

Name Collision Initial Assessment

ICANN Procedure Description

Each applied-for string, including variant strings, will undergo an initial name collision risk assessment. The purpose of this initial assessment is to identify strings that may cause name collisions with severe negative consequences based on data available prior to delegation, implying these strings carry a high risk if delegated from the global DNS root. For this classification, the High-risk string classification model is used.

Those strings determined to be high-risk will be placed on the Collision String List, and any applications for these strings will not proceed until a High-Risk String Mitigation Plan has been developed, evaluated, approved and implemented (as applicable).

Initial Assessment will take place following the [String Confirmation Day](#).

1. Inputs and Outputs

Inputs to the Initial Assessment are, as applicable:

- The applied-for string

Output of the Initial Assessment is:

- The Initial Assessment report section concerning the string.
- ICANN's determination, which may be one of the following:
 - Approved to proceed to Temporary Delegation.
 - The string is not considered to be a high-risk string.
 - Classified as high-risk string
 - The string is considered to be a high-risk string and is placed on the Collision String List.

Normative references:

- [The Applicant Guide Book](#)
- The High-risk string classification model.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Applicant – Submits a new gTLD application to ICANN during the application submission period.

Initial Assessment Panel: A panel of external technical experts, engaged through an external service provider, who will evaluate the risks relating to name collisions, led by the panel's coordinator who distributes the work and follows up on the timelines for each activity.

Technical Review Team: A team of internal experts from relevant ICANN org departments overseeing the work of the Initial Assessment Panel and providing advice as needed.

Program Governance: Program Governance refers to a group of internal Subject Matter Experts in different functions, including GDS and Program Leadership. Program Governance adopts the outcome of the procedure and makes the final determination on the report from the Initial Assessment. The Technical Review Team may also escalate to or provide input to or consider feedback from Program Governance in case there are ambiguities or other unclarities in the execution of the procedure, as appropriate.

Responsible (R): The Initial Assessment Panel
Accountable (A): Program Governance
Consulted (C): The Technical Review Team, The ICANN Community
Informed (I): The Applicant

3. The Procedure

The Initial Assessment Procedure consists of the following steps:

1. The coordinator of the Initial Assessment Panel assigns at least one panelist to conduct the assessment of a string. When assigning panelists, the coordinator shall consider any potential conflict of interests.
2. Quantitative data shall be analysed for indicators showing the string might cause name collisions to more than an insignificant extent.
 - a. The analysis shall be based on the following data sources:
 - i. DNS Magnitude Data and other metrics provided by the [Name Collision Observatory \(NCO\)](#),
 - ii. Data from [Day In The Life of the Internet \(DITL\)](#) and [Identifier Technologies Health Indicators \(ITHI\)](#).
 - iii. Any other data sources as found appropriate by the panel (as applicable).
 - b. The analysis shall consider longitudinal data, as available, to determine if and how queries for the strings may have shifted over time.
 - c. The outcome of the quantitative analysis for the string shall be documented in the initial assessment report section using a structured approach to ensure

consistency between evaluations, and include the steps taken, the considerations made, the data sources used, the data collected and the findings.

- d. If the quantitative data analysis shows no or only a small amount of sporadic queries above the visible threshold for the string at the root level of the global DNS, then the string can not be estimated to present a high risk of causing name collisions with severe negative effects.
3. Determine whether a qualitative analysis is required.
 - a. If the quantitative analysis shows no or insignificant signs that the string may cause name collisions, and that no other available data indicates otherwise, the Initial Assessment is concluded. The procedure continues to step 5.
 - b. If the quantitative analysis shows more than a small amount of sporadic queries above the visible threshold for the string at the root level, or that other available data indicates a need for further analysis, the quantitative analysis must be complemented with a qualitative analysis.
 4. If the Initial Assessment requires a qualitative analysis, the coordinator shall ensure that at least two panelists are assigned to the task. In the assignment of additional panelists, as applicable, any special competences that may be required for the assessment at hand shall be considered as well as potential conflict of interests among the panelists.
 - a. The first step of the qualitative analysis is to investigate what is causing the queries for the non-delegated string to determine the potential impact of the string being delegated from the root. The panelists will consider at least the following questions in this phase:
 - i. Can the queries be attributed to certain geographical regions, certain sectors or entities, some technical equipment, et cetera?
 - ii. Does the string carry some semantic significance, implying that potential impacts of name collisions could be widespread or have particularly severe implications?
 - iii. Does the available evidence indicate that the string is in use by essential entities for critical purposes, where name collisions could potentially impact public safety?
 - iv. Are the patterns of queries seen in the quantitative analysis in fact a result of deliberate deception, to give the impression that the string will cause name collisions with the purpose to prevent it from being delegated?
 - b. In the next step, the panelists shall apply the impact-based assessment model to determine whether the string should be classified as high-risk or not.

- c. The results of the qualitative assessment shall be documented in the initial assessment report section concerning the string, including the steps taken, the considerations made, the evidence collected, the findings and recommendations on if the string should be classified as high-risk or not.
- 5. The report section on the string is to be provided to the Technical Review Team within 14 calendar days counting from the day when the coordinator assigned the task in step 1.
 - a. The Technical Review Team will review the panel's report section on the string.
 - i. The Technical Review Team may issue clarifying questions (CQs), and request additional information from the panel to resolve any ambiguities or other unclarities, before it makes a determination on the report section and its findings.
 - ii. If ambiguities or other unclarities remain after the Technical Review Team having attempted to resolve them in the previous step, the Technical Review Team may escalate or provide input to or consider feedback from Program Governance and escalation processes, as appropriate.
 - b. When there are no remaining concerns, The Technical Review Team will adopt the report section.

4. Public Comment and ICANN Determination

The Name Collision Initial Assessment is part of the [String Evaluation](#) stage in the application process. After all strings and their respective variants have gone through the Initial Assessment procedure, ICANN will compile all report sections into the Initial Assessment report on all strings and publish it for public comments.

After the comment period has ended, the Technical Review Team will consider all available information and make any updates to the report, as appropriate. Program Governance will make the final determination on the outcome of the Initial Assessment for each of the applied-for strings and its variants.