

IANA Report on the Delegation of the TRAVEL Top-Level Domain

Subject: Delegation of the TRAVEL Top-Level Domain

Date: April 2005

The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (the IANA), as part of the administrative functions associated with management of the domain-name system root, is responsible for receiving requests for delegation and redelegation of top-level domains, investigating the circumstances pertinent to those requests, and reporting on the requests. This report gives the findings and conclusions of the IANA on the delegation of the TRAVEL Top Level Domain (TLD).

Factual and Procedural Background

There are several types of TLDs within the DNS:

- TLDs with two letters (such as DE, MX, and JP) have been established for over 240 countries and external territories and are referred to as “country-code” TLDs or “ccTLDs.” They are delegated to designated managers, who operate the domains according to local policies that are adapted to best meet the economic, cultural, linguistic, and legal circumstances of the country or territory involved. For more details, see the [ccTLD web page on the IANA web site \(http://www.iana.org/cctld/cctld.htm\)](http://www.iana.org/cctld/cctld.htm).
- There is [one special TLD, ARPA \(http://www.iana.org/arpa-dom/\)](http://www.iana.org/arpa-dom/), which is used for technical infrastructure purposes. ICANN administers the ARPA TLD in cooperation with the Internet technical community under the guidance of the Internet Architecture Board.
- All other TLDs with three or more characters are referred to as “generic” TLDs, or “gTLDs.” They can be subdivided into two types, “sponsored” TLDs (sTLDs) and “unsponsored” TLDs, as described in more detail below.

For an extensive history of the process of adding competition to the gTLD registry market, and the importance thereof, please see the [“IANA Report on Establishment of the .biz and .info Top-Level Domains” \(http://www.iana.org/reports/biz-info-report-25jun01.htm\)](http://www.iana.org/reports/biz-info-report-25jun01.htm)

[In November 2000 seven new TLDs \(http://www.icann.org/tlds/app-index.htm\)](http://www.icann.org/tlds/app-index.htm) were approved. These were introduced in 2001 and 2002. Four of the new TLDs (BIZ, INFO, NAME, and PRO) are unsponsored. The other three new TLDs (AERO, COOP, and MUSEUM) are sponsored.

Generally speaking, an unsponsored TLD operates under policies established by the global Internet community directly through the ICANN process, while a sponsored TLD is a specialized TLD that has a sponsor representing the narrower community that is most affected by the TLD. The sponsor thus carries out delegated policy-formulation responsibilities over many matters concerning the TLD.

A Sponsor is an organization to which is delegated some defined ongoing policy-formulation authority regarding the manner in which a particular sponsored TLD is operated. The sponsored TLD has a Charter, which defines the purpose for which the sponsored TLD has been created and will be operated. The Sponsor is responsible for developing policies on the delegated topics so that the TLD is operated for the benefit of a defined group of stakeholders, known as the Sponsored TLD Community, that are most directly interested in the operation of the TLD. The Sponsor also is responsible for selecting the registry operator and to varying degrees for establishing the roles played by registrars and their relationship with the registry operator. The Sponsor must exercise its delegated authority according to fairness standards and in a manner that is representative of the Sponsored TLD Community.

The extent to which policy-formulation responsibilities are appropriately delegated to a Sponsor depends upon the characteristics of the organization that may make such delegation appropriate. These characteristics may include the mechanisms the organization uses to formulate policies, its mission, its guarantees of independence from the registry operator and registrars, who will be permitted to participate in the Sponsor's policy-development efforts and in what way, and the Sponsor's degree and type of accountability to the Sponsored TLD Community.

Since the implementation of the first round of new gTLDs in 2000-2002, the ICANN community has called upon the ICANN Board to commence long-term strategic plans to launch a predictable process for the creation of new gTLDs.

On 26 June 2003, at the ICANN Board meeting in Montreal, the Board directed ICANN staff to invite public comment on a draft request for proposals for sTLDs posted on 24 June 2003, and in particular on the question whether or not the RFP should be limited to applicants who proposed sponsored TLDs in November 2000. The public comments are available at ICANN's website at: <http://forum.icann.org/mtg-cmts/stld-rfp-comments/general/index.html>.

In parallel with the public comments, the ICANN Board discussed at length the topic of how, and within what timeframe, ICANN should proceed with the creation of new gTLDs, including sTLDs. On 29 October 2003, the GNSO called upon the Board to go forward with the process for an interim round of sTLDs.

Following various community discussions including input by experts and affected parties through the GNSO, and from users directly and through the ALAC, on 31 October, 2003, the ICANN Board directed the ICANN President to finalize and post no later than 15 December 2003 an open Request for Proposals for a limited number of new sTLDs, such final RFP to be based on the points of agreement indicated above and the comments received concerning the draft RFP.

In response to this direction, on 15 December 2003, ICANN announced and released the request for proposals (RFP) for sponsored top level domain names. The RFP was divided into six parts. The first part provided applicants with explanatory notes on the process as well as an indication of the type of information requested by ICANN. The remaining parts constituted the application itself.

At the close of the application period on 16 March 2004, ICANN had received 10 applications for new sponsored TLDs. The public parts of these applications are available at ICANN website at: <http://www.icann.org/tlds/stld-apps-19mar04/stld-public-comments.htm>). Applications were received were for the following sTLD strings: ASIA, CAT, JOBS, MAIL, MOBI, POST, TEL, TEL, TRAVEL, and XXX.

An independent panel of experts was established and the review of the applications was initiated in May 2004. The independent review procedures made sure that all communications were made through the Project Manager and as such, the review was blind between the panels and ICANN staff and blind between the panels and the applicants

Each review team met six to eight times by teleconference. Each panel posed a series of questions to each applicant to seek clarification. Each panel provided separate reports, comparing information in the applications against the criteria described in the RFP.

In the case where the applicant passed all three sets of criteria and there were no other contingencies associated with the application – it proceeded onto technical and commercial negotiations in order to establish a new sTLD registry.

In cases where the evaluators indicated that all sets of criteria were not met, ICANN requested clarifying documentation relating to any potential deficiencies or contingencies.

On 13 December 2004, ICANN's Board of Directors authorized the entry of commercial and technical negotiations with the TRAVEL applicant <http://www.icann.org/minutes/resolutions-13dec04.htm>).

On 24 March 2005, ICANN announced the completion of those negotiations and posted the proposed TRAVEL Sponsored TLD Registry Agreement (<http://www.icann.org/announcements/announcement-24mar05.htm>).

The agreement was then submitted to the ICANN Board for approval. The agreement was discussed at the ICANN Public Forum and Board meeting in Mar del Plata, Argentina, 4-8 April 2005.

On 8 April 2005, the ICANN Board of Directors authorized the President to complete the delegation process. The TRAVEL agreement, like the AERO, MUSEUM and COOP agreements, establishes technical operational requirements, but delegates to the registry operator of TRAVEL, Tralliance Corporation, and authority to create policies governing such topics as eligibility for registration within the TRAVEL TLD. It also requires the registry to conduct its policy-development activities in a manner that allows members of the TRAVEL community to discuss and participate in the development of these policies. Thus, the sponsored TLD model ensures stable technical operation, by requiring adherence to the standard specifications on such topics as name service, data escrow, and use of valid host names, while providing a substantial degree of autonomy for development of community-specific policies.

On 17 June 2005 a delegation template was submitted to IANA which lists Tralliance Corporation as the requested Sponsoring Organization, and Mr. Ronald Andruff as the designated Administrative Contact. The technical contact has been designated as a role account.

Evaluation

This report is being provided under the contract for performance of the IANA function (<http://www.icann.org/general/iana-contract-17mar03.htm>) between the United States Government and ICANN. Under that contract, ICANN performs the IANA function, which includes receiving delegation and delegation requests concerning TLDs (<http://www.icann.org/general/iana-contract-17mar03.htm#C.2.1.1.2>), investigating the circumstances pertinent to those requests, making its recommendations, and reporting actions undertaken in connection with processing such requests.

In acting on delegation requests, the IANA currently follows the practices summarized in "Internet Domain Name System Structure and Delegation." ([ICP-1](http://www.icann.org/icp/icp-1.htm), <http://www.icann.org/icp/icp-1.htm>) ICP-1 represents an update of the portions of [RFC 1591](http://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc1591.txt) (<http://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc1591.txt>, which was issued in March 1994) dealing with TLDs, and reflects subsequent documents and evolution of the policies followed by the IANA through May 1999.

As described in detail above, the application for TRAVEL was approved by ICANN through an open request for proposals involving numerous opportunities

for public review and comment. ICANN has now completed contractual arrangements for the introduction of a new sponsored TLD, with Tralliance for TRAVEL.

The first goal of the community-based management of the DNS is to preserve its stable and reliable operation. One key prerequisite for ensuring stability is the formation of agreements creating a framework of accountability among those entities (ICANN, TLD sponsors, and registry operators) responsible for that operation. Like the previous TLD Sponsorship Agreements for AERO, COOP and MUSEUM, the Sponsored TLD Registry Agreement for TRAVEL has been designed to establish the necessary accountability framework, ensuring that TRAVEL is introduced in a sound manner that will maintain stable and reliable technical operation of the DNS. In particular, the contract recites functional and performance specifications, data escrow requirements, and a detailed start-up plan that is designed to ensure that stable operation of the DNS is maintained, both during the startup phase and in the long term.

Conclusion

The proposed delegation will promote service to the Internet community and will help assure the continued Internet interoperability through the global technical coordination that ICANN was created to provide. The IANA concludes that the TRAVEL TLD should be established, and delegated to Tralliance.