**Mission and Scope**

The PDP Working Group is tasked to provide the GNSO Council with a policy recommendation regarding the use of ‘thick’ Whois by all gTLD Registries, both existing and future. As part of its deliberations on this issue, the PDP WG should, at a minimum, consider the following elements as detailed in the Final Issue Report:

* Response consistency: a ‘thick’ Registry can dictate the labeling and display of Whois information to be sure the information is easy to parse, and all Registrars/clients would have to display it accordingly. This could be considered a benefit but also a potential cost. This might also be a benefit in the context of internationalized registration data as even with the use of different scripts, uniform data collection and display standards could be applied.
* Stability: in the event of a Registrar business or technical failure, it could be beneficial to ICANN and registrants to have the full set of domain registration contact data stored by four organizations (the Registry, the Registry's escrow agent, the Registrar, and the Registrar's escrow agent), which would be the case in a ‘thick’ registry.
* Accessibility: is the provision of Whois information at the registry level under the Thick Whois model more cost-effective than a Thin model in protecting users of Whois data and intellectual property owners?
* Impact on privacy and data protection:: how would ‘thick’ Whois affect privacy and data protection, also taking into account the involvement of different jurisdictions with different laws and legislation with regard to data privacy as well as possible cross border transfers of registrant data?
* Cost implications: what are the cost implications of a transition to ‘thick’ Whois for Registries, Registrars, registrants and users as a transition to ‘thick Whois for all gTLDs would affect over 110 million domain name registrations? Conversely, what are the cost implications to Registries, Registrars, registrants and users if no transition is mandated?
* Database synchronization between the Registry and Registrars: what would be the impact on the registry and registrar WHOIS and EPP systems for those Registries currently operating a thin registry, both in the migration phase to ‘thick’ WHOIS as well as ongoing operations?
* Rights in data: implications of a thin Registry possibly becoming authoritative for registrant Whois data following the transition from a thin-registry model to a thick-registry model. The Working Group should consider the term “authoritative” in both the technical (the repository of the authoritative data) and policy (who has authority over the data) meanings of the word when considering this issue.
* Competition in registry services: what would be the impact on competition in registry services should all Registries be required to provide Whois service using the thick Whois model – would there be more, less or no difference with regard to competition in registry services?
* Existing Whois applications: If existing Whois applications are updated / changed, how would that impact users of those applications if ‘thick’ Whois is required?”
* Data escrow: ‘thick’ Whois might obviate the need for the registrar escrow program and attendant expenses to ICANN and registrars.
* Registrar Port 43 Whois requirements: ‘thick’ Whois could make the requirement for Registrars to maintain Port 43 Whois access redundant.

Should the PDP WG reach consensus on a recommendation that ‘thick’ Whois should be required for all gTLDs, the PDP WG is also expected to consider:

* Cost implications for gTLD registries, registrars and registrants of a transition to ‘thick’ Whois
* How to conduct such a transition (timeline, requirements, etc.)
* Are existing contact terms between registrars and registrants sufficient to permit the transfer of registrant  data to the registry  in connection with  a  transition from a ‘thin’ to ‘thick’ Whois? If not, what is the potential impact? Are special provisions and/or exemptions needed for gTLD registries which operate a ‘thick’ Whois but provide tiered access[[1]](#footnote-1), for example.

In addition, the PDP WG should take into account other ICANN initiatives that may help inform the deliberations limited to this specific topic such as;

* Registry/registrar separation and related developments with regards to access to customer data;
* Output from any/all of the four Whois Studies chartered by the GNSO Council, if completed in time for consideration by the WG;
* The 2004 transition of .ORG from thin to thick;
* Results of the RAA negotiations, and
* Recommendations of the Whois Review Team.

The PDP WG is also expected to consider any information and advice provided by other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees on this topic. The WG is strongly encouraged to reach out to these groups for collaboration at an early stage of its deliberations, to ensure that their concerns and positions are considered in a timely manner.

1. For some registries, ‘Thick’ Whois information is available at the registry, but public access to the data is organized in tiers. For example, for .name, the full set of data is available to requesters if the requester enters into an agreement with the registry under the Extensive Whois Data tier. See <http://www.icann.org/en/tlds/agreements/name/appendix-05-15aug07.htm> for further details [↑](#footnote-ref-1)