Policy Overview of the Creation of “.ARAB”

Regional Workshop on Arabic Domain Names and Internet Governance

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A new gTLD for the Arab region

- A gTLD strengthens the image and online presence on the Internet
  - Reinforcing the online identity of the communities in the Arab region: “.arab”
- The word “arab” is a highly recognizable concept, so it should be specifically used for the Arab identity
- With growing interest for DNS in Arabic, the region has focused on its own TLD
- Several gTLD categories and various policy accommodations have been proposed, including “Geographic Name gTLD”
- At this stage, opting for a geographic (new) gTLD would further strengthen the geographical, cultural and linguistic identity of the region

ITU and League of Arab States

“I would like to refer to the Union fine initiative to support the League of Arab States to implement the Public Arab Top Level Domain Names, which included the ITU readiness to take all the necessary operating steps and procedures relating to registering the Domains (.arab) and (.عربية) on behalf of the League of Arab States, and setting the application policies that meet the region needs, with the possibility of providing financial support to the project.”

Secretary General, The League of Arab States (8 November 2009)

- An extraordinary Meeting for the Executive Office of the Arab ICT Ministers’ Council (Cairo, 1 October 2009)
  - To extend gratitude to ITU for its initiative on the matter of the financing and preparation of the application to ICANN to register, administer and operate generic Arabic top-level domains for and on behalf of the LAS.
  - To charge ITU with preparing the application to ICANN to register .arab and .عربية generic Arabic top-level domains for and on behalf of the LAS and providing the funding required for this purpose. This shall be carried out under the full supervision of the steering committee and within the deadline to be set by ICANN.
New gTLD program – Current Status

The Draft Application Guidebook v.3 (October 2009), To be launched in 2010?
Discussions undertaken by stakeholders on proposed policies for new gTLDs

- Preparation: Scalability of gTLD expansion and stability of the Internet, Additional comprehensive economic analysis, Vertical registry/registrar separation, Necessity to ensure respect for national and public interest, Risk of end user confusion

- Implementation: Necessity of more category-based approach to the introduction of new gTLDs, Objection procedures for governments or public bodies, Application fee and surpluses, Intellectual property safeguards, Competition and Trade marks, etc.

- IDN gTLDs: Separate fee for IDN gTLDs, Coordination of two zones of an IDN gTLD and ASCII (English) TLD, Right protection mechanism, IDN variants, Three (3) - character requirement and so on

New gTLD program – Geographic gTLDs

- The specific need for non-commercial categories of gTLDs
- The right of relevant governments or public authorities
- The respect of national public interests and sovereign rights regarding strings with geographical meaning names
- The need to assist developing countries
- End-user confusion between geographic names (country/territory names) and Country Code Top Level domain
- ‘Registry Agreement’ for geographic gTLD applicants
ITU will guide LAS through the application process

- Undertaking all necessary steps and related operational procedures to facilitate the registration of “.arab” and “.عربية” generic Arabic top-level domains for and on behalf of the LAS.
- This would include the elaboration of the application policy ensuring its compliance with the needs of the Arab Region.

New gTLD – Application Process

Source: ICANN's New gTLD Applicant Guidebook Version 3 (Published on 2 October 2009)
I. Pre – Launch Period

- Current challenges for new gTLDs
  - Being considered in the policy review of new gTLDs
  - Especially regarding the creation of gTLDs for geographic regions

- Proposed policies on the new gTLDs program
  - Would need to be modified to reflect the regional aspect
  - Would need to be more categorized, especially for the public interest

- ITU can assist the Arab region through the application procedures
  - In negotiation with ICANN on policy formulation and contractual agreements
  - Ensuring that the Arab regional needs and public interest are taken into consideration

II. Launch & Post- Launch Period

- Applicants be able to launch their application for new gTLDs

- Launch Period: ICANN’s Application system
  - A series of questions to provide general information: a set of 50 questions
  - Evaluation fees: 185,000 USD

- Post Launch Period
  - Started from the initial evaluation on: String Reviews and Application Reviews
  - Technical, Operational and Financial capabilities to operate registry

- May become burden for smaller registries in developing countries

- ITU can provide concrete supports to the creation of .arab TLD
  - Technical, operational and a range of financial aspects as well as its IDNs
  - Policy aspects related to the introduction and sustainability of the gTLD
Application Process

Initial Evaluation: String Review

- Policy Guidance and Administrative support throughout the process
- Adherence to technical requirements
- Documentation Requirements for Geographical names
- Guidance and Support through any Dispute Resolution Process

IDNs

- New gTLD application for IDNs
- ITU will collaborate with and leverage the excellent work of the Arab Working Group on IDNs, especially on IDN tables.
ITU can provide full technical support, including DNSSEC, IPv6, to facilitate the establishment of the operational structure for the management of "arab"

### III. Before and Post-Delegation

- **Transition to Delegation: 'Registry Agreement'**
  - ICANN DAG v.3 defines the obligations of gTLD registry operators
    - Such as to comply with consensus policies or to maintain partnerships with ICANN-accredited registrars
    - To comply with and implement decisions made according to the specific rights protection mechanisms developed and included in the registry agreement
  - **An operating entity for .arab TLD**
    - Should be appear to be the competent “right authority” for the purpose of .arab TLD
    - Should promote the benefit of Internet users or registrants who are served by the gTLD

- **Post implementation capacity building activities**
  - ITU can contribute all activities which encompass the know-how and technology transfer for the operating entity to take over in complete greater autonomy
Conclusion

- ITU supports the establishment of a gTLD for the Arab Region
- ITU dedicates resources to ‘.ARAB’ TLD
- ITU closely collaborates with LAS for this important initiative

Thank you