

Heather Dryden  
Chair, Governmental Advisory Committee  
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers  
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536, USA  
By email: [heather.dryden@ic.gc.ca](mailto:heather.dryden@ic.gc.ca)

19 September 2013

**Re: Brand Registry Group proposal for the use of country names and 2-character strings**

Dear Ms. Dryden,

The Brand Registry Group (BRG) appreciates the GAC having previously taken time in Beijing and Durban to listen to some hopes and concerns that “.brand” new TLD applicants have within the ICANN new TLD application process. We continue to explore formalizing the BRG’s role within the ICANN structure.

Among BRG members’ hopes are plans for trusted .brand TLDs to harness the power of new TLDs in furtherance of the global digital economy by providing local, country-specific content for consumers.

Since meeting with the GAC, the BRG has been in discussions with ICANN regarding a proposal for a new Specification to the standard ICANN Registry Agreement which recognizes the unique nature of a .brand registry, and reflects targeted amendments to certain clauses of that contract. Most of these seek to remove articles that are irrelevant to TLDs that do not intend to sell names at the second-level.

As you may be aware, the ICANN Registry Agreement currently prohibits Registry Operators from using country names and 2-character strings in new TLDs. This prohibition is at odds with .brands’ hopes to provide relevant online content globally.

For this reason, related to the BRG’s proposal for a .brand contract Specification, we have proposed to ICANN that Registry Operators who meet the ICANN-agreed .brand definition should be released from the current prohibition on the use of country names and 2-character strings.

**.brand TLDs are built on trust**

Brand TLDs are fundamentally unique. The TLD corresponds to a lawfully-obtained trademark which reflects the brand owners’ reputation, and which carries legal obligations to police against abuse: the same duty is simply not present in generic TLDs.

Therefore, in addition to appreciating the concerns of governments, .brand TLDs share an interest in ensuring that any use of a country name is only used for lawful purposes.

**A fast-track low bureaucracy approval process for country names**

Respectful of the discretion of governments to object to use of their country name in a new gTLD, our proposal would provide GAC members the ability to approve or reject a .brand's proposed use of country names and 2-character strings, in a reasonable time frame. In essence, the proposal is intended to provide a degree of comfort to the GAC, that if the request is from a .brand, approval may be easier to give. Given that up to one-third of new TLDs are of the .brand type, we are also mindful that a simple process is required in order not to overload the GAC with bureaucracy.

We attach for the GAC's consideration both the proposed language defining a .brand registry, and the proposed process for releasing country names and 2-character strings. Please note that this is the subject of discussion with ICANN.

We would be grateful for your feedback, and would like to propose a short meeting with the GAC at the upcoming ICANN Meeting in Buenos Aires to discuss this further, should your schedule permit.

In the meantime we remain available to answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Sheppard  
Director General  
Brand Registry Group  
[www.brandregistrygroup.org](http://www.brandregistrygroup.org)

cc:           Cyrus Namazi, ICANN  
              Dan Halloran, ICANN  
              Jamie Hedlund, ICANN  
              Brian Beckham, Valideus and BRG draftsman for this topic.

Attachments: Brand definition, Country name process