



New Domain Name Extensions in Sight

1. Background

In June 2008 ICANN announced its intention to authorise the creation of hundreds, and even thousands of new gTLDs, such as *.sport*, *.bank*, *.paris* or *.brand* for companies that are interested in using their own gTLD.

Despite a certain amount of "slippage" in time, the current trend for the calendar is stabilising around formal approval of the "Final Applicant Guidebook" for the 1st or 2nd quarter of 2011 (1). This will be followed by a 4-month communication campaign, and then the opening of the applications phase, probably around the 3rd or 4th quarter of 2011.

2. Analysis

Companies and corporate bodies can adopt three positions with respect to this process:

- apply to have their own gTLD in order to use it;
- file an application in order to retain the possibility to negotiate with any third parties that have legitimate rights that have also opted to create the potentially contentious ".BRAND". The Objection procedure may be ineffective in these specific cases, which may justify the costs (loss of 30% of ICANN administrative costs, or about 56 k\$);
- adopt a "vigilance" approach and develop a positioning strategy in light of the draft extensions submitted to ICANN by or before the end of 2011 whether in terms of objections to the projects themselves, of filing domain names using these future expansions for defensive purposes, or of filings to improve the visibility of the business on the Internet ;

It is therefore important for companies and corporate bodies to take a relatively quickly decision about the interest for them in applying to obtain an extension. This is because the various stages in the decision-making process and the preparation of an application mechanically lead to increasingly short deadlines in relation to the ICANN schedule:

- a first step consists in carrying out a **scoping study** to determine whether the company or corporate body in principle has any interest in applying for its own gTLD;

- if the answer is yes, it should then consider the various organisational, technical, legal and marketing issues involved in the project and assess the economic profile, through a **feasibility study** so that a final decision can be taken;
- if the green light is finally given, the **application file** will need to be prepared, based on items it already has plus frequently complex issues to which ICANN requires replies, particularly on the technical level (2).

Simple back-scheduling shows that if the application is to be filed with ICANN by Q3 2011, the feasibility study must be carried out in the second quarter and the scoping study in Q1. A company or a corporate body of a certain size can not ignore this issue and therefore must at least carry out the scoping study as early as possible. Its decision will thus be better-informed whether to apply or to adopt a wait-and-see approach, if the return on investment seems insufficient in relation to its expectations.

It may be hoped of course that ICANN will subsequently hold new rounds, enabling those who have previously been unwilling or unable to apply for TLDs to do so in 2011. However, that prospect remains highly uncertain in the absence of any clear commitment by ICANN in this respect.

3. Find out more

(1) Adopted Board Resolutions – Cartagena, 10 December 2010

<http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-10dec10-en.htm>

(2) Proposed Final Applicant Guidebook

<http://www.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/draft-rfp-clean-12nov10-en.pdf>

About AFNIC

(Association Française pour le Nommage Internet en Coopération)

Non-profit organization, AFNIC is in charge of the administrative and technical management of the *.fr* (France) and *.re* (Reunion Island) Internet domain names. AFNIC brings together public and private members: representatives from the French government, Internet users and Internet Service Providers (Registrars).

[Further information.](#)