

Korean Government Position on IDN TLDs (IDN at the top level)

1. The Korean government supports the ICANN's initiatives and coordinated efforts with relevant entities for the introduction of IDN TLDs.

The internet users of non-English speaking countries have been demanding multilingual internet access through Internet address in their own native languages. The Korean government is confident that IDN TLDs will make Internet truly global in that it will ensure equal access of all languages to cyberspace.

However, there is a concern that any mistake on the introduction of IDN TLDs could break the Internet's interoperability. At the same time, a delay in the introduction of IDN TLDs could give rise to questionable name resolution schemes outside of the DNS root and also threaten the interoperability of the Internet. Overall, a mistake could thus result in a setback with respect to the goal of expanding the use and ease of access of the Internet.

Therefore, ICANN must be diligent in creating IDN TLDs in order to preserve and enhance the operational stability, reliability, security, and global interoperability of the Internet, no matter which TLDs are created.

2. IDN TLDs should not be considered as same as a generic ASCII TLDs.

Unlike a ccTLD (Country Code Top Level Domains) or an ASCII gTLD (Generic Top Level Domains), an IDN TLD relates to a specific community. In general, this will be a non-English-speaking community. Each IDN TLD contributes to cultural and linguistic diversity on the Internet for various language communities while stimulating respect for cultural identity and traditions. Therefore, the Korean government believes that the specificities of IDN TLDs must be recognized and taken into account for policymaking.

Currently, both the ccNSO and the GNSO have an IDN working group each. However, it is not possible to separate ccTLD issues from gTLD issues in the context of IDN TLDs. The Korean government therefore urges ICANN to institute a joint IDN TLD policy development process between the ccNSO and the GNSO.

3. New IDN TLDs should not become primarily a magnet for defensive registrations

The introduction of new IDN TLDs should serve the interest of the respective language communities, not the particular interests of commercial entities. Unfortunately, a number of profit-oriented initiatives have already introduced rogue IDN TLDs outside of the DNS root.

The Korean government proposes an approach in which the most pressing needs are addressed first, at least whenever this can be done easily. New IDN TLDs should be based on demand and support from the respective language communities. Moreover, some IDN TLDs could be based on existing registrations with combined resolution into an ASCII and an IDN TLD, respectively. This also helps avoid an excessive burden for trademark holders to register their names in many new TLDs.

4. ICANN should give a priority to respective local language communities and their legitimate authorities in the registry operator selection process.

The principle that applicant be an appropriate representative organization of potential registrants is particularly important for IDN TLDs. The applicant for an IDN TLD must be accountable to the respective language community. In addition, there must be no objection from relevant language communities and local governments.

The Korean government emphasizes that the operator of an IDN TLD should abide by policies which respect cultures and traditions of the language communities related to the TLD.

5. If a national government has historically been in charge of its scripts and language, then that role must be respected in the context of new IDN TLDs.

For most if not all people, language is not just the medium of culture, heritage, history, customs, and diversity but also is a part of them. Language has always played an important role in the formation and expression of identity. In some countries or communities, the government has promoted and managed the standardization of the national language and writing system, or even created the writing system itself. The latter, incidentally, is the case of Korea: the Hangul script was invented by King Sejong in the 15th century. As a result, any official resource (such as a TLD) in Korean script is naturally associated with the assumption that this resource reflects the policy of the Korean government.

ICANN and IDN registries must consult with the relevant governments to develop the IDN policies, based on the combination of languages, scripts and countries where these are used.

For example, policy development would have to take different approaches depending on whether the script belongs to a combination of

- ♦ “one language, one script, and one country”,
- ♦ “one language, multiple scripts, and multi countries”,
- ♦ “multiple languages, multiple scripts, and one country”, etc.

For cultural and historical reasons, some governments would have strong sovereign authority and higher responsibility to exercise over a specific language in the context of IDN TLD. If so, the respective government should be able to exercise oversight over the respective IDN TLD in order to preserve and protect the nation’s culture and heritage.

6. ICANN should try to harmonize the policies for the introduction of IDN TLDs with all relevant language stakeholders.

The challenge for IDN TLD is complex and we cannot have all the answers now. It requires collective actions across national borders. ICANN should facilitate consultation, cooperation and coordination between relevant stakeholders for the development of appropriate and harmonized policies for IDN TLDs.

Lastly, the Korean government would like ask ICANN to continue and extend its efforts to increase awareness of non-English speaking communities all over the world about the importance of IDN TLDs and ICANN’s related activities.