ICANN74 | Policy Forum – GNSO: IDNs EPDP Working Session (1 of 2)
Monday, June 13, 2022 – 16:30 to 17:30 AMS

DEVAN REED:

Hello and welcome to the IDN-EPDP Working Group Session, one of two. Please note this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior. During this session, questions or comments submitted in chat will be read aloud if put in the proper form as noted in the chat.

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For the benefit of other participants, please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. You may access all available features for this session in the Zoom toolbar. With that, I will hand the floor back over to Donna Austin. Please begin.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thank you, Devan, and welcome, everybody to our IDN-EPDP team call. This will be the first one that we will do this week. Apologies for not being able to be there in person this week. I'm

sure it's all a weird and novel experience for everybody. But I'm sure it's great to see people in person. Today, we just have an hour and primarily what we are going to do for this session is updates to some extent.

So we won't be having a substantial discussion with the work track team. And I think, given we only have an hour, we are, to the extent that folks have questions, we will give priority to our EPDP team members. But if there's other folks that have questions, perhaps if we don't have time to get to them today, maybe there's some way that we can take them on notice and get back to folks. So we will do our best to get through questions as they come up. But we are mindful of the time. And we've got a fair amount on the agenda.

So with that, Justine, is there anything that you wanted to say to open? Okay. All right. Okay. So with that, we will get into it and try to keep this on time. So what we thought might be helpful, and this is something we haven't done for the team either for some period of time, is just give a little bit of an overview of where we are and how we're tracking or perhaps not tracking in some respects.

So this is a slide that folks might be familiar with. It's something that's been developed through the GNSO to try to track the progress of working groups as they go through the process. In

some respects, the 43% complete might be a little bit misleading or a little bit confusing as we work through the next three slides because of the status.

The important thing for us here is the initial report. So we are aiming to publish the initial report mid-December this year. And we think we're optimistically cautious that we are on track to do that. But we do appreciate we've got a fair amount of work to do to get there. But the reason we're optimistically cautious is that we have had first discussions on a number of the charter questions. And there's a lot of charter questions. But we've had at least first discussions on a lot of them. We just haven't written up recommendations and had those approved in principle by our team. So that's kind of where we're behind a little bit in terms of our work.

The way that we've been approaching this work is that we work through the questions with our team. And we try to write up preliminary recommendations along the way and get approval in principle along the way from the work track team members so that once we've put together the initial report, at least we have pretty solid agreement on the recommendations that will be contained in the initial report. So that's something that we're hoping will give us some kind of confidence that we will get to publish the initial report when we've said we will do that.

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So our next slide, please. So what these slides are intended to portray is give you some idea of the numbers that you see here A1, A3, A5. We've grouped the questions into seven groups, I think. So it's A, B, C, D, E, F, G. And the numbers, obviously, reflect the charter questions. So we've made some good progress on group one. There's a couple of the questions that we don't think we require recommendations for. And there's A8, which is a bit of a catch-all question, and we will come back to that at some point. And Ariel has posted the charter into the chat for folks that are interested in just having a look at where those numbers are.

So a few of the sample draft recommendations that we have, so the Root Zone LGR will be the sole source to calculate the variant labels and disposition values for existing delegated gTLDs. So one of the things, I guess, at a meta level, what this PDP is doing is considering the treatment of variant IDN gTLD labels at the top level, also at the second level, and we're also doing it for potentially new applicants, but also for those that applied in 2012 where variants weren't allowed. Well, allowed is a strong word, but I guess that's what it was.

You couldn't have variants delegated as part of 2012 because there are a number of uncertainties about the impact of variants on the root zone. So what we're trying to do here is to work through those now, given that considerable work has been done in the last 10 years. And that includes the development of the Root Zone Label Generation Rules. And I think version 5 of those

has come out recently. And now, somebody might have to correct me on this, but I think it's 27 scripts maybe that the Root Zone LGR now covers. So that was an important recommendation for us.

No ceiling value is considered necessary to keep the number of activated top-level variant labels conservative. So what this is talking about is whether in future gTLD processes or even with those that applied in 2012, whether there should be a ceiling value on the number of variant levels you can apply for with your IDN gTLD string. And after some considerable discussion and engagement with SSAC, we've agreed that no ceiling value will be applied so you can apply for as many IDN variant labels as you wish to go with your IDN gTLD.

But there's a little bit of a caveat with that in that the Root Zone LGR notes that, for a number of the scripts, variant labels are not to be allocated or delegated. So that makes it a little bit easier. So there's only a limited number of scripts where you can apply for and have the variant label delegated.

Best practice guidelines should be developed for managing gTLDs and its variant labels by registries and registrars. So what we are cognizant of is that because there hasn't been any variant labels delegated in the past because it wasn't allowed is that it's uncertain how they would operate in practice. So we think the development of best practice guidelines is probably a good thing

to do with the intention that that would be iterated over time. So it would be a living document.

Generation panels and the integration panel must make efforts to retain full backward compatibility. And what this is talking about is where the Root Zone LGR does a revision of the variant labels for respective scripts and there are changes that could potentially impact the delegated IDN gTLD string and its variants.

So what we're saying here is that the generation panel and the integration panels need to try to ensure that there's full backward compatibility so that there are no ramifications for already-delegated IDN strings and their variants. And there is also a recommendation that goes with that that says that all existing strings should be grandfathered in the event that backward compatibility isn't possible.

Single-character gTLDs may only be allowed for limited script and language where a character is an ideograph. I'm not really good on the terminology here. But it's to say that I think it's recognition that an ideograph can represent more than a single character. So in some circumstances, single character IDN gTLDs could be allowed.

So some of the outstanding items that we have is scope additional work on single-character TLDs. So what we found during some of this work is that we don't have the necessary expertise we need within the group. So we're seeking external

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help. And on the ideograph one, we've gone to the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean generation panels that are part of the Root Zone LGR exercise to see if they can help us out and confirm the updated draft outcome language is stable for A7. So that's a review issue with the language that's been drafted. Did I miss anything, Ariel, on that?

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. I think you covered very well. And I just wanted to add one point about the outstanding work for Chinese, Japanese, Korean generation panels. So the outstanding work is for basically an ask for them to develop a list of allowable characters in the Han script that can be potential candidates for single-character TLDs. We don't know yet whether this work is doable. But based on their feedback on the previous outreach, it seems they already have some initial idea what would not be allowed.

So, for example, some characters, they cannot have a standalone formation. They need to be attached to some other characters in order to provide new names. Where something that it's just confusable with Katakana, for example, in Japanese. So these are some initial ideas they shared. And then, we need to provide additional detailed work ask for these panels to consider and see whether they could take it on and develop that allowable character list. So that's the only thing I wanted to kind of chime in. Thanks, Donna.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. And just to note that Sarmad has also put the Root Zone Label Generation Rules—a link to that in chat as well for those who are interested. So next slide, please. So Group 2 says, "Same entity at the top level." So what we mean by same entity is it's more or less a marrying to ensure that the IDN gTLD that's been applied for and its variant labels are married in the sense that it's the same entity that applies and goes through the process for all. And we've also agreed the same with a backend registry service provider. So that's what we mean by same entity.

So the current status on Group 2 we've identified as 65%. And that's kind of on a numerical basis. But sometimes it's hard to estimate how long a time it's going to take to finish things. But we have draft outcome language developed for B1 and B2, which always makes me smile because if anyone's Australian and know about Bananas in Pajamas, there are B1 and B2. So D1Aa and D1b Part 2, and B5, so we have some language drafted, but we need to get that to the group for review. And similar to the other one, no recommendations are needed for B3 and D1. And deliberations are on hold for D1b Part 1, B4 and B4a.

So one of the things we found as we're working through the charter questions, and we did rearrange the sequencing a little bit in recognition that some questions flowed better with others, is that we realize that when we're having some discussions, we may come to a certain point where we realize that's going to impact

on something else that we need to discuss. So we'll ensure that we have that other discussion and then try to round things out.

So a few draft recommendations samples here is that a registry operator of an existing gTLD must use the same backend registry service provider for operating all delegated variant labels for that gTLD. So that's, again, that kind of same entity marrying principle, that they all stay together. That each gTLD and its variant labels be subject to one registry agreement with the same registry operator. So currently, every TLD has its own registry agreement. But we're acknowledging here that an IDN gTLD label and its variants essentially are set. So we think it's appropriate that it be the one registry agreement. And the registry agreement can only be with the one registry operator.

One application covers the primary new gTLD and allocatable variant labels that the applicant wishes to activate. So, again, that's the principle of they operate as a set. So one application will contain the IDN gTLD and its variant labels. And they will be evaluated together with an asterisk there that we're working through the evaluation process, some of those questions now. And it does get a little bit tricky.

The fee structure associated with applications that include variants must adhere to the principle of cost recovery. So in the conversations we had, what we're acknowledging is that because you ... We're saying one application for the primary gTLD and the

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variant label, that doesn't necessarily hold that it will be the same application fee because it's only one application being submitted. There may be other parts to the evaluation process that is required because it is a set. So basically what we're saying is that the cost recovery, depending on the requirements for evaluating that one application, plus its additional allocatable variant labels.

So outstanding items. Sorry, it's very late here or early, depending on the time of day. Review draft outcome language for B1, B2, D1a, D1b. So that's language that the staff has developed. But at the leadership level, we need to review it before we put it out to the group for agreement. Review responses from Arabic and Chinese TLD registry operator survey. So I'll get Ariel just to provide a bit of a backstory on that. And review the updated strawman proposal for process flow.

One of the things we've come to appreciate is that we need to do a fair amount of work to establish a baseline level of understanding on processes across the group. And the development of these process flows and things that staff put together for us are really helpful. So that's some of the stuff we need to do there. Is there anything to add on that, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. I guess I can provide some back story about this registry operator survey. So there is a charter question asking,

"What would the process look like for existing registry operators to request activating their variant labels of their existing gTLDs?" So when the group deliberated on this question, what we found out is that only the Chinese and Arabic gTLDs have allocatable variant labels and no other IDN gTLDs are eligible to have variant labels.

And at the same time, the group had questions in terms of the process and timing. So should this happen during a new gTLD application round or can that happen on a rolling basis not dependent on the application round? And then what are the relevant criteria and process for evaluating such applications? Is that going to be just the same like applying for a new gTLD or some steps where process can be omitted?

So there is a lot of kind of questions about this, but before the team decides to dive in and develop some concrete recommendations, one thing we would like to find out is do these existing gTLD registry operators have interest in activating their variant labels? And what are the factors that may impact their decision to seek activating such variant labels? So we want to find out the demand first before the team starts to develop recommendations to supply those processes. So that's why we have this effort to survey these existing registry operators.

And now, the survey has been out for a bit of time now. And the deadline we asked the registry operators to get back to us is the

24th of June. And so that we did receive some responses. In fact, 11 Chinese gTLD registry operators have already responded. And I believe there's one Arabic gTLD registry operator responded.

And I think the total number of the registries that we surveyed is 30-something. I need to double-check my notes. So we did receive quite a bit of response so far. And hopefully, we will receive more responses by the deadline. And then, we will have some data to present to the team before we get back to those charter questions. So that's the back story about the survey, and over to you, Donna.

DONNA AUSTIN: And thanks, Ariel. And just on the data collection, we've found that having data available to us has been really important to the work of this group to try to understand the scope of the problem we're trying to solve or the charter question we're trying to solve. And certainly Pitinan and Sarmad did some really good data collection for us early on in the piece. It's helped us get through some of these questions.

So next slide, please. So Group 3 variants and their impact on new gTLD process. Can I just say that we haven't tried to make this complicated? But it truly is really complicated to try to unpack some of these processes and work out potential impacts that variants might have on the processes because with the variants

we're dealing with multiples of or compounding effects. So it really does create some interesting discussions for us.

So we have draft outcome language developed for E2, E5 Part 1, D2 and D3, deliberation on hold for A1, B4a, E3a, E4 pending the string similarity review small team input. So this is something we're going to get an update today on from the small team. But the string similarity review, it's a challenge. And then deliberations to be continued for E5 Part 2, E7.

So some of our draft recommendations, all allocatable variants that applicants request to activate must be subject to the objection process. So the objection process is one of the processes identified in the 2012 new gTLD process and we expect will also be in any future new gTLD processes. One of the things that has been a little bit challenging for this group is that there was at the time the charter was developed an assumption that the board would have approved the subsequent procedures PDP recommendations and that there would already be an implementation review team starting to look at implementing those recommendations.

And as most of us know, that hasn't happened because of the ODP step. And that's not a criticism. It's just a reality. So it's one of the challenges that we're dealing with in that we're trying to ensure that we understand the processes as well as we can. But we don't know for sure what they're going to look like in any

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future processes. So most of our thinking is based on what happened in 2012. Do we think it will change much and how can we develop recommendations that fit into that?

For the reserve names list, we're recommending that it be maintained as is. And variants of reserved names will be blocked from application. So that means you won't be able to apply because they'll be blocked. Emergency transition of a gTLD to an EBERO provider. So that's an emergency backend registry operator provider. And that's something that gets triggered through the registry agreement if a registry operator isn't meeting the SLAs or requirements in the contract.

So emergency transition of a gTLD to a EBERO provider must trigger an emergency transition of all allocated and delegated variants of gTLD to the same EBERO provider. So in the event that EBERO is triggered, it's not just the IDN gTLD that goes into EBERO. Everything has to go to the same EBERO provider. So ICANN has contracts, I believe, with EBERO providers. There's a few of them. So their IDN and the gTLD, the label set, would go to the same EBERO provider.

The same data escrow provider is to be contracted for the primary gTLD and its allocated and delegated variants. So, again, that's that marrying same entity principle with that and the idea that this is a set that we're considering. So everything should stay together with the same whatever third-party provider the registry

operator happens to have. So where are we on outstanding items? Review draft outcome language for E2, E5 D1, D2, D3. Discuss input from the string similarity small review group. And continue deliberations on E5. Anything else on this one, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Thank you, Donna. I think you covered it really well.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. All right. Is that all that we have for this or do we have one more slide?

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah, one more slide.

DONNA AUSTIN: So this is upcoming work. I'm not going to go through it because I'm very conscious of time. We've got two more presenters. So read the slide. If you've got any questions, find a way to get in contact with us. And we will answer them to the extent that we can. So with that, I think I will hand over to Dennis Tan.

One of the requirements that we have with this work, and it comes from a board resolution, the ccNSO also has PDP process going at the moment on IDNs. And the board has pretty much asked that we try to ensure consistency in our recommendations.

So we have liaisons to the ccPDP and we have liaisons from the ccPDP to our group. So Dennis is one of those liaisons and he's going to provide us an update on the ccPDP 4 work that's being undertaken by the ccNSO. So, Dennis, if you're ready to go, can I hand over to you?

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Donna.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis.

DENNIS TAN: This is Dennis Tan, ccPDP 4 liaison but also representing the Registries Stakeholder Group on the GNSO IDN-EPDP. So we have the slides on screen. This is a set of slides that the ccPDP 4 will use as well in their updates. So you will be familiar with those later during the week. This is the progress today. I'm not going to go into details but the work of the ccPDP 4 entails different work tracks, variant management being one of them. But there are others such as deselection of IDN ccTLDs and confusing similarly as well. The update that I'm going to give you today is about variant management.

Next slide, please. So I think we can skip that because I think pretty much ... Oh, no, sorry. I think we collapsed two slides in

one. So at the outset I should say that the way the that the ccNSO handles policy is different from the GNSO in the terms of their scope. And please correct me if I'm wrong because I am not very familiar with the ccNSO policy. But what I do know, what I have been informed, is that ccNSO, when they issue policy, it's at the top level. So they don't issue policy at the second level, which would be a subject in the GNSO EPDP. So that's a very fundamental difference that will be reflected in the outcomes of the ccPDP 4, specifically in variant management.

So the way the subgroup is looking at all the issues, top level and second level. But as far as how the outcome is structured, it's going to be a combination of policy recommendations and also guidance, or technical guidance, or what have you. So we're trying to find a way to still inform the community, inform the ccNSO, about the issues concerned that they should be looked at and find a way to give that information to the ccTLD operators.

Next slide, please. So how variants are generated pretty much were consistent with the work of the GNSO EPDP. And the Root Zone LGR, the Roots Zone Label Generation Ruleset, it's expected to be, anticipated to be the sole source, the authoritative source to validate IDN ccTLD string variant labels. The current version of it, it was mentioned before, is version number five, which was published just earlier this month.

Next slide, please. In terms of how to limit the number of variants allocated, let me just pause here and give a break or an explanation as to how this is an important topic that both efforts are looking at. Variants is a concept that it's been dealt with at the policy level. From a technical standpoint, from an operational viewpoint or angle, there is no standard solution for variants. This concept of two domain names being considered the same, there is not a DNS record or implementation solution, what have you, that makes the two domain names behave the same or identically.

So it's pretty much what the registries can do from an operations standpoint, then the registrars. And then the registrant and then the, potentially, hosting providers—how they implement what type of services for end users. That's to the extent that the end user will experience this concept of sameness. So in that regard, that's one point. And the concept of having multiple domain names that ought to be the same identical and managing this complexity gives us pause and to think how many of these variants should be delegated into the root zone.

And so this recommendation came from SSAC Report 060. We had a conversation within the GNSO and the ccNSO PDP 4. What are the concerns here? And because there is no operational standard in order to do that, from a policy standpoint, we should take a conservative approach.

Now, unlike gTLDs, on the ccTLD strings, there are additional requirements that, effectively, limit the number of IDN ccTLDs strings that could be delegated or even applied for. Those main requirements are the ones that you see at the bottom of this slide. So an IDN ccTLD string is required to be a meaningful representation of the name of the territory. That in itself limits the number of labels that can be applied for. Next slide. So in that sense, as a result, there is no arbitrary number to limit the variants that could be allocated. But the criteria will limit themselves.

Next slide, please. Now, in terms of in the GNSO EPDP, we talk about the same entity principle. The same happens in ccPDP 4, variant management. And here basically, again, with the limited scope that we have on ccPDP 4, it's all about the top level. And the same entity principle is applied here and basically says that all the rigor, processes, requirements for one ccTLD string is applied to every ccTLD string and that includes the variants.

However, there are going to be certain caveats. And those two caveats are highlighted here in example one. So one pertains to the designated language. So there is one requirement that it's only one string per designated language in a script. But because in a variant set you have multiple of these labels, they're potentially all in the same language and script, then that's one caveat, right? But that exception is only because it's a variant set, not individual unrelated labels.

	And the other caveat or exception is going to be that all these—or maybe not an exception but a rule—that all these variant sets need to be operated by the same ccTLD operator. Next slide, please. Okay. Yeah. I don't think I'm going to speak on string similarity because I'm not yet familiar with that process. Okay. Back to you, Donna. I'm happy to answer any questions if there are any.
DONNA AUSTIN:	Thanks, Dennis. So were you expecting another slide, or do you …?
DENNIS TAN:	No, no. I think there is one item perhaps that you touched on, the GNSO EDP, which is the grandfathering. I was just remembering that I wanted to voice over what the recommendation was to the conversation within the ccPDP 4 because it's similar but perhaps not the same consistency. So the ccPDP 4 looks at the default behavior for any changes in the Root Zone LGR must guarantee or … I'm sorry. The base case is that all ccTLD strings must be grandfathered.
	However, unless there is a high-threshold case of security and stability issues that a delegated ccTLD string might pose because of a change, then it may be a trigger for deselection. But again, the ccPDP 4 has not gone into this conversation, deliberations to

the substance of what does that mean in terms of this high threshold of security risk that might trigger a deselection of the string. But that would be the only place thus far that the recommendations are not consistent with the charge.

DONNA AUSTIN: Consistent. Okay. All right. Thanks for highlighting that, Dennis. And it's certainly something that we spent quite a bit of time on. So maybe we need to, at some point, have a discussion between the two groups to see if we can iron that one out. Okay. So any questions for Dennis? So I see we have a question from Ahmad in chat. "So where can I read the definition of variants and view lists of current existing variants?"

Ahmad, in the first instance, I would direct you to the Root Zone LGR. So Sarmad put a link in the chat earlier. So that will be helpful. The definition of variants is a little bit tricky. So Sarmad, would you have a go at that for us? Not have a go. Would you explain that for us in that you are our resident expert? Thanks, Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Sure, Donna. Thank you. So variants are defined as those labels, or if you're looking at the code points level, then those code points which are considered the "same" by a particular script community. So there's no consistent definition of variants which

can be applied across all of the scripts. Different scripts may actually define this differently.

And so as far as what is a variant in a particular script, we are saying that that is really defined by what the Root Zone LGR says as that's how the community has actually defined same characters. And as far as same labels or variant labels is concerned, we use a Root Zone LGR definition to create the variant labels against a given label. So in summary, these are labels which are considered "same" by a particular script community as defined by the Root Zone LGR. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thank you Sarmad. So I see that we've got a couple of questions in chat. But I'm also mindful of time. What I would like to do is go to our string similarity small team overview. And then, we'll come back to the questions. If we don't have time to answer them here, we will endeavor to do so and get back to the folks that have asked them. Am I handing this over to you, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: All right. yes. Thank you, Donna. And also, I want to recognize that Justine Chew, who is the vice chair of the EPDP team, she actually chairs this string similarity small group. So I'm really just providing an update. But all kudos to her leadership and to also the effort from the members in the group. And I should have the

list of members ready. But I just want to note that all the kudos to their work.

And here is a quick update of the progress so far. So first, just for the folks who are not familiar with the group's work, what they're trying to solve is related to a particular charter question. So the charter question asked whether any adjustment is needed to a string similarity review because of the implementation of variants.

So, for example, if there is a variant label that's potentially allocatable but the applicant didn't apply to activate it, does that kind of label play a role in the string similarity review? And also, what are the potential consequences for the other allocatable variants in the same sets of the requested variant label which is rejected as a result of the string similarity review? So that's also some sub-question related to the consequence of the string similarity review and what will happen to the other variant labels in the same set. So that's the particular charter question the group is trying to tackle.

And then in the discussion among the EPDP team, the team considers three possible levels of the comparison among visually-confusable strings and also analyzed their impact and potential consequences. So, for example, level one is they only compare the primary applied-for string, plus the only requested allocatable variant. So only the ones requested by the applicant

will be compared against other applied-for labels and request the activated labels by existing future applicants. So that's a level one.

And then for level two is compare all the allocatable variants in the set across the primary applied-for one. So physically comparing all the labels that can all potentially be delegated to the root zone in a string similarity review. And then, the third level is comparing all of the labels in the string similarity review, including blocked variants. So those other variants that can never be delegated to the root zone.

And I note that someone in the chat was asking the definition of that. So that is defined in the Root Zone LGR. And basically, those variants can never be delegated because, for example, there's no utility for them. That's not how native speakers write those labels or words in their language. Just there's no use for that, even such a character or label exists.

So basically, level three is comparing all of them. But then another thing I want to emphasize is a string similarity review is really based on visual confusability. So it's really comparing the strings that can potentially be confusable among each other.

So when the EPDP team was tackling this charter question and doing these comparisons, they encountered a couple of problems. The first one is there is a divergence of opinion regarding which level is most appropriate. So the group discussed

this question over the course of three meetings and also put that discussion in the mailing list. But still, there is opinions supporting different levels. And we cannot reach a preliminary agreement on that.

And then the second problem is the discussion has largely been academic based on abstract concepts. So the group did develop some kind of a visual graphic to visualize the problem they're dealing with. But they're just theoretical and they're not based on concrete examples.

So that's why it made those discussions very difficult to comprehend. And that's why the EPDP team has set up a small group to facilitate a comprehensible discussion of this question. And then, their main task is to develop concrete examples of variants that are visually confusable.

So basically task one is to develop examples of strings. And also, those strings, they should have blocked and/or allocatable variant labels that may be visually confusable with other strings. And that can be confusable with other strings in the same script or with other strings in a different script. So that really relies on the language expertise now of the team members.

And luckily, we have folks who are native speakers in Chinese, Arabic, and Bangla, I believe. And so that helps develop these examples. And also, Latin is another example we want to see too. And then, the things that folks keep need to keep in mind in

developing these examples is they need to see whether these can actually happen in reality. And they don't need to focus on many edge cases.

And also, they need to discuss whether there's any existing mechanism that could help prevent such confusable strings being delegated. So maybe, for example, the objection process in the new gTLD process could potentially detach those visually confusable strings. And then some other mechanism can help stop that from delegation. So task one is to develop concrete examples.

And task two, which is see how these examples be compared against each other in the string similarity review according to the three levels that I just provided an overview on. And then showcasing the impacts of the review and the potential consequences.

And task three is to demonstrate how these examples would undergo the objection process according to the three levels because during the EPDP team discussion, some members believed that the same kind of level should apply to objection as well. So, for example, if an allocatable but non-requested variant label plays a role in string similarity review, then in objection process, they should similarly play a role as well. So that's some of the direction, I guess, from the EPDP team's deliberation.

So these are the three tasks for the group. And so far, the group has met, I believe, four times. And they have developed a lot of examples. And this is a table of the examples the group has basically developed so far. And then, you can see, for example, example one, label A is the Latin B-I-S-S, but the S, the last character, is the German S. And then, the I is the dotless I in the Turkish language.

And then, for level B is a Cyrillic script label. And that looks like B-I-S-S but it's not in Latin script. So that's one example. And then, you can see there are a bunch of Chinese script or Han script examples. And the second one is the HSBC, one in traditional Chinese, the other in simplified, but they're actually variants of each other. So this example wasn't very applicable to our case.

But then if you look at example four, they're both simplified, but they are two different labels. They have two different meanings. Basically one is [inaudible]. It's a trademark for an artist. And then [inaudible] is the traditional Chinese. That's another trademark but it's for a different trademark, a different entity too. So you can see there are some examples that the group has developed so far. And I believe in the last meeting the group is converging to some level of comparison for string similarity review.

And I assume we will probably see a preliminary recommendation to be developed. But these examples definitely helped with the discussion so far. So that's the extent of update

for this small group. And I guess, Justine, if you have any additional comments, I welcome your input. And then, I believe there are a couple of members from the small group is present in the meeting too. So if you'd like to chime in and provide any additional comments, please feel free to do so. And I will stop here.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel, and thanks for the update. And thanks for the work of this small team. I know that they've been meeting on a weekly basis through a few weeks now to try to unravel this issue because the compounding or multiplier effect of variant labels made the discussion really challenging within the work team, which is why we spun off a smaller group to try to come up with examples and potentially a path forward.

So the work that the small team's been doing hasn't been shared with our work team. This is the first time we've seen it. So we look forward to them finalizing their work and coming back to the full work team to see how we move forward with this one. But it certainly is very tricky for us in trying to work through some of these potential new gTLD processes, given some of the principles we've already adopted like the marrying principle in one application. So we're trying to ensure that across our recommendations at least that they make sense and that they can be implemented.

So any questions from folks? We've got about six minutes left. And I note that there's been a bit of chat. And thanks to Pitinan and Sarmad helping out with questions about what we mean by variants, allocatable, and blocked. So if there's any other questions from folks that aren't part of the work team that you have on IDNs in general or variants, now is the time to ask because we have Sarmad and Pitinan ready to answer all your tricky questions. Okay. Well, I don't see any hands. So Ariel, do we want to give a preview of what we're going to be talking about in two days' time I think it is, our second meeting?

ARIEL LIANG:

Yes, yes. Thanks, Donna. I guess for a preview, the second meeting is Wednesday and it's going to be a 90-minute session. So this session we are going to start deliberating on the same entity principle of variants at the second level. But before the group dives into the charter questions based on what leadership and staff discussed, we believe it would be very helpful to provide a foundational presentation on how IDNs are managed at the second level with a particular focus on the IDN tables because IDN tables is something mentioned in the majority of the charter questions related to second-level variant management.

So we believe that's something the group needs to gain a foundational understanding of that before we can dive into the questions.

And then the first part of the session two is going to be a staff presentation on IDN tables and second-level management topic. And that's going to be conducted by our colleagues, Sarmad and Pitinan. So that's a presentation that you probably don't want to miss.

And then, following that will be kind of a free-flowing discussion among contracted parties, members in this group. And they can talk about how, in practice, they manage variants at the second level and how IDN tables are implemented in their registries and registrars. So that probably won't be a formal presentation. But we can hear from them about some of their practical experiences. And then, that will complement the presentation to be conducted by the ICANN Org staff. So that's a quick preview. And I will also put the session time and date in the chat just to make sure everybody has it on your calendar.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks very much, Ariel. And just a shout out to Ariel, Steve, Emily, Sarmad, Pitinan, and the really good work they do for us in what we kind of refer to as our foundational sessions to try to get all of the members of the EPDP team on the same level of understanding on the issues that we discuss because what we've found when we've gone into this is that we all have different levels of understanding. So we try to level set.

And this is going to be a really important opportunity for us to do that as we get into conversations about IDNs at the second level, which is quite different than IDNs at the top level. So it will be an important session for our work team members. So I hope that everyone is able to attend. And then, that will launch us into our discussions on second-level IDNs. So I think we're at time. So we will close out this session. So thanks, everybody.

DEVAN REED: Thank you all for joining. Once again, this meeting is adjourned. I hope you have a wonderful rest of your days. Tech team, please end the recording.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]