

Feedback on Qualified Launch Programme for new gTLD Registries

28th February 2014

The undersigned Geographic Name Applicants welcome the proposal for a Qualified Launch Programme (QLP). Many Geographic applicants intend to run a launch programme and a number have submitted requests to ICANN for permission to do so. The published QLP addendum addresses many of the needs of applicants. Although they place some burden on applicants, overall we believe that the rights protection mechanisms described are acceptable.

In order that the QLP meets the plans of the widest group of Geographic Name applications, we request that ICANN make the following minor amendments to the proposal:

1. In section 1 the term 'allocate or register' is used. Subsequently the term 'register' or 'time of registration' is used. From a practical perspective it should be recognised there could be a time difference between a list of QLP names being finalised and their actual registration. Applicants will need to communicate to third parties that they will be part of the QLP. Therefore we request that that term 'allocate or register' be used throughout (in clauses 2, 3 and 4) to allow applicants to check names against the Sunrise list and 'allocate' them to third parties. And then to subsequently register them without a requirement to recheck against a new Sunrise list.
2. There are 'Geographically-oriented' applicants for a clearly defined geographic area who have the appropriate approval from governmental authorities who would not be eligible under clause 2.2 (i.e. .swiss; .ruhr). We request that ICANN amend this clause. If it is deemed difficult to clearly define these 'Geographically-oriented' applicants then we would suggest that Geographic applications in terms of the guidebook are automatically able to take advantage of this clause, whereas other 'Geographically-oriented' applicants might check with ICANN individually.
3. We request some minor amendments to clause 2.2 to address the following:
 - a. in some instances the appropriate registrant may not be a governmental authority. Monuments, parks, buildings, airports, famous squares or streets can often be operated by other entities under the control, oversight or with endorsement from the relevant public authority. We request that the clause be amended with wording along the lines of '...municipal governmental authority or other appropriate entity'.
 - b. in some instances appropriate QLP names might not match identically the name or acronym of the Public Authority. For example the term 'cityhall.london' or 'city.paris' should be able to be used. We request the clause include a phrase such as 'identical to the name, acronym or other term in common use to describe...'
 - c. we request that the clause be amended to include 'public services'. This will enable applicants to include key terms which governmental authorities wish to use to demonstrate their support at launch
 - d. we request that the clause be amended to include 'subdivisions of that geographic area'. This would allow regions, counties, cities, districts, neighbourhoods, boroughs, streets to be used.
4. We request that it be recognised explicitly that all names listed in the clause 2.2. are allowed to be translated into the TLD-relevant language(s)/scripts. There will often be the need to translate/transliterate/transcribe the official name so it is meaningful for the intended users in the specific TLD, and often more than one linguistic version will be necessary. As an example, Quebec authorities should be able to register

primeminster.quebec in addition to premierministre.quebec, while the Moscow City Government should be able to register government.moscow in addition to the domain name that matches its official name in Russian.

We believe that these minor amendments will improve the proposed QLP without weakening the protection of intellectual property rights. The QLP is for only 100 names and by agreeing these changes this programme can be used by the widest group of Geographic Name Applicants without the need for individual applications and the inevitable further delays this may introduce.

As launches have now started for some applicants and are fast approaching for others, we also request that ICANN seek to incorporate these comments and approve the QLP as soon as possible following the close of public consultation bringing a quick resolution to this longstanding issue.

Signed

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