
Internationalized Domain Names

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Internationalized Domain Names

ICANN expects a diverse set of applications for new gTLDs, including IDNs, creating significant potential for new uses and benefit to Internet users across the globe.

1. Rules for IDN gTLDs and Their Variant gTLDs

An applied-for IDN gTLD string must comply with [IDNA2008](#) (RFCs 5890-5893¹) and all of its successor(s). The IDN gTLD must also comply with the applicable version of Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR; see [\[Section x: Root Zone Label Generation Rules\]](#)).

An IDN gTLD string can be represented in Unicode characters (called U-label) and its equivalent ASCII mapping prefixed by “xn--” (called A-label) as per IDNA2008. Applied-for IDN gTLDs (in U-label format) must be longer than a single character. [\[As an exception, single-character IDN gTLDs \(in U-label format\) can only be applied for in Han script², which is used in the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages.\]](#)³ For additional string requirements, also see [\[Section x: DNS Stability Review\]](#).

The RZ-LGR is the sole source to calculate the variant gTLDs and their disposition values (allocatable or blocked) for all existing gTLDs and all applied-for primary gTLD.

The LGR Tool made available by ICANN at <https://lgrtool.icann.org/> can be used to determine allocatable variant gTLDs for a primary gTLD.

2. Application Submission

An applied-for IDN gTLD that conforms to the mandatory string requirements, including IDNA 2008, as well as the RZ-LGR, can be submitted through the new gTLD application submission system. Where the RZ-LGR calculation during the algorithmic check deems an applied-for gTLD as “invalid” or “blocked” (in case the applied-for string is a variant gTLD), such application for a non-conforming string will be accepted by application submission system but the applicant will be warned of its potential disqualification. In such a case, an applicant may make a limited challenge on the RZ-LGR calculation by the application submission system (see detail in [\[Section X. Challenges\]](#)).

¹ Also relevant are RFCs 5894-5895, which are informational documents providing background, explanation, and rationale for IDNA2008 as well as mapping characters for IDNA2008 respectively.

² Exception is allowed for Han script as it is an ideographic script where a single character may have a meaning as per Final Recommendation 3.17 of [Phase 1 Final Report on the Internationalized Domain Names Expedited Policy Development Process](#).

³ To be finalized after the community feedback from the [public comment](#) is duly considered by the CJK Panels and then the IRT.

2.1. Application Submission of New Primary IDN gTLD and its Variant gTLDs

An applicant can apply for a new primary IDN gTLD along with one or more of its allocatable variant gTLDs. Variant gTLDs will only be allocated to the same applicant as the primary IDN gTLD. All variant gTLDs must have the same back-end registry service provider as the applied-for primary IDN gTLD when delegated.

Allocatable variant gTLDs can be applied for from the set generated using the RZ-LGR. An application for an allocatable variant gTLD cannot precede an application for its primary IDN gTLD. A primary IDN gTLD and any of its allocatable variant gTLDs being applied for in the same round must be submitted through one application. An applicant cannot apply for a blocked variant gTLD of the new primary IDN gTLD, as calculated by the RZ-LGR. See [Section x: Fees] for details on application fees for variant gTLDs.

Once the primary IDN gTLD is applied for, it cannot be changed, except for a brand IDN gTLD application⁴ whose applied-for primary string has been placed in contention.

After submission of an application, the applicant is allowed to withdraw any of the applied-for variant gTLD from that application, but is not allowed to add any other allocatable variant gTLD that was not originally applied for in that application. However, after submission of an application, should the applicant withdraw its application for a primary IDN gTLD, all of its applications for variant gTLDs will also be withdrawn.

2.2. Application Submission of Variant gTLDs of Existing IDN gTLDs

An applicant can only apply for variant gTLDs of an existing IDN gTLD if it is the same legal entity as the registry operator for the already existing IDN gTLD. All variant gTLDs must have the same back-end registry service provider as the existing IDN gTLD when delegated. The back-end registry service provider must be approved through the RSP evaluation program for the next gTLD round.

Allocatable variant gTLDs of an existing IDN gTLD can be applied for from the set generated using the RZ-LGR. An applicant for allocatable variant gTLDs of an existing IDN gTLD must submit these in one application. An applicant cannot apply for a blocked variant gTLD of an existing IDN gTLD, as calculated by the RZ-LGR. See [Section x: Fees] for details on application fees for allocatable variant gTLDs.

⁴ Based on IDN EPDP recommendation 3.25.

After submission of an application, the applicant is allowed to withdraw any applied-for variant gTLD from that application, but is not allowed to add any other allocatable variant gTLD that was not originally applied-for in that application.

3. Initial Evaluation

3.1. Prioritization of Processing of Variant gTLDs of Existing IDN gTLDs

As a one-time exception, applications for allocatable variant gTLDs of existing IDN gTLDs from the 2012 round will receive priority in processing order ahead of all other new gTLD applicants, including the IDN gTLD applicants that elect to participate in the prioritization draw (see [\[Section x on Prioritization\]](#)).

3.2. Multiple Applicants for the Same IDN gTLD or its Variant gTLD

If different applicants apply for IDN gTLDs from the same variant-string-set, then such applications will be placed in contention, and only one applicant will be selected through the contention resolution process. This means that applied-for IDN gTLDs and their applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs will participate as a set in any contention resolution mechanisms, i.e., Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) or Auctions of Last Resort (see [\[Section x: Contention Resolution\]](#)).

Note that any application for an allocatable variant gTLD of an existing IDN gTLD will be rejected if it is made by an applicant that is not the Registry Operator of that existing IDN gTLD.

3.3. Justification of Variant gTLDs and its Evaluation

An applicant seeking one or more allocatable variant gTLDs of an applied-for primary IDN gTLD or existing IDN gTLD must provide the justification for the need of each variant gTLD being applied-for. This justification will be evaluated by a panel on a general standard of reasonableness based on the following criteria, in the context of the applied-for primary IDN gTLD or existing IDN gTLD:

1. The meaning or intended meaning (for non-dictionary words) of each of the applied-for variant gTLD is the same, based on sources included by the applicant.
2. The variant gTLD is considered the same by the intended user community.
3. The benefits and the user communities who will benefit from the introduction of the applied-for variant gTLD.

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4. Steps the applicant will take to minimize the operational and management complexities of the variant gTLD and resulting variant domain names that impact registrars, resellers and/or registrants.

The applicant must pass each criterion for each applied-for variant gTLD to proceed in the program. The evaluation outcome of any one applied-for variant gTLD will not impact the evaluation outcome of a primary applied-for IDN gTLD or any other applied-for allocatable variant gTLD in the application.

The ability to manage the applied-for allocatable variant gTLD(s) along with the applied-for primary IDN gTLD or the existing IDN gTLD will be evaluated from both a technical and operational perspective, as described in [Section x - PDT Section of AGB and Section x - RSP Handbook].

3.4. Additional Application Requirements for Variant gTLDs

An applied-for allocatable variant gTLD will be subject to the same application requirements and evaluation criteria as the associated primary applied-for IDN gTLD or existing IDN gTLD. Specifically, the same documentation requirements apply to both the primary applied-for IDN gTLD and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs. For purposes of clarity, this means that an applied-for primary gTLD string and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs will be evaluated together as a set but will require relevant documentation for each variant gTLD, as needed.

With respect to the following three non-standard application types of gTLDs, this means that:

- An applicant for a Community-based IDN gTLD and its allocatable variant gTLDs is required to submit the same endorsement for applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs as needed for its applied-for primary IDN gTLD. Additionally, should a community-based IDN gTLD be in contention (as described [section 3.2]) and opts to participate in Community Priority Evaluation (CPE), then the community-based IDN gTLD and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs will be evaluated together as a set. ([see Section x: community based gTLD]).
- An applicant for a Geographic Name IDN gTLD and its allocatable variant gTLDs is required to submit documentation of support or non-objection to its applied-for primary gTLD and applied-for allocatable variant gTLD(s) from relevant governments or public authorities. That is, the requisite documentation of support or non-objection should reference both the applied-for IDN gTLD string and its applied-for allocatable variant gTLDs ([see Section x: Geographic Name gTLD]).
- An applicant for a .Brand IDN gTLD and its allocatable variant gTLDs is required to submit proof that its applied-for primary gTLD and applied-for allocatable variant gTLD(s) are identical to registered trademarks owned and used by the applicant. That is, in

addition to the .BRAND IDN gTLD, any applied-for allocatable variant gTLD must also show proof that it is identical to registered trademarks owned and used by the applicant ([see Section x: .Brand gTLD]).

3.5. Application for Variant gTLDs of Reserved Names List

Only the organizations with strings on the Reserved Names List (see [Section x: Reserved Names List]) are allowed to apply for the allocatable variant gTLD(s) of their corresponding reserved name(s) at the top-level. The variant gTLDs are not required to be on the Reserved Names List, but are generated by the Reserved Names on this list using the RZ-LGR. An application for an allocatable variant gTLD(s) of a reserved string cannot precede an application for the reserved string, which serves as the primary gTLD for generating the variant gTLDs.

3.6. Additional Dependence of Variant gTLDs

All variant gTLDs are dependent on their primary IDN gTLD for application evaluation. Should a primary applied-for IDN gTLD be disqualified for any reason, as described in this section or other relevant sections of the AGB, the associated variant gTLDs will also be disqualified. This means that, in such cases, the entire application will not be allowed to proceed.

However, while any applied-for allocatable variant gTLD be disqualified and not able to proceed, the corresponding applied-for primary IDN gTLD and any remaining applied-for variant gTLDs that are not disqualified and will still be able to proceed.

Annex - Relevant Outputs

Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process (SubPro) Section 25.

Affirmation with Modification 25.1 With the change in italicized text, the Working Group affirms Principle B from the 2007 policy: “Internationalised domain name (IDNs) new generic top-level domains *should continue to be an integral part of the New gTLD Program.*” Principle B originally stated, “Some new generic top-level domains should be internationalised domain names (IDNs) subject to the approval of IDNs being available in the root.”

Recommendation 25.2 Compliance with Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR⁵, RZ-LGR-2, and any future RZ-LGR rules sets) must be required for the generation of TLDs and variants⁶ labels, including the determination of whether the label is blocked or allocatable. IDN TLDs must comply with IDNA2008 (RFCs 5890- 5895) or its successor(s). To the extent possible, and consistent with Implementation Guidance 26.10, algorithmic checking of TLDs should be utilized.

Implementation Guidance 25.3 If a script is not yet integrated into the RZ-LGR, applicants should be able to apply for a string in that script, and it should be processed up to but not including contracting. Applicants under such circumstances should be warned of the possibility that the applied-for string may never be delegated and they will be responsible for any additional evaluation costs.

Recommendation 25.4 Single character⁷ gTLDs may be allowed for limited script/language combinations where a character is an ideograph (or ideogram) and do not introduce confusion risks that rise above commonplace similarities, consistent with SSAC⁸ and Joint ccNSO-GNSO IDN Workgroup (JIG)⁹ reports.

Recommendation 25.5 IDN gTLDs identified as variant TLDs of already existing or applied for gTLDs will be allowed only if labels are allocated to the same entity and, when delegated, only if

⁵ To see the current versions of RZ-LGRs, see: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/generation-panel2015-06-21-en>

⁶ For more information about the definition of IDN variants as well as examples, please see section 2 of IDN Variant TLD Implementation: Motivation, Premises and Framework, available at <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/idn-variant-tld-motivation-premises-framework-25jan19-en.pdf>

⁷ Meaning a character in a U-label.

⁸ See report here: <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/sac-052-en.pdf>

⁹ See report here: https://ccnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/filefield_22667/jig-final-report-singlecharacter-idns-08mar11-en.pdf

they have the same back-end registry service provider. This policy must be captured in relevant Registry Agreements¹⁰.

IDN Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) [Phase 1 Final Report](#)

Recommendation 1.1 The RZ-LGR must be the sole source to calculate the variant labels and disposition values for all existing gTLDs.

Recommendation 2.1 Any allocatable variant label of an existing gTLD, as calculated by the RZ-LGR, can only be allocated to the same registry operator or withheld for possible allocation only to that registry operator.

Recommendation 3.1 An application for an allocatable variant label cannot precede an application for that variant label's primary gTLD string.

Recommendation 3.2 A future registry operator who wishes to apply for an allocatable variant label of its existing gTLD must submit an application during an application round.

Recommendation 3.4 A future applicant applying for a primary gTLD string together with its allocatable variant label(s) in the same round is required to submit one application for the primary gTLD string and the variant label(s).

Recommendation 3.5 In addition to explaining the mission and purpose of the applied for primary gTLD string or existing gTLD, the applicant seeking one or more gTLD variant labels will describe the justification of such need. The justification given by the applicant shall at minimum provide the following information:

3.5.1 The meaning or intended meaning (for non-dictionary words) of each of the applied-for variant label(s), including sources;

3.5.2 Explanation of how the primary and variant labels are considered the same;

3.5.3 Explain the benefits and the user communities who will benefit from the introduction of the applied-for variant label(s); and

3.5.4 A description of the steps that the applicant will take to minimize the operational and management complexities of variant gTLDs and variant domain names that impact registrars, resellers and/or registrants.

¹⁰ The Working Group did not discuss the process by which an existing registry operator could apply for, or be given, a variant for its existing gTLD. Nor has it discussed the process by which an applicant applying for a new IDN gTLD could seek and obtain any allocatable variant(s).

Recommendation 3.7 A future applicant must be required to demonstrate its ability to manage the applied-for primary gTLD string and applied-for allocatable variant label(s) from both a technical and operational perspective. The same requirement applies to registry operators who wish to apply for allocatable variant label(s) of their existing gTLDs.

Recommendation 3.15 As a one-time exception for the immediate next application round, applications for allocatable variant labels of existing IDN gTLDs from the 2012 round must receive priority in processing order ahead of all other new gTLD applicants, including the IDN applicants that elect to participate in the prioritization draw.

Recommendation 3.16 An applied-for allocatable variant label must be subject to the same application requirements and evaluation criteria as the associated primary gTLD string. Specifically, the same documentation requirements apply to both the primary gTLD string and its applied-for allocatable variant label(s). With respect to the three non-standard application types of gTLDs as identified by the SubPro PDP, this means that:

3.16.1 An applicant for a Community-based TLD string and its allocatable variant label(s) is required to submit a written endorsement of its applied-for primary gTLD string and applied-for allocatable variant label(s) from established institution(s) representing the community that the applicant has named.⁸⁰

3.16.2 An applicant for a Geographic Name TLD string and its allocatable variant label(s) is required to submit documentation of support or non-objection to its applied-for primary gTLD string and applied-for allocatable variant label(s) from relevant governments or public authorities.

3.16.3 An applicant for a .Brand TLD string and its allocatable variant label(s) is required to submit proof that its applied-for primary gTLD string and applied-for allocatable variant label(s) are identical to registered trademarks owned and used by the registry operator or its affiliate.

Recommendation 3.17 The EPDP Team affirmed the Recommendation 25.4 in the SubPro PDP Final Report that single-character gTLDs may only be allowed for limited scripts and languages where a character is an ideograph. At the time of the EPDP Team's deliberations, the only script that meets the criteria is the Han script, which is used in the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages. Nevertheless, applications for single-character gTLDs that are ideographs must not be accepted until relevant guidelines from the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Generation Panels are developed, finalized after Public Comment, and implemented in the New gTLD Program. In the event that the Generation Panels determine such additional guidelines beyond the analysis already provided in the RZ-LGR unnecessary, applications for single-character gTLDs in the Han script shall be accepted.

Recommendation 3.20 The list of Strings Ineligible for Delegation must not be expanded to include variant labels.

Recommendation 3.21 Only the protected organizations on the list of Strings Ineligible for Delegation are allowed to apply for the allocatable variant label(s) of their protected string(s) at the top-level. Consistent with Final Recommendation 3.1, an application for an allocatable variant label of a protected string cannot precede an application for the protected string, which serves as the primary label for generating the variant label.

Recommendation 3.22 Only an applied-for gTLD string that conforms to the mandatory string requirements, including IDNA 2008 for IDN strings, as well as the RZ-LGR, can be submitted through the new gTLD application submission system.

Where the initial algorithmic check deems an applied-for gTLD string as “invalid” or “blocked” (where the applied-for string is a variant label), such application for a non-conforming string may be accepted but the applicant must be warned of its potential disqualification. If the DNS Stability Panel (DSP) subsequently confirms the applied-for string as “invalid” or “blocked” per the RZ-LGR and disqualifies the application for the non-conforming string, the applicant may invoke a limited challenge mechanism for DNS Stability Review to seek a reassessment of the disqualification.

However, the applicant’s ground to challenge is limited to a belief that its applied-for gTLD string is valid and allocatable as per the RZ-LGR and that the disqualification by the DSP was due to an incorrect assessment of the technical implementation of the RZ-LGR.

Recommendation 3.25 After submission of an application, the applicant is allowed to withdraw an applied-for variant label from that application, but is not allowed to add any other variant label that was not originally applied-for in that application. Only an applicant for a .Brand TLD string whose applied-for primary gTLD string is placed in a contention set is allowed to change its applied-for primary string and allocatable variant label(s) under the condition set out in SubPro PDP Recommendation 20.8.