



Draft Implementation Plan for IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process

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

Revision Notes:

Rev1.0: In this revision, clarification has been made to the IDNC WG position on IDN tables. The topic has been listed for public discussion in Module 7, and the deadline for submitting comments has been extended per the announcement following this document.

Rev2.0: In this revision, clarifications and updates have been made in accordance with public comments received on the previous version. In conjunction with this revision two papers, proposing implementation details on some open issues, have been released. All material is being posted to seek further community collaboration, in particular during the ICANN meeting in Mexico City, Mexico, March 1-6, 2009.

Rev2.0 is provided in both a redlined and a clean format.

Rev 3.0: In this revision detailed explanations of the entire evaluation process have been included together with flowcharts. Topics considered complete have been removed from Module 7 (these are: association between IDN ccTLD managers and the ccNSO; provisions concerning contention between strings and labels; and the yearly usability evaluation) to various other places in the Draft Implementation Plan so that only outstanding topics remain in Module 7. In conjunction with this revision, three papers are posted (1) revised DoR, (2) proposed details regarding financial contributions to ICANN (3) revised proposal on the management of IDN Tables. All material is being posted to seek further community collaboration, in particular during the ICANN meeting in Sydney, Australia, 21-26 June 2009.

Rev3.0 is provided in both a redlined (compared with the Rev2.0 clean format) and a clean format.

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Module 1

General Introduction

This is revision 3.0 of the Draft Implementation Plan for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process.

The plan is based on recommendations provided by the [IDNC Working Group \(WG\) in its Final Report](#), as well as on public comments provided throughout the IDNC WG's online and public comment options, and on public comments received on the previous versions of the plan.

The plan is presented in modules that will be further detailed and finalized after a final round of public comment for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process. The modules are:

Module 1: General Introduction

Module 2: Fast Track Eligibility Requirements

Module 3: TLD String Criteria and Requirements

Module 4: Technical Committee Considerations

Module 5: Request Submission for String Evaluation

Module 6: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation

Module 7: Discussion of Additional Topics

Several papers have been made available with supporting material to this plan:

- Proposed Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD managers (revision 1.0)
- Proposed Development and use of IDN Tables and character variants for second and top level strings (revision 1.0)
- Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Financial Contributions to Support the Development and Deployment of IDN ccTLDs
- ICANN Cost Analysis by Stakeholder Interest Area
- ICANN Staff considerations and analysis of received comments

1.1 Background Information

One of the most significant innovations for the Internet since its inception will be the introduction of top level Internationalized Domain Names (IDN TLDs). These IDN TLDs 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.

IDNs have been discussed in the ICANN community for many years. Initially, development focused on enabling the introduction of IDNs as registrations under existing top-level domains (TLDs), but in the past year especially focus has shifted to be on broadening the character repertoire available for use in top level strings.

Over the past years the introduction of IDN gTLDs was discussed in the context and as part of the New [gTLD program](#).

The formal consultation and discussion on the introduction of IDN ccTLDs¹ was [initiated by the ICANN Board](#) at its meeting in São Paulo (December 2006). The Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) and the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) were asked to collaborate, in consultation with the relevant technical community, to produce an issues paper on the selection of IDN ccTLDs associated with the two-letter codes described in the ISO 3166-1 standard.

The ccNSO and GAC formed a joint IDN working group (IDNC WG) that published and submitted to the ICANN Board a list of issues relating to the introduction of IDN ccTLDs in June 2007.

Consultations and discussions of the IDN working group made it clear that several countries and territories have a pressing need for IDN ccTLDs. This realization 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 selecting and authorizing such TLDs that can inform a policy development process. The ICANN Board requested the ICANN community, including the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO), ccNSO, GAC, and the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), to collaboratively 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 asked the ALAC, ccNSO, GAC and GNSO chairs to set up an IDNC working group appoint its members and begin work in accordance with its [Charter](#) as soon as possible.

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 WG submitted its Final Report to the Board, including GAC and ccNSO statements 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.

¹ The shorthand term "IDN ccTLDs" refers to new top-level domains associated with entries in the ISO 3166-1list.

ICANN then posted the IDNC WG Final Report for public comments and began implementation as directed. Following the public comment period, ICANN posted a consolidated overview of the comments received and a document containing staff considerations of the comments received. During implementation planning, ICANN also submitted letters to relevant public authorities and ccTLD managers to seek information on their interest in participating in the Fast Track Process.

This is the third revision of the Draft Implementation Plan. The initial and first revision were posted right before and immediately following the ICANN meeting in Cairo, Egypt, 1–7 November 2008, the second revision was posted before the ICANN meeting in Mexico City, Mexico, 1-6 March 2009.

In preparing this revised plan, ICANN took into consideration the comments received on the previous versions; in particular public comments and input received through meetings, such as the ICANN meetings in Cairo and Mexico as referenced above. The analysis of received comments is released in a separate documentation.

This revised plan, presents a Fast Track Process for the delegation of IDN ccTLDs. However, as outlined in the earlier versions some open issues require further community collaboration (see Module 7).

All this material is being released to seek further community collaboration, in particular before and during the ICANN meeting in Sydney, Australia, 21-26 June 2009. A public comment period will enable and document such community discussions. Comments received will be used to revise the plan in preparation of a Final Implementation Plan, which is expected to be provided for Board consideration no later than at the ICANN meeting in Seoul, 25-30 October 2009.

This, per the ICANN Board resolution during the ICANN meeting in Mexico City, Mexico:

It is resolved (2009.03.06.03), that the Board thanks the ICANN community for its work to date and encourages it to continue its work so that the implementation plan can be finalized and considered by the Board no later than at its annual meeting in 2009.

A full overview of activities and links to the materials related to the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process and its implementation can be viewed at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/>.

A glossary of IDN terms used throughout this document is available at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/idn-glossary.htm>.

Module 2

Participation Eligibility Requirements

Participation in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process has been limited in accordance with the IDNC WG recommendations, as discussed in this module. The recommendations and their inherent limitations were decided through community consultations, as described in Module 1. The primary reasons for implementing limitations are that the process is experimental² in nature and should not pre-empt the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO Policy Development Process. Limitation aspects related to the string criteria and requirements 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 listed 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 additional eligibility of the European Union, which has an exceptionally reserved code designated by the ISO 3166 Maintenance Agency (see http://www.iso.org/iso/support/country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists/iso-3166-1_decoding_table.htm#EU) and has also been deemed eligible under ICANN policy for a country-code top-level domain.

A country or territory represented on the ISO3166-1 list is eligible to participate in the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process and to request an IDN ccTLD string that fulfills the additional requirements set forth in Module 3.

2.2 Requester of an IDN ccTLD

The Fast Track Process is divided into three distinct stages, as discussed in more detail in Module 5:

- Stage 1: Preparation Stage;
- Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation; and
- Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation.

The entity acting as the requester, and that submits the request for an IDN ccTLD to ICANN, can be the identified IDN ccTLD manager (proposed sponsoring organization), or in accordance with the recommendations of the IDNC WG: "...where a delegate is not yet selected in the Territory the relevant public authority of the Territory may perform the role of the "selected delegate" until the Territory is ready to enter stage 3 of the Fast Track process."

² It is important to note that by "experimental," the working group was commenting on the policy aspects of IDN introduction and not the technical aspects. IDNs have been tested in the root zone and technical implications of the introduction are generally well understood. All studies will be completed to ensure there is a full understanding that IDNs will have no deleterious effects on DNS interoperability, stability and security.

If the requester is the proposed sponsoring organization (this may be the existing country-code top-level domain manager for the ISO 3166-1 code, or a different entity) it must have the support from the country or territory corresponding to the relevant ISO 3166-1 entry, and must satisfactorily document this support.

The documentation of support may be limited to evidence of support from the relevant government or public authority. This is defined as a signed letter of support, from the Minister with the portfolio responsible for domain name administration, ICT, foreign affairs or Office of the Prime Minister or President; or a senior representative of the agency or department responsible for domain name administration, ICT, Foreign Affairs or the Office of the Prime Minister.

The letter should clearly express the government or public authority's support for the request.

Module 3

TLD String Criteria and Requirements

Conservative limitations for potential IDN ccTLD strings have been included because of the Fast Track Process' limited introductory nature and to safeguard against pre-empting the outcome of the ongoing IDN ccNSO Policy Development Process. Limitations in this module are focused on criteria and requirements set for the TLD string itself which are included to address the reasons for the limitations listed above.

3.1 Language and Script Criteria

The conditions for allowable languages and scripts to be used for the selected TLD string are as follows:

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

The language requirement is considered verified as follows:

- 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* ("UNGEGN Manual") (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm>); or
- If the language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant country or territory in the ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10; or
- 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.

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 diacritics. Languages based on the Latin script are not eligible for the Fast Track Process.

3.2 Meaningfulness Requirement

The selected string for the IDN ccTLD must be a meaningful representation of the name of the represented country or territory. A string is deemed to be 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; 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 UNGEEN Manual, then the string fulfills the meaningfulness requirement.
2. If the requested string is not listed in the UNGEEN Manual, then the meaningfulness must be substantiated, as in the following :

More details about submission of documentation from an internationally recognized linguistic expert or organization stating that the requested string meets the criteria can be found in Module 5.

3.3 Number of Strings per Country or Territory

The number of strings that a country or territory can apply for is not limited to a specific number (in accordance with Guiding Principle G in the IDNC WG Final Report). However, the following maximum limitation applies:

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

This limitation may cause issues for some countries and territories which have expressed the importance of having variant strings allocated.

This topic is currently under discussion and the revised paper (“Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Development and Use of IDN Tables and Character Variants for Second and Top Level Strings”) is posted together with this plan and contains more details about IDN Tables and variant management.

3.4 Technical String Criteria

This section describes technical criteria for strings only, other technical requirements related to delegation (such as name server requirements) are considered in Module 6.

Meeting all the technical string requirements in this section 3.4 does not guarantee acceptance of a prospective top-level string, since the following subsections do not contain an exhaustive list of all requirements or restrictions. Technical requirements for IDN ccTLD strings and IDN gTLD strings are equivalent and are established by technical standards developed by the IETF.

The IDNA protocol to be used for internationalized labels is under revision through the Internet standardization process (in the IETF). Following that revision completion in the IETF, additional requirements may be specified or the requirements specified here may be changed, in accordance with the finalized IDNA technical standard. 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 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 complied with for the IDN ccTLDs in A-label³ 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 label must have no more than 63 characters. This includes the prefix (the four initial characters "xn--").
- Upper and lower case characters are considered to be syntactically and semantically 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 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

This subsection details the specific technical string requirements for IDN strings. Requesters for these internationalized top-level strings are assumed to be familiar with the IETF IDNA standards, Unicode standards, and IDN terminology.

The string must be a valid internationalized domain name, as specified in technical standards <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/rfcs.htm> or any revisions of this technical standard currently under consideration by the IETF. As a result, IDN-related technical requirements are subject to change. These are presented guidelines only and are not a complete statement of the requirements for IDNA specifications. The label:

- Must contain only Unicode code points that are defined as "Protocol Valid" 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*. Examples appear in <http://unicode.org/faq/normalization.html>
- The string must consist entirely of characters with the same directional property. This requirement may change as the IDNA protocol is being revised to allow for characters having no directional property (as defined at <http://unicode.org/Public/UNIDATA/extracted/DerivedBidiClass.txt>) to be available along with either a right-to-left or a left-to-right directionality.
- The string must not begin or end with a digit (in any script).

³ The **A-label** is what is transmitted in the DNS protocol and this is the ASCII-compatible (ACE) form of an IDNA string; for example "xn--11b5bs1di". The **U-label** is what should be displayed to the user and is the representation of the Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) in Unicode.

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

- 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 guideline 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 coexist in a single set of permissible code points unless a corresponding policy and character table are clearly defined. Further, the IDN Guidelines contain a requirement for IDN registries to develop IDN Tables. The IDNC WG recommended the following for IDN Tables:

The language/script table to be used by the IDN ccTLD may already exist i.e. has been prepared by another Territory using the same language/script and was already submitted. In this case the selected delegate should indicate its intention to use that language/script table.

Territories using the same script are encouraged to cooperate in developing a language/script table, in accordance with IDN guidelines.

Building on this recommendation ICANN revised the paper (“Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Development and Use of IDN Tables and Character Variants for Second and Top Level Strings”). The paper is posted for further community discussions on the topic.

Module 4

DNS Stability Panel Considerations

The role and responsibility of the Technical Committee (referred to as the DNS Stability Panel) is to provide external and independent advice to the ICANN Board about whether, based on the documentation provided by the IDN ccTLD requester, a selected string meets the technical criteria. If the DNS Stability Panel 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 Process. However, the committee can seek further clarification from the requester, if deemed necessary by the panel, before providing its findings on the requested string.

In line with the IDNC WG Final Report, the external and independent DNS Stability Panel should be appointed to conduct technical due diligence and report to the ICANN Board.

ICANN will secure the services of a competent technical panel (DNS Stability Panel) to make stability evaluations. In their actions and statements as Panel and review team members, these experts do not represent either their affiliated organizations or the country in which they reside in any way.

ICANN is finalizing the coordination of the DNS Stability Panel. Further details will be made available.

4.1 Proposed DNS Stability Panel Function

A core piece of the IDNC WG Final Report is technical recommendations for the stability and security of the TLD string itself. These technical requirements are outlined in Module 3. All requests in the Fast Track Process must successfully pass a DNS Stability Panel review for the requested IDN ccTLD string to continue through the Fast Track Process.

The DNS Stability Panel conducts an initial evaluation on the strings submitted by prospective IDN ccTLD managers.

If the Panel determines that a string needs extended evaluation, a three-member review team will be formed from the Panel to conduct the extended evaluation.

The review team will examine the string and determine whether the string will adversely affect the security or stability of the DNS.

Usually the review team will conduct its review within 30 days.

The review team may seek clarification from the requester if necessary. An extended review is likely not to be necessary for a string that fully complies with the string requirements referenced in Module 3, subsection 3.4. However, the

string review process provides an additional safeguard if unanticipated security or stability issues arise concerning a requested IDN ccTLD string.

If the review team determines that the requested string does not comply 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 the findings will be communicated to ICANN staff and to the requester.

The request for an IDN ccTLD cannot proceed through the Fast Track Process if the Panel or review team identifies that a requested string raises significant security and stability issues.

Module 5

Request Submission for String Evaluation

This module contains details of the process for requesting an IDN ccTLD string under the Fast Track Process, including instructions for completing and submitting required supporting documentation and other necessary materials.

This module also discusses how to request assistance concerning the process, and the circumstances under which a submitted request can be withdrawn or terminated.

5.1 General Fast Track Process Overview

An 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:

- Stage 1: Preparation;
- Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation;
- Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation.

These three stages are described briefly in the following subsections 5.1.1 to 5.1.3. The remaining sections in this Module 5 are focused solely on Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation.

5.1.1 Preparation (Stage 1)

In the Preparation Stage, the requester undertakes preparatory work to enter the Fast Track Process. Primary preparation activities include identification of:

- The language(s) and script(s) for the IDN ccTLD string(s),
- Selection of the string(s) representing the name of country or territory for the IDN ccTLD(s), and
- The development of the associated IDN Table(s) and identification of any potential variant characters.

In addition, at this time the requester develops the required documentation of endorsements. Documentation of endorsements must include:

1. Support from the relevant government or public authority of the country or territory for the selected string. This should be demonstrated in a similar manner as required for delegation requests:
<http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide>
2. Support from the local internet community and by the relevant government for the proposed sponsoring organization, as required for delegation requests:
<http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide>.

The sponsoring organization does not need to be appointed until the request has reached Stage 3: Request for Delegation Evaluation (see Figure 5.1). Requests can be submitted by either the proposed sponsoring organization or by the relevant government or public authority.

As previously mentioned the evidence of support from the relevant government or public authority is defined as a signed letter of support from the Minister with the portfolio responsible for domain name administration, ICT, foreign affairs or Office of the Prime Minister or President; or a senior representative of the agency or department responsible for domain name administration, ICT, Foreign Affairs or the Office of the Prime Minister.

The letter should clearly express the government or public authority's support for the request.

The involvement of the relevant stakeholders in the country or territory should be documented as described above in a manner similar to that required for a standard ccTLD delegation request, by the requester. The application should demonstrate there has been community dialogue regarding which string is the appropriate representation of the country in the selected string(s) and/or language(s)/script(s), and that appropriate stakeholders have been involved in the decision making process.

See <http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/> for more guidance.

To support the requesters in preparing requests, ICANN will be launching a support function for guidance and support in the development of IDN related aspects of the requesters' IDN registration policy.

5.1.2 Request Submission for String Evaluation (Stage 2)

In Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation, the requester submits a request for the selected string(s) to be accepted by ICANN as eligible to be a representation of the country or territory. The request is reviewed through the defined validation steps, including:

- Request Completeness Validation
- Linguistic Process Validation
- DNS Stability String Evaluation
- Publishing of Validated Strings

The steps in Stage 2 are described in further detail in the section 5.6.

5.1.3 Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation (Stage 3)

After a request has successfully passed Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation, it enters the Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation.

In this phase, the standard ICANN IANA process for delegations is followed, as already exists for ASCII country-code top-level domains. The ICANN Board approves the delegation.

The process for the Request for Delegation Evaluation is described in detail in Module 6.

Once the delegation process is concluded successfully, the string(s) is delegated in the DNS root zone, after which the domain is active and the sponsoring organization can commence operations such as accepting registrations within the new IDN ccTLD.

5.2 Submission of an IDN TLD Fast Track Request

Formal requests for IDN ccTLDs can be submitted to ICANN starting [Fast-Track opening date/TBD]. The submission system for the string evaluation stage (Stage 2) is a web-based form that identifies the information necessary. The web-based form is available at [link]. Figure 5.2 illustrates the submission of a request. By submitting the request the requester must acknowledge that they understand that usability of IDNs may be limited in that some software applications may not be capable of working with IDNs. Further, some acceptability and usability issues may occur as the IDNA protocol standard is revised and as the IDN protocol for email management is finalized in the IETF. Until standards are implemented broadly adopted by relevant application software writers, users may experience different results in different applications and may experience no functionality at all.

The necessary supporting documentation for the string evaluation is:

- Documentation of support for the request from the government or relevant publicly authority for the country or territory (if applicable),
- Documentation that the selected language(s) is considered official in the country/territory (if applicable) and under which definition of official (listed above),
- Documentation that demonstrates the requested string(s) is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country/territory,
- Documentation that the selected string(s) and sponsor is supported by the local community,

This documentation must be uploaded in electronic form to the web based form and submitted together with the request to ICANN. In addition supporting documentation must be provided in original form 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

All information provided in a request must be provided in English or with an accompanying official English translation of any non-English documents. Any information and supporting documentation not provided will delay processing.

Requesters that are unable to utilize the online web based form for submitting their request should contact ICANN directly.

IDN ccTLD Fast Track requests can be submitted at any time from the start date and until the conclusion 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. It is expected to last through the adoption and implementation of the IDN ccTLD policy development recommendations.

Requests for IDN ccTLDs will (other than as mentioned above) be processed manually due to the expected limited number of requests. The expected number of requests is based on the replies ICANN received to a request for information (RFI) from potential participants in the Fast Track Process. A detailed overview of the responses on this outreach can be found at:

<http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-10feb09-en.htm>

5.3 ICANN Staff Support and Contact Functions

To support countries and territories in participating in the Fast Track Process, several contact points and support processes will be made available. These support functions, described in greater detail in the following subsections, will be available to prospective IDN ccTLD managers in their preparation phase as well as after the requested IDN ccTLD are delegated.

During the entire string evaluation (Stage 2, Figure 5.1), requesters must not approach, or have any other person or entity approach on their behalf, any ICANN staff member, any ICANN Board member, or any person associated with the evaluation process, including any evaluators, experts, examiners, or reviewers retained by ICANN. If such contact is attempted, the requester will be redirected to submit their inquiry to the system that is in place for such inquiries (see the description for the web-based request system, above). The exception to this case would be when or if a requester is approached by ICANN or its agents for clarification of information in the submitted request. In addition, some communication will occur during the standard ICANN function for delegation of the IDN ccTLDs and for providing root management services (Stage 3, Figure 5.1).

5.3.1 General Contact Details

ICANN Regional Liaisons and Fast Track Program staff will be available to assist prospective IDN ccTLD managers in the Preparation Stage of the Fast Track Process.

Region-based contact details will be made available for Fast Track participants to ensure that inquiries are responded to promptly within all time zones.

Answers to the most common questions about the Fast Track Process will be made available in a FAQ on the Fast Track website at <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/>

5.3.2 Specific IDN Support Details

To support the requesters in their preparations, ICANN will make a support function available that contains guidance and information in the development of elements related to requesters' IDN registration policy. This support function will be available in the Preparation Stage and again to an IDN ccTLD manager following delegation of the requested IDN ccTLD(s).

The following elements will be included in the IDN support process:



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 or language and sets thereof
 - 1.3. Development of IDN Table(s), including identifications of variants
 - 1.4. Posting of IDN Table(s) in the 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 or other preregistration 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 implementation topics in general.
 - 2.5. Support to development of more technical necessary tool, such as WHOIS capabilities, IDNA conversions, and more.

In developing IDN Tables and associated registrations policies, requesters are encouraged to work with other language communities that are using the same scripts as the basis for the languages they plan to support.

ICANN will provide support and general assistance in these matters. ICANN will not provide legal or business advice to countries or territories, or any potential or existing registry managers.

5.4 Termination of Submitted Requests

Several of the steps in the request Submission for String Evaluation (Stage 2) allow for a requester to withdraw a request. It is also possible that ICANN will terminate a request if the request contains certain errors.

Errors resulting in termination include the following:

1. The requested string is already a string delegated in the DNS, or approved for delegation to another party.
2. The country or territory of the request does not correspond to a listing in the ISO3166-1 list or the European Union.
3. The requested string consists of one or more characters from the Latin script.

4. The language represented does not fulfill the language criteria for the corresponding country or territory.

If such errors are discovered, the requester will be contacted by ICANN and provided an opportunity to amend its request. Alternatively the requester may decide to withdraw the request.

Other issues arising from a submitted request may delay the determination of whether the requested string should be delegated. Such delaying factors could include: (1) the requested string is already applied for in the Fast Track Process, (2) the requested string is already applied for in the gTLD process, (3) the request does not contain support from the corresponding country or territory, and (4) the requested string is not included in the UNGEGN 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 requester will be consulted for clarifications before any determination on the request is made.

While contention between strings is not expected and is unlikely to occur, the proposed procedure and rules for resolving such cases are described in the following section.

5.5 String Confusion and Contention

String confusion exists where a string so nearly resembles another visually that it is likely to deceive or cause confusion. For the likelihood of confusion to exist, it must be probable, not merely possible that confusion will arise in the mind of the average, reasonable Internet user. Mere association, in the sense that the string brings another string to mind, is insufficient to find a likelihood of confusion.

String confusion issues can involve two or more strings that are identical or are so confusingly similar that they cannot coexist in the DNS, such as:

- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against existing TLDs and reserved names;
- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against other requested IDN ccTLD strings;
and
- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against strings applied-for gTLD strings.

Contention situations between Fast Track requests and new gTLD applications are considered unlikely to occur. Assessments of whether strings are considered in conflict with existing or applied-for new gTLD strings are made in the DNS Stability String Evaluation for Fast Track requests and in the initial evaluation step for [new gTLD applications](#). The following supplemental rules are the thresholds for solving any identified contention issues:

- A. A gTLD application that is approved by the ICANN Board will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.
- B. A validated request for an IDN ccTLD will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.

For the purpose of contention, an IDN ccTLD string is validated once it is confirmed that the string is a meaningful representation of the country or territory and that the string has passed the DNS Stability Panel evaluation.

5.6 Processing of a Fast Track Request

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

5.6.1 Request Completeness Validation

The first activity after ICANN receives a request for an IDN ccTLD(s) is a check that the request is complete. This is illustrated in Figure 5.3.

ICANN will verify that all required fields have been entered and ICANN staff will verify that the information provided is sufficient to initiate the string evaluation.

ICANN will verify that:

- The requested string (A-label) does not exist in the DNS, is not approved for delegation to another party, and it (U-label) is not identical to an entry in the Reserved Names list.
- The requested string (U-label) does not contain Latin characters.
- The requested string (U-label) is a minimum of 2 characters.
- The following required elements are in agreement: the requested string(s) (U-label), the identified ISO 3166-1 corresponding code, the identified UNGEGN Manual entry (if applicable), and the language(s) or script(s) listed in the IDN Table.
- The following required elements are in agreement: the requested string (U-label), the identified script(s), and language(s).
- The following required elements are in agreement: the requested A-label, U-label, and corresponding Unicode code points.
- All contact details provided are accurate and usable
- If the string request is not coming from the government, formal documentation from the relevant government or administration supporting the requester as sponsor is included. (ICANN will verify that the received documentation of support is from an authoritative source.)
 - o ICANN Staff may seek assistance from the GAC in verifying that the documentation is from an authoritative source.

This check identifies requests as complete or incomplete. ICANN staff will inform the requester of any missing elements or errors in the request, and the requester will be able to either provide additional information at this time, or withdraw the request (and potentially resubmit at a later time). If no errors are encountered, ICANN staff will notify the requester that the Request Completeness Validation is

passed successfully and that the Linguistic Process Validation and DNS Stability Evaluation have been initiated.

5.6.2. Linguistic Process Validation

The Linguistic Process Validation is graphically described in Figure 5.4. In this step ICANN staff is verifying that the following are satisfactory:

- That the selected language(s) and script(s) are considered official in the country/territory of the request.
 - 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
 - If the language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant country or territory in the ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10; or
 - If the relevant public authority in the country or territory confirms that the language is (i) used in official communications of the relevant public authority; and (ii) serves as a language of administration.
- That the received documentation of community support for the string(s) is satisfactory.
 - This should be demonstrated in a similar manner as required for delegation requests: <http://www.iana.org/domains/root/delegation-guide/>
- That the string(s) requested is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country/territory name by verifying that either
 - the string is matching an entry (/entries) in the UNGEGN Manual, or
 - the received expert documentation states that the string(s) is a meaningful representation of the country/territory name,

For purposes of the Fast Track Process the requested string is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country or territory name if it is listed as the long or short form name of that country or territory 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>) in an official language of the country or territory.

If the requested string is not listed for the country or territory in the UNGEGN Manual the requester must provide documentation which includes a report from an internationally recognized expert(s) in a relevant field of expertise, such as toponymy, that the selected the string(s) is a meaningful representation of the country/territory name as per the following criteria:

- The string is the name of the country or territory in the official language; or
- The string is a part of the name of the country or territory that denotes the country or territory in the official language; or
- The string is a short-form designation for the name of the country or territory, recognizably denoting it in the official language

Examples of strings that are not listed in the UNGEGN Manual but may be of interest to countries and territories include:

- The selected string is a *part* of the long or short form name of the country or territory in the UNGEGN Manual in the selected language; or
- An acronym of that name; or
- The country or territory, or the language does not appear in the UNGEGN Manual.

ICANN will provide examples of what such reports should include.

ICANN will also provide assistance in identifying internationally recognized experts in a relevant field to any country or territory requiring such assistance. The details of this assistance program are in the process of being finalized and will be provided as soon as it is available.

5.6.3 DNS Stability Evaluation

The DNS Stability Evaluation process is graphically described in Figure 5.5. The request and associated material will be provided to the DNS Stability Technical Panel (see Module 4 for details) and the string evaluation will begin. This evaluation consists of two main components:

- i. is a detailed technical check in which all the technical string requirements referenced in Module 3 are applied and adherence verified, and
- ii. is an evaluation of confusability with any Reserved Names, existing TLDs (both ccTLDs and gTLDs), or potential future ccTLDs.

If the DNS Stability Panel finds that additional linguistic expertise is necessary to satisfy the latter component of the evaluation, such can be requested through the Staff Manager. The Staff Manager will in return request assistance, specific information, or a full confusability review by experts. The specific expertise needed will partly depend on the actual string in question, but could for example, consist of a full review conducted by the String Similarity Panel. This is a panel assessing string pairs for confusing similarity, following the rules set forth in section 5.5. If any issues on the selected string are discovered in this review the DNS Stability Panel can request clarification from the requester through the Staff Manager. If clarifications are either not sufficient or cannot be provided, the Termination Process will be initiated. See section 5.4.

If the DNS Stability Panel review reveals no technical issues the requester is notified that the DNS Stability String Evaluation is successfully completed and that the requested string will be queued for public posting.

5.6.3 Publishing of Requested String(s)

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

The ICANN website will contain an area dedicated to presenting strings that reach this step in the Fast Track process. RSS feeds of changes to this area will be made available.

5.6.4 IANA Delegation Readiness

Following the public posting of the requested string, all Stage 2 process requirements are considered successfully completed. The requester will be notified that the standard IANA delegation process can begin and what further actions are necessary. The IANA delegation process is described in Module 6.

Appendix 1 to Module 5

Revision note: All flowcharts contained in previous versions of the plan have been completely replaced, with the flowcharts contained in this appendix.

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

Figure 5.2: Stage 2: Submission of a Request for String Evaluation

Figure 5.3: Stage 2: Request Completeness Validation

Figure 5.4: Stage 2: Linguistic Process Validation

Figure 5.5: Stage 2: DNS Stability Evaluation

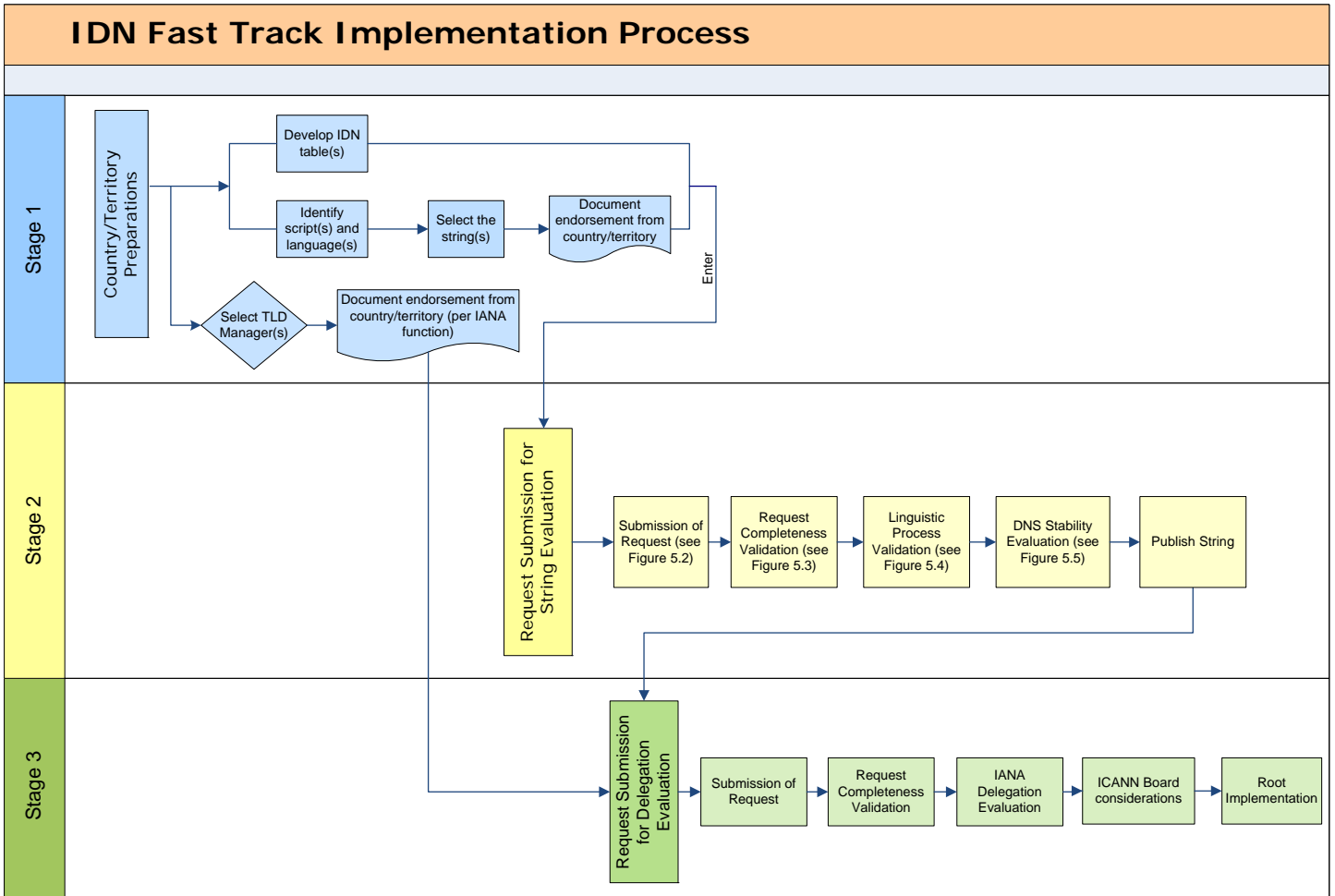


Figure 5.1: General Overview of the Fast Track Process; Stage 1: Preparation; Stage 2: Request Submission for String Evaluation; Stage 3: Request Submission for Delegation Evaluation.

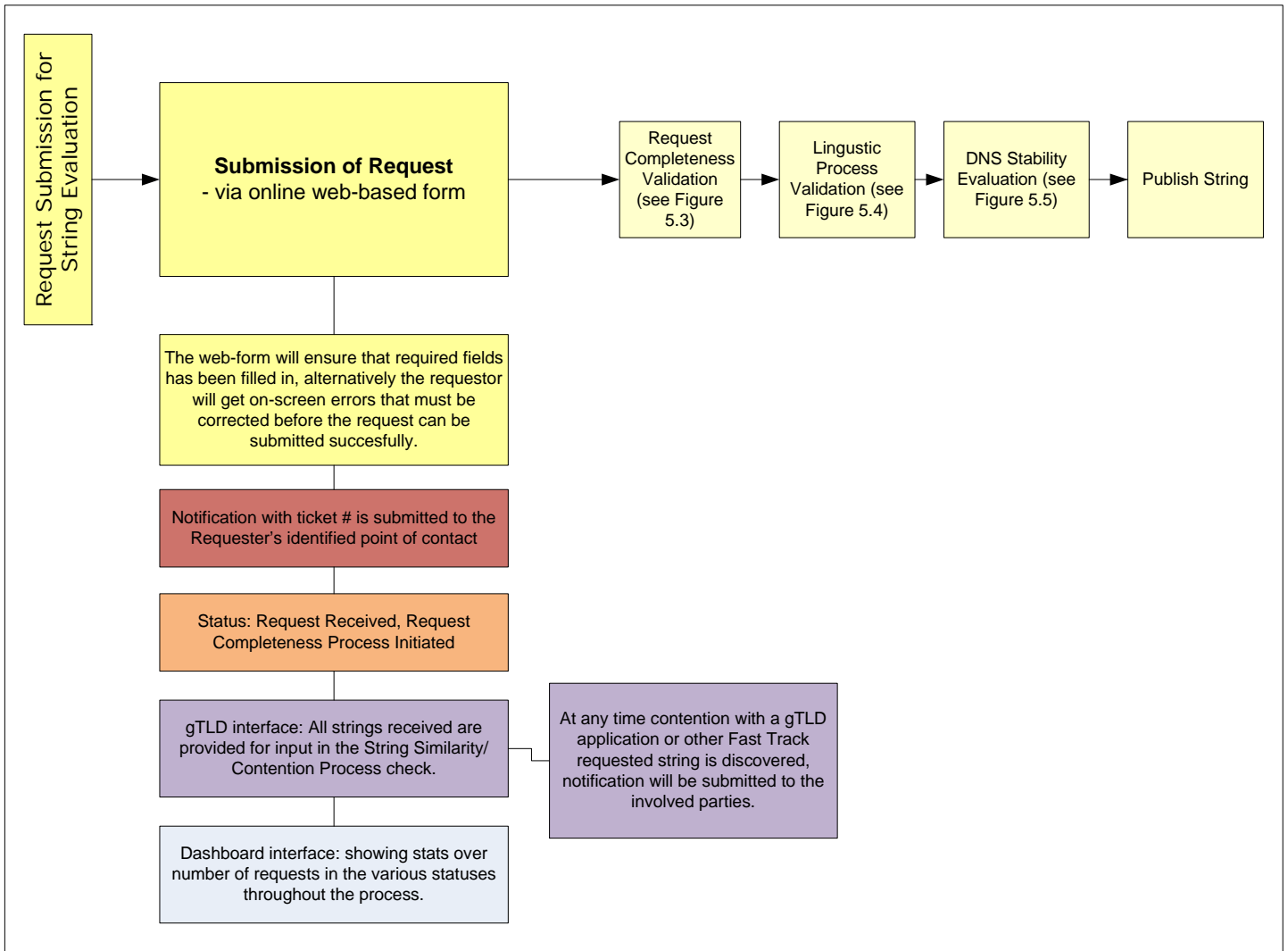


Figure 5.2: Stage 2: Submission of a Request for String Evaluation.

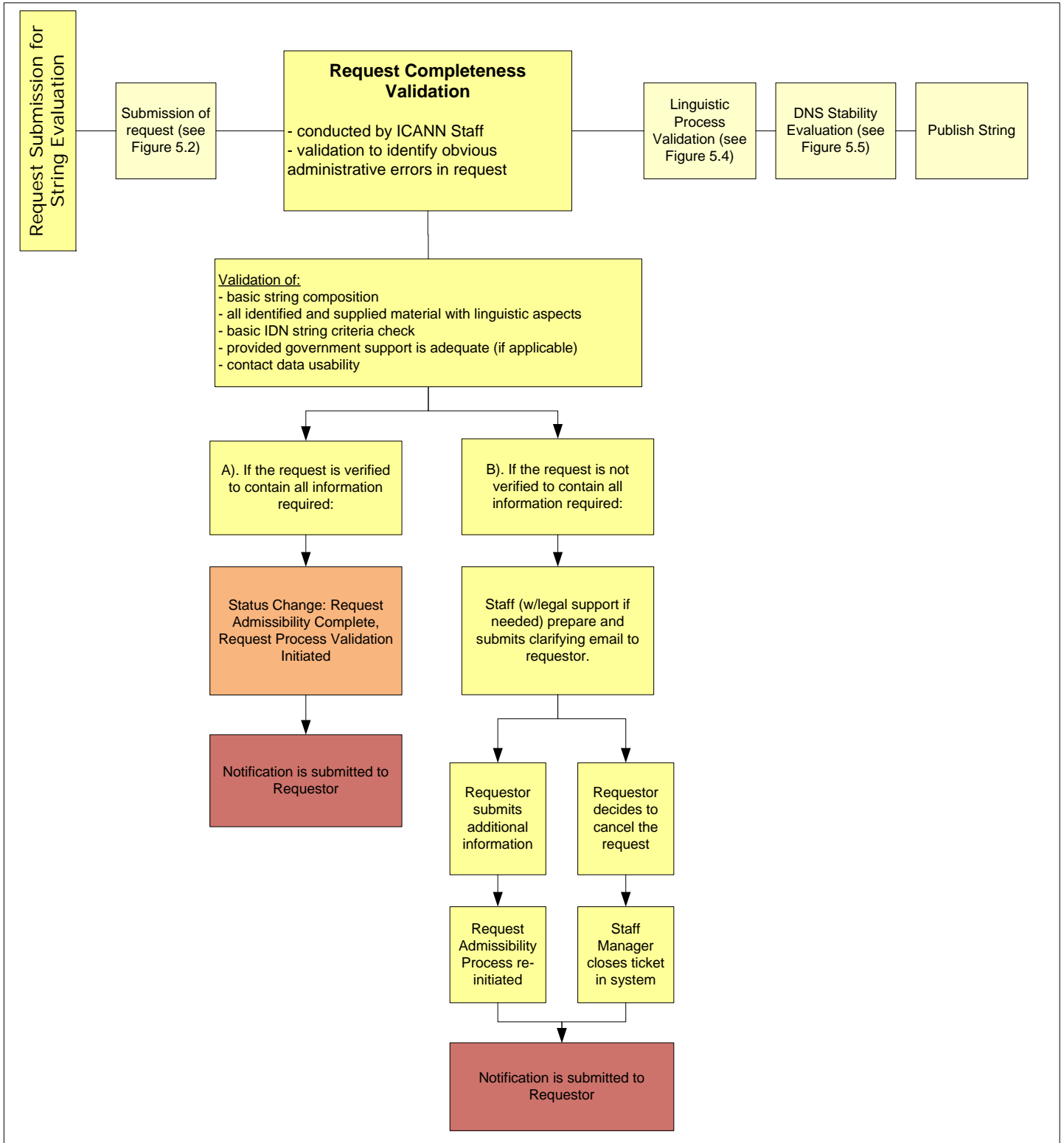


Figure 5.3: Stage 2: Request Completeness Validation.

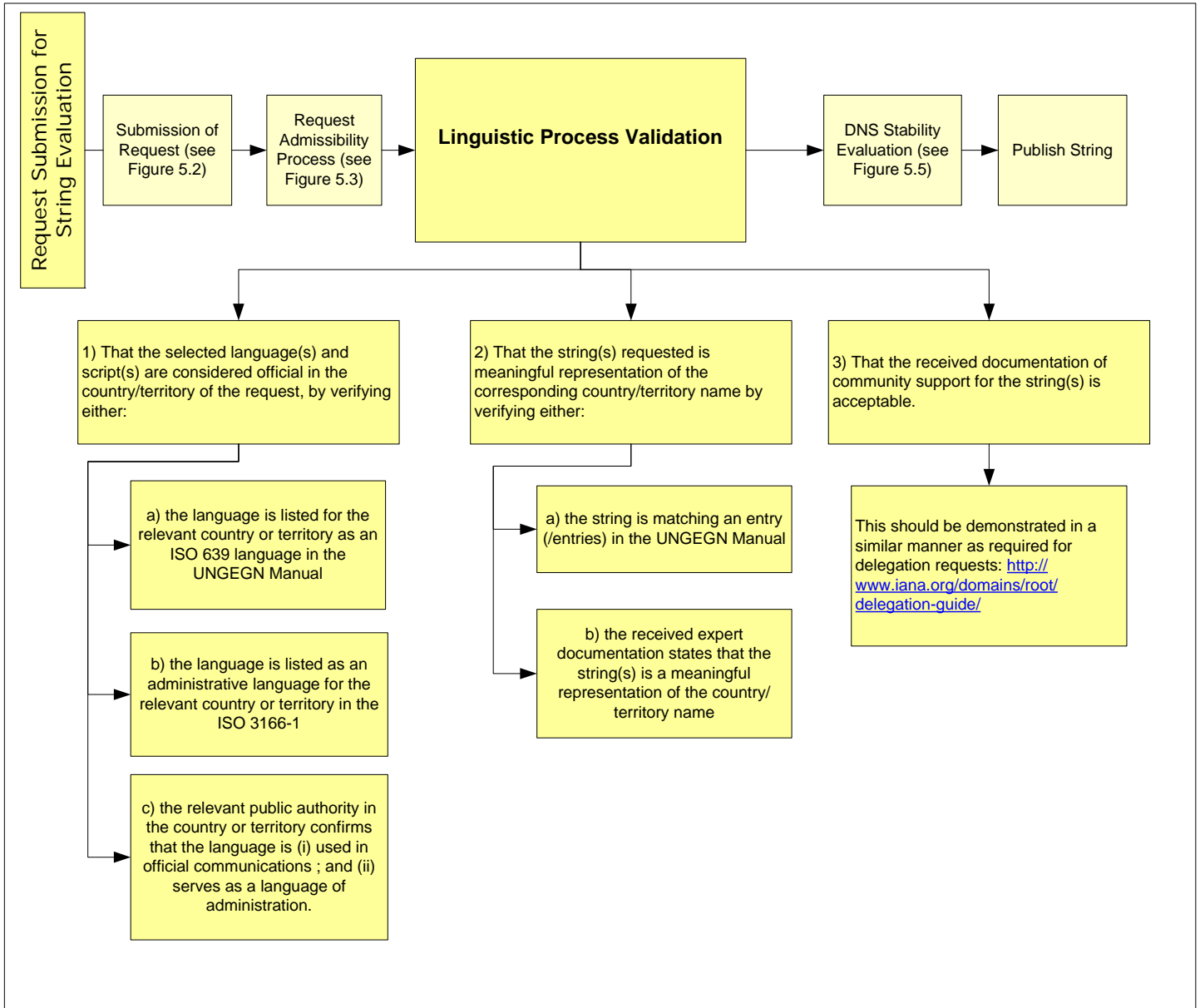


Figure 5.4: Stage 2: Linguistic Process Validation.

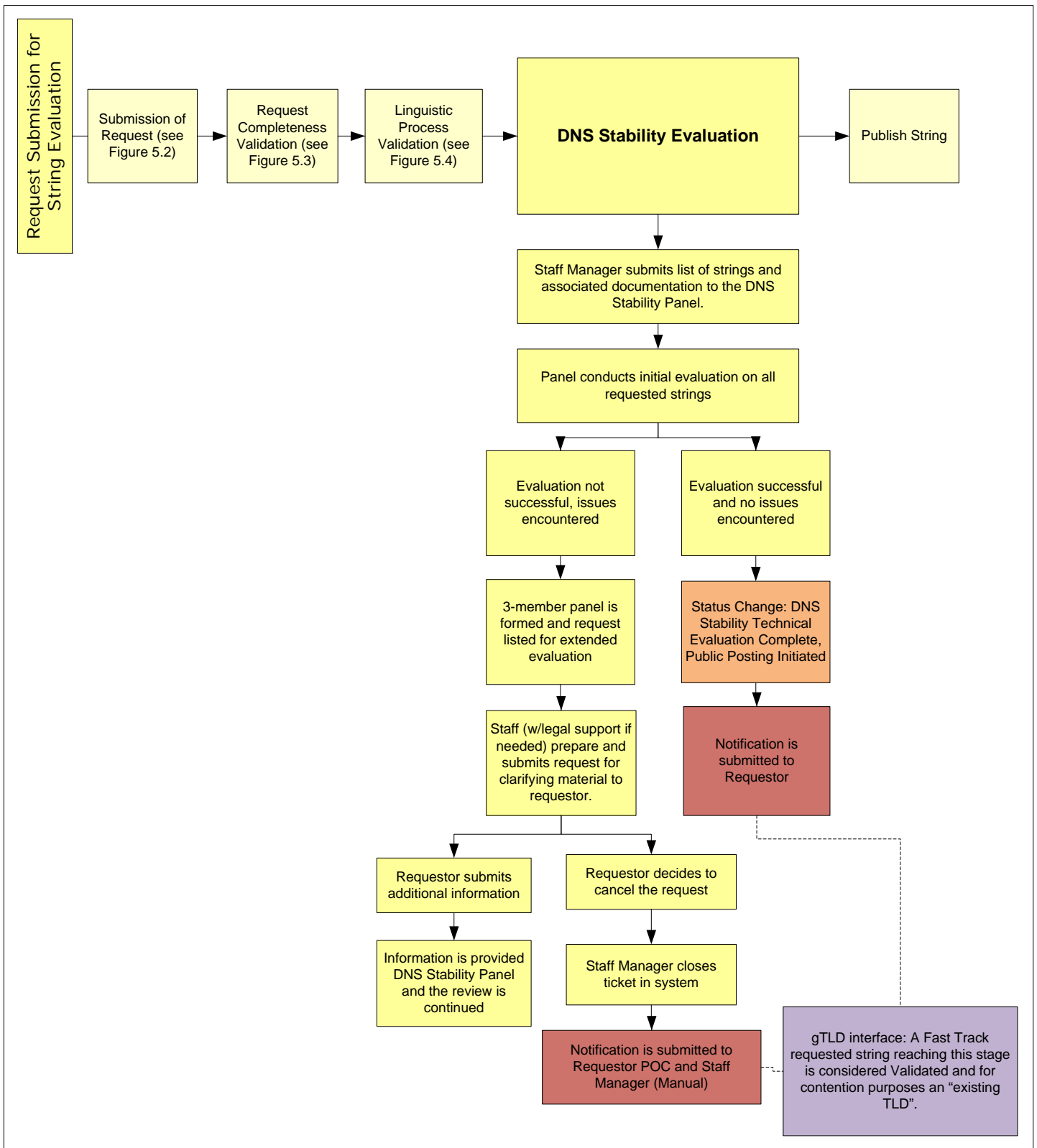


Figure 5.5: Stage 2: DNS Stability Evaluation

Module 6

Delegation Process

ICANN maintains a process for delegating top-level domains in its execution of its IANA functions. 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 to IDN ccTLDs. The online document will be updated to reflect updated operational practices for IDN ccTLDs.

Requesters that have successfully completed the String Evaluation Process will receive a notification from ICANN that the selected string has been approved for use by that country or territory, and that they are welcome to apply for the delegation process (Stage 3). While the process described in Module 5 is concerned with assessing the string, the delegation process involves assessing whether the proposed sponsoring organization is a qualified trustee for the local Internet community.

As the requirements of the two processes are separate, the requester must submit the qualifying documentation for delegation separately. If some documentation is the same as for the string evaluation process, it must be resubmitted at this time.

6.1 IANA Function

ICANN manages the IANA functions under a contract with the United States Department of Commerce. The IANA function process for delegating an IDN ccTLD will remain consistent with the process for existing TLDs directly derived from the ISO 3166-1 standard. The process will be augmented only to include the requirements in Module 5.

In this process, ICANN staff will receive a request to delegate a IDN ccTLD that is composed of a formal template explaining the delegation request together with supporting documentation. This supporting documentation must describe how the principles in RFC1591, ICP-1, and the GAC principles are supported. Some of these principals 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 name servers and electronic mail connectivity to the managers.

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

6.1.2 Manager 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 Registry manager shall operate the IDN ccTLD in a manner that allows the TLD community to discuss and participate in the development and modification of policies and practices for the TLD.

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 demonstrates the requester suitability under these RFC 1591 criteria, requesters must provide the additional specific material relating to the evaluation described in the Module 5. This requirement will be satisfied by the Delegation Readiness report that describes the IDN-specific factors.

ICANN will perform due diligence on the documentation provided in accordance with the IANA review process described in RFC 1591. If the request does not adequately cover all areas, they will confer with the requester, who may provide further information. When ICANN deems the IANA due diligence evaluation complete, it will package the request and its assessment for ICANN Board review.

6.2 ICANN Board Review Process

All delegations and re-delegations of ccTLDs require ICANN Board approval to proceed. This approval is expected to remain constant with the introduction of IDN ccTLDs.

At the conclusion of the IANA function evaluation, of the ICANN Board will assess the delegation request.

The ICANN Board will evaluate whether requests are consistent with governing policies and with ICANN's core values set out in its bylaws to "ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems."



6.3 US Government Authorization

After approval of a request, ICANN will execute its regular IANA function root zone change management process.

This change involves retesting the technical configuration of the sdelegation data supplied by the requester, and ensuring that name servers function correctly. Once satisfied, the request will be transmitted to the US Department of Commerce for authorization. Following this authorization, it will be implemented in the DNS root zone.

Module 7

Discussion of Additional Topics

This module 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. Module 7 has been updated to only contain discussions of outstanding issues. Topics deleted from the previous versions of the plan are considered solved and have been included elsewhere in the plan as deemed necessary. In the final version of the Implementation Plan, Module 7 will be completely eliminated. Most of the topics remaining in this module relate directly to the overarching requirements to:

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

The remaining topics included have all been addressed in supporting papers to this plan. They are listed here for reference.

- Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Documentation of Responsibility between ICANN and prospective IDN ccTLD Managers (revision 1.0), aiming at
 - ensuring ongoing compliance with the IDN technical standards, including the IDNA protocol and the IDN Guidelines.
 - cooperative engagement, a mechanism to ensure that ICANN and the IDN ccTLD will, as a first step, attempt to resolve any dispute in a cooperative manner.
- Proposed Development and use of IDN tables and character variants for second and top level strings (revision 1.0), aiming at:
 - informing and defining rules around the development of IDN tables, and
 - proposing use of identified variants especially at the top level.
- Proposed Implementation Details Regarding Financial Contributions to Support the Development and Deployment of IDN ccTLDs, a new paper aiming at:
 - proposing principles suggesting that some contribution should be received from IDN ccTLD managers to offset program costs.