next step is I want to see what ICANN org comes back with as part of having a look at the recommendation from an implementation perspective, and then I want to pick this conversation up again based on that. Because I think we're all pretty much in agreement that if something is extremely difficult to implement, then it's probably maybe we need to rethink it and see what else we can come up with. So we we've managed to get to a point where I actually didn't think that we'd be

in this position, that there was the general support for the hybrid model.

So we've reached that point, which is good. So let ICANN org consider what that means from an implementation perspective. And once we have that information back, which I think we should have sometime next month, we can pick up this conversation again. So, hopefully, that works for everybody. This would be really good to understand the consequence of implementation here, and that should help us move forward with the next part of the conversation. So if that works for everybody, that's what we're going to do next to try to see where we go on the string similarity.

Okay. With that, we are at pretty much at time. So thanks everybody for your contribution. Ariel will put something out to the list just to confirm option two for the updating the Council on our project request. And then between now and next week we'll work out what we're going to talk about next week. So thanks everybody.

DEVAN REED: Thank you all for joining. Once again, this meeting is adjourned. I'll end the recording and disconnect all remaining lines. Have a wonderful rest of your day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]