

Position Paper:

Comments on potential postponement of the GNSO review August 2013

Executive summary

The Brand Registry Group (BRG) is keen to contribute manpower and thought-leadership on behalf of .brand-type registries to the ICANN policy-development process, shortly following the delegations of our members TLDs. Previous GNSO reviews have had a gestation period of 4 years. The Registry Stakeholder Group has no intention at present to change their charter until after the GNSO review.

The BRG asks the ICANN Board for its reassurance that there is no linkage between the timing for the BRG to be involved in ICANN policy development in a voting and representative capacity, and any decision on the postponement of the GNSO review.

Background

The Board Structural Improvements Committee is considering recommending to the ICANN Board of Directors that a mandated review of the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) be postponed and that a new schedule for the review be established within the next six months. The committee is considering this recommendation because of GNSO participation with two other activities: the second Affirmation of Commitments Accountability and Transparency Review and ICANN's Strategic Planning Process.

Historical perspective

A previous GNSO review, which led to the current GNSO structure, began in 2008. Its recommendations were finally implemented by 2012. That review led to fundamental structural change in the GNSO to reflect a perceived imbalance between the contracting and non-contracting parties stakeholders within ICANN. With the advent of 1000s of new top-level domain names, a third of which will be .brand-type, there is a need for a second wave of fundamental reform in the ICANN policy-development process to reflect ICANN's new stakeholders.

Issues

The BRG is keen to be a part of ICANN's policy-development framework with voting powers commensurate with its representative capacity. The BRG recognises the good sense in understanding ICANN's new stakeholders before creating a policy-development framework for them. The BRG also notes the four-year time frame of the previous GNSO review.

We seek to contribute manpower and thought-leadership on behalf of .brand-type registries to the ICANN policy-development process, shortly following the delegations of our members TLDs. This contribution includes the ability to vote and participate directly on the GNSO Council. This may be achieved, under the current GNSO structure, by the creation of a BRG Constituency within the Registry Stakeholder Group. The Registry Stakeholder Group (RySG) has told the BRG directly at ICANN47 in Durban that they have no current intention to change their charter until AFTER the GNSO review. The Registry Stakeholder Group charter today does not allow for the creation of Constituencies but only interest groups. An interest group within the RySG would both duplicate the BRG itself and require organisations to individually join both the BRG and the RySG; a process of duplication that would most likely lead to two non-identical groups. The BRG consists of global organisations most of which have over the last decade rationalised their participation in industry fora and which have no appetite to duplicate and create inefficiency. Discussion on this issue is underway.

Brand Registry Group request

The BRG asks the ICANN Board for its reassurance that there is no linkage between the timing for the BRG to be involved in ICANN policy development in a voting and representative capacity, and any decision on the postponement of the GNSO review.

To put this another way. An unacceptable outcome for up to one third of new TLD registries would be to be told there is no chance of any such GNSO involvement for the next 4 – 5 years.

The BRG remains open for direct dialogue on this issue.

The Brand Registry Group (BRG) is an independent membership organisation of future owners of a top-level domain name that matches their brand, a product or service. The BRG is registered as an international not-for-profit under Belgian law. It represents the members' common interests and offers a set of agreed services including advocacy, representation and networking paid for from member fees.