

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

12 December 2025

Tripti Sinha, Chair, ICANN Board of Directors
Kurtis Lindqvist, President & CEO ICANN

Subject: Protections for Names and Acronyms of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) in gTLDs

Dear Tripti and Kurtis,

Following the Board's adoption of the EPDP recommendations on curative rights for IGOs and the IGO-INGO IRT's work, the GAC has finalized updated criteria and processes for protecting IGO names/acronyms at the second level in new gTLDs. Key updates include:

1. Mechanisms for adding/removing IGOs from the protection list, qualification criteria, and list maintenance procedures (see Annexes 1–2).
2. A moratorium on IGO acronym protections pending final implementation of the PDP Working Group's recommendations.

The GAC also notes recent discussions on including reserved IGO identifiers in String Similarity Evaluations for the Next Round. Per the GAC's Dublin Communiqué principles, we anticipate the Board's guidance on engaging the GAC and relevant IGOs regarding applications potentially conflicting with reserved IGO identifiers.

We appreciate the Board's continued collaboration and stand ready to clarify any implementation questions.

Best regards,



Nicolas G. Caballero
Chair, Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)
ICANN

Annexes:

Annex 1 - IGO Criteria for Protection, Established by the GAC and IGO Coalition

Annex 2 - GAC Intergovernmental Organization List for Protection of New gTLDs

Annex 1: IGO Criteria for protection, established by the GAC and IGO Coalition

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Criteria for protection

The names and acronyms used by Intergovernmental Organizations may not be acquired by any third party as a domain name at either the top or the second level, unless express written permission is obtained from the Intergovernmental Organization concerned:

For purposes of the present protection, the term “Intergovernmental Organization”¹ shall mean:

- a) an Intergovernmental Organization established by a treaty and which possesses international legal personality; or
- b) an “Intergovernmental organization” having received a standing invitation to participate as observer in the sessions and the work of the United Nations General Assembly; or
- c) a distinct entity, organ or program of the United Nations.

These names and acronyms shall be protected in the following languages: [TBD]

A list of organizations which meet the above mentioned criteria shall be established. Protection for the names and acronyms of the listed organizations shall be provided at the second level in all rounds of new gTLDs and at the top level in all except the first new gTLD round.

The list shall be reviewed prior to delegation of any new top level domains in a subsequent new gTLD round or every three years, whichever comes earlier.

¹ The definition of “Intergovernmental Organization” employed herein is intended for the sole purpose of the present protections within the framework of the Domain Name System and is without prejudice to any definition of such term in international law, domestic law, or otherwise.

Annex 2: Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO) List for Protection in gTLDs

Contents

I. Introduction	0
A. Background	1
D. Scope of the List	3
E. Definitions	4
F. Information About the List	4
II. Processes to Update IGO List for Protection in gTLDs	4
A. Process to Add a Name/Acronym to the IGO List for Protection in gTLDs	4
B. Process to Remove from the IGO List for Protections in gTLDs	6
Annex 1: IGO Criteria for protection, established by the GAC and IGO Coalition	7

I. Introduction

The IGO list for protection in gTLDs was created by the GAC in 2013, to be maintained by the GAC to enable the protection of IGO identifiers at the second level in new gTLDs.

This document sets forth background information on IGO protections generally, the purpose/description of the GAC list for protection in gTLDs, the scope of the list and the process for adding, removing and modifying IGO names and acronyms from the list.

IGO List: [Current IGO List](#) as per 22 April 2013

A. Background

The protection of the names and acronyms of International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) against unauthorized use in the Domain Name System (DNS) emerged as an issue as part of the [Second WIPO Internet Domain Name Process](#) (2001). Over the following decade, several attempts were made¹ to address WIPO's² recommendations to include IGO identifiers in the scope of the trademark-based [Uniform Dispute Resolution Procedure](#) (UDRP).

In the meantime, the [GAC Principles regarding New gTLDs](#) (28 March 2007) recognized that *“the process for introducing new gTLDs must make proper allowance for prior third party rights, in particular [...] rights in the names and acronyms of [...] IGOs”*.

During the development of the [New gTLD Program](#), the issue was raised to ICANN by legal counsels of IGOs through an [open letter](#) (13 December 2011), followed by an IGO Common Position Paper³ (4 May 2012) and a [letter on behalf of the United Nations Secretary General](#) (11 July 2012) providing the legal basis and rationale for *“targeted exclusion of third party registrations of the names and acronyms of IGOs both at the top and second level, at least during ICANN's first application round and until further appropriate policy could be developed”*.

As a result of the development of the ICANN [New gTLD Program](#), and the divergence that subsequently emerged between GNSO policy recommendations and GAC Advice, IGO names and acronyms have become subject to a multifaceted regime of protections, pending outcomes of several ongoing ICANN processes.

The GAC submitted Advice to the ICANN Board pertaining to the Protection of IGOs identifiers in the DNS:

¹ see [WIPO-2 Joint Working Group](#) (2003-2004), and [GNSO Issue Report on Dispute Handling for IGO Names and Abbreviations](#) (2007)

² [World Intellectual Property Organization](#)

³ see Annex 5 of the [Final GNSO Issue Report on the Protection of International Organization Names in New gTLDs](#)

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

- [Toronto Communiqué](#) (October 2012);
- [Beijing Communiqué](#) (April 2013);
- [Durban Communiqué](#) (July 2013);
- [Buenos Aires Communiqué](#) (November 2013);
- [Singapore Communiqué](#) (March 2014)
- [London Communiqué](#) (June 2014)
- [Los Angeles Communiqué](#) (October 2014)
- [Buenos Aires Communiqué](#) (June 2015);
- [Dublin Communiqué](#) (October 2015)
- [Helsinki Communiqué](#) (June 2016)
- [Hyderabad Communiqué](#) (November 2016);
- [San Juan Communiqué](#) (March 2018)
- [Panama Communiqué](#) (June 2018)
- [Barcelona Communiqué](#) (October 2018);
- [Montreal Communiqué](#) (November 2016);
- [ICANN71 Communiqué](#) (June 2021); and
- [Cancun Communiqué](#) (March 2023)

As per GAC Advice included in the [ICANN45 Toronto GAC Communiqué](#) (17 October 2012) relative to Protections of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO), identifiers in the DNS, the GAC advised the ICANN Board that:

“In the public interest, implementation of such protection at the second level must be accomplished prior to the delegation of any new gTLDs, and in future rounds of gTLDs, at the second and top level.

The GAC believes that the current criteria for registration under the .int top level domain, which are cited in the Applicant Guidebook as a basis for an IGO to file a legal rights objection, provide a starting basis for protecting IGO names and acronyms in all new gTLDs.

Building on these criteria, the GAC and IGOs will collaborate to develop a list of the names and acronyms of IGOs that should be protected. Pending further work with ICANN on specific implementation measures for this initiative the GAC believes this list of IGOs should be approved for interim protection through a moratorium against third-party registration prior to the delegation of any new gTLDs.”

In March 2013, the GAC Chair, following consultations between the IGO Coalition and the GAC, submitted a [letter](#) to the ICANN Board including the agreed criteria and corresponding final list for protection of IGO names and acronyms at the second level for the 2012 round of new gTLDs.

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

As a result of the ICANN53 Buenos Aires GAC Advice, the ICANN Board resolved that acronyms of IGOs listed on the [GAC List](#) are temporarily protected by virtue of an ICANN Board [resolution](#) (9 January 2014).

This moratorium was put in place pending the resolution of [inconsistencies](#) between existing GNSO policy recommendations and GAC Advice.

On 5 May 2024, the Board resolved to accept the GAC's Cancun Advice to maintain the moratorium until implementation of the Board-adopted recommendations from the [IGO/INGO Access to Curative Rights Mechanism PDP WG](#) (17 July 2018) and the [Expedited PDP on Specific Curative Rights Protections for IGOs](#) (4 April 2022).

B. Description of the List for Protections in new gTLDs

The IGO list for protection in gTLDs was created by the GAC to be maintained by the GAC to enable the protection of IGO identifiers:

At the top level of the DNS (IGO identifiers as Top-Level Domain Names)

- Under the rules of the 2012 [New gTLD Applicant Guidebook](#), IGOs were eligible to file objections on New gTLD Applications (see Legal Rights Objections, Section 3.2 of the [New gTLD Applicant Guidebook](#))
- Per ICANN Board [resolution](#) (30 April 2014) adopting GNSO Policy recommendations not inconsistent with GAC Advice, Full Names of IGOs on the [GAC List](#) are now permanently reserved at the Top Level.

At the second level of the DNS (IGO identifiers as Second Level Domain Names)

- Full Names of IGOs listed on the [GAC List](#) are permanently protected in two languages by virtue of the [Protection of IGO and INGO Identifiers in All gTLDs Policy](#) (an ICANN [Consensus Policy](#) effective since 1 August 2018)
- Acronyms of IGOs listed on the [GAC List](#) are temporarily protected by virtue of an ICANN Board [resolution](#) (9 January 2014) consistent with GAC Advice in the [GAC Buenos Aires Communiqué](#) (20 November 2013), and pending the resolution of [inconsistencies](#) between existing GNSO policy recommendations and GAC Advice (ref. the above-noted Curative Rights Protection policy).

C. Purpose/Description of the Mechanism to Update the List

This document sets forth the processes for adding, modifying or removing IGO names from the IGO List for Protection in new gTLDs, and also for IGO acronyms as a moratorium measure.

D. Scope of the List

New gTLDs since 2012 and legacy TLDs that have renewed under the Base Registry Agreement.

Ownership of the List

The **IGO List for Protection in new gTLDs** is maintained by the GAC, and is administered by ICANN Org.

ICANN operational staff add the IGO List into entries in a wider list of [Reserved Names](#) posted on the ICANN.org web site. That reserve list provides a point of reference for registries per formal/applicable ICANN policies (including the base registry agreement) governing registration of domains at the second level.

E. Definitions

- **Criteria for Inclusion on the IGO List: See Annex 1**
- **Requestor:** Requests for adding, modifying or removing protected IGO names or acronyms from the GAC IGO list for protection in gTLDs should only come from accredited GAC Member/Observer representatives or authorized representatives.
- **Request:** Requests should be submitted on the approved [add/remove](#) form. Form templates can be found here:
<https://gac.icann.org/activity/gac-igo-list-for-protection-in-gtlds>
- **Removal from IGO List Request Form:** Standard Form for IGO to fill and request its removal from the IGO List for Protection in gTLDs.
- **Addition to IGO List Request Form:** Standard Form for Requestor to fill in and request its addition to the IGO List for Protection in gTLDs.
- **Modify entry on IGO List Request Form:** Standard Form for Requestor to fill in and request a modification to the IGO List for Protection in gTLDs.
- **Reserved Names:** are ASCII labels (including Punycode notation for Internationalized Domain Names) that are meant to be reserved from registration at the second level in two languages at the discretion of the concerned IGO in new gTLDs whose contract include provisions to mandate the reservation of these names.
- **Expected Timeframe for Response:** 45 days *[at discretion of GAC Chair to account for circumstances]*.

- **Assessment:** Review to confirm the proposed addition meets the defined criteria and that the form is correctly filled out by the authorized representative.

F. Information About the List

Information about the IGO List for Protection in new gTLDs is published on the GAC Web site at <https://gac.icann.org/activity/gac-igo-list-for-protection-in-gtlds>.

II. Processes to Update IGO List for Protection in gTLDs

A. Process to Add a Name/Acronym to the IGO List for Protection in gTLDs

1. At any time, an accredited representative to the GAC (“**Requestor**”) may submit an application to add an IGO name and acronym to the IGO List for Protection in new gTLDs.
2. Using the GAC IGO List for Protection in gTLDs - Add Form template⁴: the Requestor:
 - a. Confirms that the IGO meets the Criteria for Protection of IGOs in gTLD
 - b. Confirms the IGO name and language(s) in which the IGO name and acronym should be reserved
 - c. Identifies IGO contact name and contact information
 - d. Submits the Request for inclusion to the IGO List for Protection in gTLDs to the GAC Chair via email at gac-leadership@icann.org.
3. Upon receipt of a **Request**, the GAC Chair or his/her representative acknowledges receipt (within three business days) and provides an **Expected Timeframe for Response** in light of current circumstances, committee workload and availability of the necessary assessment expertise (but no later than 45 days).
4. Within the **Expected Timeframe for Response**,
 - a. The **GAC Chair** seeks an **Assessment** of the **Request** against the **Criteria for Protection of IGOs in gTLDs**, possibly including:
 - i. Analysis by relevant **GAC Topic Lead(s) on IGOs and Rights Protection Matters**

⁴ [GAC IGO List for Protection in new gTLDs - Add Form](#)

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

- ii. Confirmation, if requested, **from ICANN’s Government Engagement Team and or Global Stakeholder Engagement Team.**
- b. The **GAC Chair** shares the **Assessment** with the **Requestor**:
- i. In case the **Assessment** leads to a clear conclusion that the IGO should be added to the **IGO List for Protection in gTLDs**:
 1. The **GAC Chair** or his/her designee, notifies the relevant contact at **ICANN Org** for updating of the relevant systems used to implement the **Protections of IGO Names and Acronyms in gTLDs**
 2. Upon confirmation by **ICANN org** of the date at which the change will be implemented as well as its relevant systems and documentation, the GAC Chair or his/her designee informs the **Requestor**.
 3. The **IGO List for Protection in gTLDs** is updated concurrently to the change becoming effective in relevant ICANN systems and documentation, including the relevant list of **Reserved Names**, and the updated **IGO List for Protection in gTLDs** is published.
 - ii. In case the **Assessment** leads to a clear conclusion that the IGO should **not** be added to the **IGO List for Protection in gTLDs**:
 1. The **GAC Chair** or his/her designee, notifies the **Requestor**, providing reasoning for the conclusion and potential means to remedy application, if any.
 2. The **Requestor** may remedy the application within 45 days of reception of the notification from the GAC Chair or his/her designee, and submit an updated application form.
 3. If no remedy is submitted to the GAC Chair or his/her designee within 45 days, the application will be considered withdrawn.

B. Process to Remove from the IGO List for Protections in gTLDs

1. At any time, an authorized IGO representative (“**Requestor**”) may submit a request to remove an IGO name or acronym from the **IGO List for Protection in new gTLDs**, upon request from an IGO currently listed on the **IGO List for Protections in gTLDs**.

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

2. In order to remove an IGO name or acronym from the IGO List for Protections in gTLDs, the Requestor:
 - a. Submits a standard **GAC IGO List For Protection in gTLDs - Remove Form**⁵ for exclusion from the IGO List for Protection in gTLDs to the **GAC Chair** via email at gac-leadership@icann.org.
 - b. Using the **Remove from IGO List Request Form**, the **Requestor**:
 - i. Acknowledges that the Requestor and the Authorized Representative of the IGO understand the consequences of and is/are authorized to submit the request to remove the identified name and/or acronym from the IGO List for Protections in gTLDs. Submits the **Request** for removal from the **IGO List for Protection in gTLDs** to the **GAC Chair** via email at gac-leadership@icann.org.
3. Upon receipt of a **Remove Request**, the **GAC Chair** or his/her representative acknowledges receipt, and the **GAC Chair** or his/her designee notifies the relevant contact at **ICANN Org** for updating of the relevant systems used to implement the **Protections of IGO Names and Acronyms in gTLDs**.
4. Upon confirmation by **ICANN org** of the date at which the change will be implemented as well as its relevant systems and documentation, the **GAC Chair** or his/her designee informs the **Requestor** and GAC Membership of the change.
5. The **IGO List for Protection in gTLDs** is updated concurrently to the change becoming effective in relevant ICANN systems and documentation, including the relevant list of **Reserved Names**, and the updated **IGO List for Protection in gTLDs** is published.

⁵ [GAC IGO List for Protection in New gTLDs - Remove Form](#)