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As founder and CEO of dotKoeln, I strongly support the idea of an EOI process as a significant step towards the long overdue introduction of new gTLD's. For us and all the other seriously interested parties time has come to act and an EOI seems to be an adequate way to sort out some of the remaining questions.

My comments to the EOI are:

Ad 1.:

Only applicants should be allowed to the EOI that seriously intend or have clients that seriously intend to file a new gTLD application under the EOI proposal.

Ad 2.:

Yes! That will be a significant incentive for parties to express their serious interest. Only this will help ICANN to get valid data on the number and quality of new gTLD proposals. Apart from that it is also fair to limit the first round to those who have expressed their interest publicly.

Ad 3.:

A significant deposit by the potential applicant will underline that the intention to file an application is serious. The US\$ 55,000 proposal is substantial enough and consistent with the refund scheme proposed in section 1.5.1 of the DAG3.

Ad 4.:

The fee must be offset with the US\$ 185,000 application fee, so that only US\$ 130,000 have to be paid when the application is filed later on. If an applicant does not file an application during the application period, the fee should not be refunded at all.

If ICANN does not open the application window within 12 months of EOI filing the fee has to be fully refunded immediately to the potential applicants who would be seriously hurt by this delay anyway.

Ad 5.1:

Applicants organization / Applicants contact data / String(s) to apply for (including IDN?) / Expected number of domains per string(s) applied for / Special registry services planned for the string(s) applied for

Ad 5.2.:

Yes! In any case the combination of applicant's organization and string(s) is required to make settlements between applicants possible.

Ad 5.3:

Yes, in any case! Only those who seriously intend to file an application for and thereafter operate a new gTLD will be prepared to publish their interest.

Ad 6.:

That may depend on the individual model, but in general I say: Yes!

Ad 7.:

The information derived from the EOI process should enable ICANN to come up with firmer commitments and limit the changes to the truly serious points. Whatever the changes may be, for some applicants they may lead to a complete stop of their application. We would therefore wish that at the time the EOI starts a version of the DAG should be available that contains agreed-upon sections that are not going to be changed at all after the EOI.

Ad 8.:

Frankly, I do not see any risk in the EOI.

The EOI will help to take the wind out of opponents sails, especially when it becomes clear that brand owners that strongly opposed the new gTLD process are among the applicants. And the EOI will provide valuable information for the ICANN board and help us all to see light at the end of a long tunnel.

Thomas Lenz  
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