

Report of Public Comments

Title:	Release of Country and Territory Names within the .HONDA, .AXA, .EPSON, .HSBC, .XYZ and .COLLEGE TLDs
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Prepared By:	Krista Papac
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Section I: General Overview and Next Steps

General Overview

Five (5) [Registry Services Evaluation Policy \(RSEP\)](#) requests were submitted by the registry operators listed below to allow the release of country and territory names for the below TLDs. In total, the requests concern 6 New gTLDs.

Proposal	TLD	Registry Name	Documents
2014080	xyz college	XYZ.COM LLC	XYZ.COM LLC Request 6 March 2015
2014078	hsbc	HSBC Holdings PLC	HSBC Holdings PLC Request 27 February 2015
2014074	epson	Seiko Epson Corporation	Seiko Epson Corporation Request 08 February 2015
2014073	axa	AXA SA	AXA SA Request 08 February 2015
2014072	honda	Honda Motor Co., Ltd.	Honda Motor Co., Ltd. Request 08 February 2015

As required by the RSEP, ICANN made a preliminary determination on whether these RSEP proposals might raise significant competition, security or stability issues. ICANN's preliminary review (based on the information provided) did not identify any such issues.

Following ICANN's preliminary determination that the proposals do not raise significant competition, security or stability issues, ICANN proposed to implement the registry service by amending the respective Registry Agreements.

From 31 March 2015 – 13 May 2015, ICANN posted the proposed RA amendments for public comment, which resulted in one comment.

Next steps

As provided in Section 4 of Specification 5 of the Registry Agreement, a registry operator may propose the release of reserved country and territory names “subject to review by ICANN’s Governmental Advisory Committee and approval by ICANN”. In its [Singapore Communiqué](#) (11 February 2015), the GAC advised ICANN Board to “work with the GAC to develop a public database to streamline the process for the release of country and territory names at the second level, as outlined in Specification 5. The database will inform whether individual GAC Members intend to agree to all requests, review them case by case, or not agree to any. The absence of input from a government will not be considered as agreement”.

Subsequent to the GAC’s Singapore Communiqué (11 February 2015), on 23 April 2015, the GAC Chair sent a [letter](#) to the Chairman of the ICANN Board, confirming its intent to work on a proposal for the development of such database for the process for release of country and territory names. The GAC indicated in its letter that “The GAC has started to work on a proposal for such a database and on related aspects of the process for release of country and territory names. This work has priority status for the GAC and a proposal will soon be shared with ICANN. In the meantime, it is the expectation of the GAC that a realistic timeline will be followed, and that existent RSEP requests will not be approved before an adequate process involving the GAC and individual governments in the release of country and territory names at the second level has been developed.” On 14 April 2015, the Brand Registry Group (BRG), the Business Constituency (BC) and the Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC) submitted a [letter](#) to the ICANN Board, offering a joint proposal on the matter of the release of country and territory names and two-letter labels at the second level. The letter requests confirmation that the database project referenced in the GAC’s April 23rd letter is underway, and the anticipated timeframe for making this information available.

Section II: Contributors

At the time this report was prepared, one (1) community submission had been posted to the Forum. The contributors, both individuals and organizations/groups, are listed below in chronological order by posting date with initials noted. To the extent that quotations are used in the foregoing narrative (Section III), such citations will reference the contributor’s initials.

Organizations and Groups:

Name	Submitted by	Initials
Business Constituency	Steve DelBianco	BC

Section III: Summary of Comments

General Disclaimer: This section is intended to broadly and comprehensively summarize the comments submitted to this Forum, but not to address every specific position stated by each contributor. Staff recommends that readers interested in specific aspects of any of the summarized comments, or the full context of others, refer directly to the specific contributions at the link referenced above (View Comments Submitted).

Regarding the proposed introduction of country and territory names within .HONDA, .AXA, .EPSON, .HSBC and .BRAND TLDs:

The comment submitted by BC supports the release of country and territory domain names within the .HONDA, .AXA, .EPSON, .HSBC TLDs and also more generally within .BRAND TLDs.

“The use of country and territory names will allow such a .BRAND registry to segment its TLD in a way that is meaningful to Internet users around the globe. Geographic segmentation will not only bring greater efficacy to .BRAND TLDs, but it will benefit businesses and consumers alike by fueling economic development in regions which currently have limited choice with respect to linguistically and culturally tailored domain names and content. In addition, we firmly believe that the release of country and territory names for .BRAND TLDs will enhance security and trust in online commerce by permitting businesses to exercise more control over the security and stability of their customized web sites....the use of country and territory names within a .BRAND registry will always avoid confusion with an official government web property.” (BC)

Regarding the proposed introduction of country and territory names within .XYZ, .COLLEGE and open TLDs:

The comment received recognizes that geographic segmentation and non-confusion arguments set forth for .BRAND TLDs (as noted above) are less persuasive for the release of country and territory domain names within the .XYZ, .COLLEGE and also more generally within open TLDs.

“The geographic segmentation and non-confusion arguments set forth above are less persuasive for open TLDs than for .BRANDs or geographic TLDs. We therefore believe that the presumption of approval should more readily be overcome by a particular government’s objection to the release of its country or territory name.” (BC)

Section IV: Analysis of Comments

General Disclaimer: This section is intended to provide an analysis and evaluation of the comments received along with explanations regarding the basis for any recommendations provided within the analysis.

The only comment received is in favor of the release of country and territory names within .HONDA, .AXA, .EPSON, .HSBC TLDs and more generally in favor of such release within .BRAND TLDs.

In sum, the BC expressed that geographic segmentation will bring greater efficacy to .BRAND TLDs and that allowance of such names within .BRAND TLDs will enhance security and trust in online commerce. Also, BC indicated that use of country and territory names within a .BRAND registry will always avoid confusion with an official government web property. As for .XYZ, .COLLEGE, and “open” TLDs, the BC stated in their comment that the geographic segmentation and non-confusion arguments set forth for .BRAND TLDs are less persuasive for open TLDs and that the presumption of approval should more readily be overcome by a particular government’s objection to the release of its country or territory name.

It should be noted that as of 18 December 2014, Specification 13 is granted for .HONDA, as of 30 October 2014, Specification 13 is granted for .AXA, as of 11 December 2014, Specification 13 is granted for .EPSON, and as of 24 October 2014, Specification 13 is granted for .HSBC, whereas

Registry Agreements for .XYZ and .COLLEGE do not include Specification 13 provisions in place.

In response to these comments regarding the process for releasing reserved country and territory names, ICANN notes that similar comments emerged from the community with respect to the previously published public comments for similar RSEP requests. (See:

<https://www.icann.org/public-comments/ctn-release-neustar-2014-09-19-en>,

<https://www.icann.org/public-comments/bmw-mini-amendment-2014-12-11-en>,

<https://www.icann.org/public-comments/ctn-release-tlds-2015-01-06-en> and

<https://www.icann.org/public-comments/emerck-hamburg-berlin-amendment-2015-03-02-en>).

And also, on 11 February 2015, the GAC, in its [Singapore Communiqué](#), advised ICANN Board to “work with the GAC to develop a public database to streamline the process for the release of country and territory names at the second level, as outlined in Specification 5. The database will inform whether individual GAC Members intend to agree to all requests, review them case by case, or not agree to any. The absence of input from a government will not be considered as agreement”. Subsequent to the GAC’s Singapore Communiqué (11 February 2015), on 23 April 2015, the GAC Chair sent a [letter](#) to the Chairman of the ICANN Board, confirming its intent to work on a proposal for the development of such database for the process for release of country and territory names. The GAC indicated in its letter that “The GAC has started to work on a proposal for such a database and on related aspects of the process for release of country and territory names. This work has priority status for the GAC and a proposal will soon be shared with ICANN. In the meantime, it is the expectation of the GAC that a realistic timeline will be followed, and that existent RSEP requests will not be approved before an adequate process involving the GAC and individual governments in the release of country and territory names at the second level has been developed.”

ICANN will consider these comments along with the advice from the GAC as it considers whether or not to approve the requested amendments.