
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – GNSO: RySG GeoTLD Group Membership Meeting
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NIKKI SCHULER

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NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much and again, welcome to the GeoTLD group session. This is going to be a hybrid meeting because we have more people online than on site, but we are going to have some updates on several of the topics that we have now on the screen, which is our agenda.

We'll start with the GeoTLD study which is a research being funded by the ICANN grant project. And the one to give the update is Beatriz Guzmán, .cat domains director, that is the lead on this

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project. And she will give us an overview on how has been the evolution of the project since our last update.

After that, we will go to the geographic panel names review. You know that this is one of the topics that are focused mostly during 2025 and is still an ongoing issue and we are paying attention, so we will give you an update on the last exchanges since ICANN Dublin.

Then we want to tell you about some of the proposals and ideas that we've been having at the ExCom level, but also socializing them with the group in our brainstorm session and our first open call for members that we had in February, yeah, one, two weeks ago. And we will tell you what are our plans and we will specifically request your feedback on how we should work on this. Then we are going to have an update on the UA local initiative and we'll have some more room for any other business.

We are here in the room, Ronald, treasurer of the group, and Wim, which is coordinating with the ExCom and giving support. And we also have Josu, which is the vice chair online. And we don't need to make any round of introductions because we all know each other and we are seeing who we are.

So, with that, Bea, the floor is all yours and you can start whenever you are ready.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN Thank you very much. Hello, everybody, from Barcelona. I hope
BURGOS you are all feeling good. I want to share my screen. Let me see if I
can.

NACHO AMADOZ We all made it all right to Mumbai.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN Okay, good to know, good to hear. Okay, I don't know. Can you see
BURGOS my screen?

NACHO AMADOZ Yes.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN Okay, so hello again. Thanks for this time to give you a quick
BURGOS update. As we had an extensive meeting by the end of January, of
the month of January, this will be a quick update on the topics that
we have advanced since that meeting. So the most important thing
is to take into account that we are arriving to the middle of the time
of the project. This is a 23-month project. I don't know if you are
seeing my progress line. Nacho, can you confirm?

NACHO AMADOZ We do. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

Thank you. Thank you. Okay, by the end of this month of March, we will arrive to the 48% of the time of the project. So, we're almost in the middle of the project. This means that although we have done a lot of job during this time, the next half of the project is going to be the more intense in terms of how we connect and what can we do and expect of the project. So, to go straight to the point, where are we now?

As you may remember, this study is divided in two different phases. The first one is the part of the study. The second one is how we communicate this study. And during the first phase, we have two different studies. The first one with traditional search engines and the one with artificial intelligence powered search engines.

So, for the first part of the study, we're currently in the triad indexing phase. As you may remember, we need at least 60% of the triads to be indexed to start a comparative analysis. Right now, since we finished the selection and the creation of all the websites and all the random contents with the keyword exactly in the 10th position of the content, we have managed to get 35-37% of the triads indexed. Okay?

Please remember that this is out of our control. We are monitoring and we're requesting Google Search Console to index every day all the domains, but we are in a point that it's out of our control. And to be in the same page, please take, for example, one domain name. As you may remember, all the domain names were totally invented. We are using this domain as an example,

balkrindormerseblita, and this is a domain used for the .quebec part of the study.

So, we need the triad of these extensions that needs to be indexed are in .ca, in .com, and in .quebec, and for all the directors in the three different languages used for the study. If only two of the three extensions are indexed, the domain will not qualify as valid for the study. So, we need that balkrindormerseblita get indexed in .ca, in .com and in .quebec to be useful for the study.

And please remember that we have 10 domain names each registered under three different TLDs as shown in this example, and each containing three sub-directors, one per language. So, we have 300 domains available for indexing for each of you and we are right now with the 35-37% of indexing. So, what's next?

We need 60% of trials to be indexed. It depends on Google, but we are monitoring all this, but this is the part that we cannot fully control. But the good news are that based on the currently indexing phase, we expect to approach 60% of the needed triads indexed in the coming weeks. So, it's okay, we are not as fast as we wanted, but we are not doing bad. So, we believe that by the end, by the middle of April, we will achieve the 60% of the triads indexed.

If we move to the study with artificial intelligence powered platforms, we have finally completed the selection of seed domains. Seed domains is the domain under your TLD that could qualify because has a lot of pages indexed and good indexed and their respective competitors. Please remember that we have five

seed domains and three competitors under different TLDs to create a good set to be analyzed.

Okay, so we are now currently finalizing the proposal of 10 prompts for each of the domains, and we will share these prompts in English with you as soon as possible. We will need your help to translate the proposed prompts so they could sound as natural as possible, closer to how a human will search on LLMs.

Okay, so once we receive your translated prompts, we will begin the analysis using, remember, ChatGPT, the market leader, at least during the last month, Perplexity, the strong search integration, and Mistral, the European alternative.

Okay, so you will receive something like this. You will receive a sheet form, Excel, with a seed domain, for example, `bicing.barcelona`, with a prompt, where can I rent a bike in Barcelona? A prompt related to a keyword, rent bikes in Barcelona, and you will need it in English. Please correct anything if needed and you will need to translate it to the two other languages selected for the study.

In this example, for example, we will receive this prompt, you will receive it in English or in Spanish for the `.gal` and the `.eos` and we will need to translate it to Catalan, make it sound natural in our language and to the second language chosen for the study. So, you will receive 50 prompts in English or Spanish, 10 for each of the 5

sets of seed domains and 3 competitors, and should be naturalized if needed and translated.

So, what's next? If we talk and we focus specifically in the artificial intelligence powered platforms, we have done the topic selection. We have identified overlapping topics for the GeoTLD. We are working in the prompting with a natural language. This is a work in progress. We believe that by the middle of this month, we will be ready to share with you. And then we will execute the interesting part of the study, which is repetition.

As you may remember from the last meeting in January, our researcher partner, Human Level, explained that we need to find the number of times, the number of account repetition to make sure that we achieve a good randomness in the prompt. And this randomness will let us be sure that the same prompt is going to be taken into account and is going to give us some consistent data in all the responses from the AI.

Then we will capture the information and we will calculate the visibility index in artificial intelligence, which is the key KPI, the interesting KPI for us. This is to be done in the coming months. So, the first part is to end with the prompting phase, get your translations, and then we will start with the repetition of the prompts.

Please take into account this is going to be global testing, it will be executed in multiple languages and from local VPNs, so the system will take into account as a local search for all of you.

So, what to expect during this year? Unfortunately, in January, I was very optimistic and I told that during February, we will be able to share the prompts with you. I'm sorry, it's going to happen in March. The communication plan, it's going to be end internally in March and we will invite you to a meeting at the beginning of April, shortly after Holy Week. So, we can share with you our proposal and discuss that with you with enough time to arrive to the part of the study that could be communicated with a consensus with everybody, with all of you.

In April, we will also need to create a second interim report to ICANN. We are still working in the website for May and as commented in September, by the end of September, we will receive a final report on draft. As mentioned, the report is going to be three parts of the report, full report, individual report, and a media report. The full report is detailed and extensive in the information methodology and results.

The individual report is exactly specific for each of the GeoTLD participating in this with their own results and their own conclusions, their own specific conclusions. And then we will create a media report that could be able to send to the media so they could understand what we're doing and communicate it to their community.

So, if we talk about milestones, we are in the right timing for checking positioning in artificial intelligence generated results, so we have time according to our planning until May. We believe that we will need to run during April and May, but we believe that we could achieve these results in the time proposed.

Also, we are starting the positioning monitoring process, weekly measurement of indexing positions for the traditional search engine study, part of the study, and the rest. For now, I can say that we believe that we could be on time according to the work plan. And as you know, next year is going to be the year to spread the word and that's all for me. If you have any questions, just let me know.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Bea. I'm looking for questions in the room or in the chat because I have a couple. But I want to give the floor first to the rest of participants. Okay, seeing none, I will -- I see Josu now. Josu, go ahead.

JOSU WALIÑO

Hi, can you hear me?

NACHO AMADOZ

Yes.

JOSU WALIÑO

Okay. Good morning, everyone. Sorry for not being here or there present with you guys. See you next meeting. Thank you, Bea, for the presentation. I have one quick question about the final report, because you were saying that we will have the individual reports and the final report for the GeoTLD group.

Are you also thinking in having -- I don't know if the result will be an aggregated result with all, let's say, the result focusing on the CO and Geo study for GeoTLDs overall? Or if you are doing a public comparison between all the participants saying, okay, .us is doing good or bad and .gal is doing so. So, you can see that because probably not all of us are working the same at CO levels. No. So, I'm curious about that. Nothing else. Thank you.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

Thank you, Josu. Please take in mind, remember that the final product of our study is a methodology that could be replicated for any TLD, new TLD, new, new TLD or whatever in the world. So, the final product of our project is the methodology, but the aggregate report will include insights from each TLD regarding the situation of each TLD because, as you said, it is possible that we could find totally different situations between one and another.

So yeah, what we're going to do is to create a detailed, specific report for all of you, but in the aggregated report, it is necessary to explain the global situation with real data for real TLDs. So yeah, you are going to find information of all of you, comparative results. And we'll also cooperate results in traditional search engines and

results in artificial intelligence to make a big picture, the whole picture of the situation. But you will also get detailed information in your specific report. I don't know if I answered your question.

JOSU WALIÑO

Perfectly answered. Thank you, Bea.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN Thank you, Josu.
BURGOS

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much. I have a question, Bea, about the AI section of the study. Because I think that since you made the proposal to ICANN, it was approved and the study started, the focus on AI has increased exponentially. And therefore, the part of the study that covers AI-powered platforms has become even more and more relevant.

I don't know if this is something that you can share now or that it's fully formed, but could you give some more insight on the context of how the outcome of the study on the AI platforms might be? What are we expecting there to show or how is it going to illustrate how it matters when doing the searches?

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

Yeah. I know the interest has increased exponentially. I agree with you. So, what we expect to get is different levels of information. First of all, we want to know if in the same conditions, the domain with one of our GeoTLDs is mentioned and linked more times, less times, or the same times that our competitors. And this is why we took so many time to create a current set of seed domains plus competitors, because we needed to be in equal conditions and to see if they have the same probability to be mentioned, to be visible, or to be linked.

And of course, it will depend on the quality of the domains and the content of domains, which is out of control, completely out of control, but this is why we looked for five different seed domains to at least get one or two chances to get very good, very well-structured websites to know if the artificial intelligence is looking for domains under GeoTLDs. And with the language, in some of the cases, minorized or minority languages and how this could impact the visibility of the contents hosted under our domains.

So, it's going to be as we called the visibility index, which means we cannot promise that you will get traffic or you will be the leader of your industry, but at least we can calculate if you are visible for the artificial intelligence system. So that is how we can do that and to know exactly how to do that is that we need to calculate the probability or the numbers, the exact name of prompts that you need to do to get a good consistent result in one of them because all of them are different.

So, if you do two different searches at two different moments, the answers could be completely different. So, we need to be consistent and repeating the exercise to get a number of questions, of prompts that you need to do in artificial intelligence. And this is going to be another KPI to understand how many times you need to ask to get a consistent result from artificial intelligence.

So, I don't know if I answered your question. It's tricky. Maybe our researcher, partner will explain it better than me, but as far as I understand, that's the point. Calculating the number of prompts you need to do, calculating the visibility index, and calculating if we are better positioned or the same position or worse position than the competitors for a specific search.

NACHO AMADOZ

For me, the question was answered very clearly and very deeply. You want to go ahead, Ronald?

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Yes, Bea. This is Ronald. A question from a non-marketing person as I am, I'd like to have a result saying if you use a .eos domain in the Basque language, it will perform better than the same domain name under .es using Spanish or English. This is what I would like to have. Can we somehow count on that, that using a GeoTLD in the local language performs better than any other TLD in any other top-level domain?

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

Yeah. In fact, we consider three different scenarios. The first one is the one that we all want which is, that we could say with data, with real data that our domains position better than the other options. But we need to take into account that there are also two different possibilities. The possibility that we could perform exactly the same which is also good, which is also the opportunity to say don't be afraid, we work exactly like the country code or the .com or the competitor that you have chosen. And the third option is that we perform worst.

In that case, we will also have a case to raise the voice and try to contact, I don't know, Google, OpenAI, Mistral, whatever, to try to understand why they are not treating us in the same way they are treating the other competitors. Or try to open dialogue with the industry to get them to know us better and do something about this position which is not the same or we are not getting the same treatment that the others.

So, we consider all of these three scenarios and we believe that we can take advantage of any of them. Of course, I would love to say that .cat performs better than .com or .es, but the truth is that, I don't know until the end of the study. And if that's not the case, I will raise a voice and I will create expectation and we will try to do something about that in the media and in the technical way to solve this evidence. Because by the end of the study, that will be evidence, not an opinion. That will be criteria with evidence and data.

NACHO AMADOZ

Yeah, I rest my hand to talk also as .cat here because when we are considering the less desirable scenario, which is your ranking is worse, that would be, as Bea said, the lever to raise the voice and say what is happening should not, because this is just a gTLD, same as the others, and should not be penalized. And in that regard, we've had some experience with Google that has resulted successful in the past when, two, three years ago maybe Bea, we saw that the Catalan version of websites from the area, official government websites, newspapers, were ranking lower than the Spanish versions.

So, there was an alliance of entities worried about Catalan usage that created the case, same way as the study led by Bea is doing now here, to understand what was going on. And that was the platform from which Google was contacted and that issue was fixed. And it was indicated by Google as such in a blog post that they said, we have fixed these issues affecting blah, blah, blah.

So, if we find ourselves there, we will be able to react and even though it's no guaranteed that it happened in the past, we have the good experience in the past of that being able to prove something to Google and Google reacting to what we did. Same thing, I guess, happens now with the AI situation. We don't have that experience, but as everybody else in the world, we are looking very closely at what is going on with AI and specifically in our case, how it is

affecting the representation of our language and culture because that goes beyond the domain name.

And as Bea explained also in the past with the rebranding to Accent Aware, which is an idea in our case, .cat provides the funding for many other different initiatives that we conduct in-house that are in connection with Catalan language and culture. And we are looking very, very closely at how to do something there with AI. And if the case happens, less desirable a scenario, and we look at that and we decide to do something, we will have had already the experience of organizing something about how to reach to AI.

Because we don't think it's a question of a minority language if you want which is not something that we like, but it is something that is affecting all cultures beyond English, all cultures and some people may not yet see that because they have a strong language in a strong state through different states, but it's happening. I don't know, it's happening in Danish and Dutch and we are seeing that this is a concern. So, we will see what goes on when we get there.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Sorry, this is Ronald. Can we as a GeoTLD group offer that we would like to or that we will address Google, address whomever and not that the individual has to, .vin or the .bch has to contact? Because if it's a formal group having grants from ICANN proving that their minority is not treated well, I think the GeoTLD group should then

use this position to contact. Also, if you want to do it as your own TLD do it, but we as a GeoTLD group will also proceed doing this.

NACHO AMADOZ

This is a good use of the group name and resources, but this is up for the members to decide and this is a conversation that we are starting now. We haven't talked about this concrete situation before, but more and more it seems likely that we will have to face it in a way. And as you were saying, the group as an established entity of different registry operators could be the good platform to tackle this. We will come to this at that point.

Talking about the point where we have the delivery, and this is something that I also wanted to comment with you, Bea, to see how it works timing-wise, you said, if I remember well, that the 2027 timeline gets to April. But as you will see in one of the points that we want to discuss about communications, in March 2027, we think that the Lisbon meeting is going to be a very, very good scenario for the GeoTLD group to try to increase the visibility and to engage with new registry operators of GeoTLDs.

So, is that something that you could also work with so that Lisbon becomes a focal point in the delivery estimations and someplace where you can also advance how this worked?

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN Hello, can you hear me?
BURGOS

NACHO AMADOZ

Yeah.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

Okay. I believe that the group needs to be ready for the three scenarios. I mean, the less desirable scenario, it's going to be a good starting point to open the conversation and we are stronger together than one by one. But we also need to be ready if the results are good for the group. So, I believe that we need to start to think about how the group will approach to the results of the study.

It doesn't matter which is the general scenario, because please remember that maybe we could conclude that, for example, .cat is not doing well, but .london is doing great. So, maybe we'll have different situations between the different TLDs, but we will have a global conclusion and we need to be ready for any of the three different scenarios.

And I believe that this is a very important topic for ICANN, not only for the GeoTLD group, but also for ICANN, because we are representing 11 TLDs with different characteristics. And if we don't feel created in a proper way for the search engines, it's ICANN, I believe, I don't know how, but ICANN should pay attention to this issue because it will mean that not all the domains are in the same position.

And I don't know how to address that, but I believe that it's good to start to think, how can we prepare in one year, be ready to present

in a good scenario, in a good position during the ICANN meeting of Lisbon, the results of the study? And how are we going to position the group regardless of the result, the global result?

NACHO AMADOZ

Yes, yes, indeed, but me being a lawyer, I cannot avoid just preparing for the worst-case scenario. So, you prefer for the good scenario and we will also have that in mind, but you already have that in mind. Okay, one last thing, which is also in connection with ICANN meetings, and this one is in connection with Sevilla, which is where .cat will be celebrating the 20th anniversary. So, if you allow me also, I will give Bea the room to announce what she's preparing.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

Thank you, Nacho. Yes, during this year, we're going to celebrate our 20th anniversary. The real date of the start, a general availability of the domain it's going to be 23 of April, which is a very specific and very lovely day here, which is San Jordi. But we're going to celebrate the 20th anniversary on June 12th. Yeah, which is a Friday, which is the Friday after ICANN Sevilla meeting.

So, we are preparing a full day of experience. First one, a professional meeting and during the morning and during the evening, we will have a party celebration. So, it is our pleasure to invite you to celebrate with us the 20th anniversary of .cat next Friday 12th of June, right after ICANN Seville and you will be contacted by email.

And we will love to have you here because we, .cat, as the first cultural and linguistic language, opened the door for many of you being here so we will be super happy to have you here. Please, save the date and consider to attend the full day experience. Thank you.

NACHO AMADOZ

Just a clarification. Oh, sorry. Just a clarification Bea because I found myself in this situation, the celebration is in Barcelona, not in Sevilla. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, no, a couple of people made their plans already and said, no, no, but this is going to be Barcelona, not Sevilla. Just for my peace of mind, I needed to say that.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN Thank you.
BURGOS

NACHO AMADOZ

Okay, Bea, thank you so much for the good presentation that you gave us, because I think that it really showed all the effort that you are putting into this and how this is going to be, you know, a hard case that we will, I mean, hard case study that we can be used no matter what is the outcome. So really, really thank you for that.

Okay, I see no more questions or comments. You have one? Please, go ahead.

SUNCICA ROSIC

Suncica for the record, I'm a fellow. I also have a question about the AI search engine in relation to the study and please let me know if this is outside the scope of the study. But I was wondering if there is any way to tweak or incentivize AI search engines to prioritize human-generated pages rather than the AI-generated pages. Thank you.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

It's not part of the scope right now, but for the record, the part of the comparison for artificial intelligence search engines, it's done with real websites created and established more than two years ago because we needed real websites that were already indexed and crowded by the artificial intelligence searching engines. So, I don't know if these websites created more than two years ago will have artificial intelligence part of the creation. I believe, I guess, not. So, I don't know if this answers your question, but we are considering websites created more than two years ago and real websites not created ad hoc for this study.

SUNCICA ROSIC

That's clear. Thank you.

BEATRIZ HELENA GUZMÁN
BURGOS

Thank you.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you again, Bea, and thank you for all participants. Good.

LOUIS HOULE

May I please add a few words on that?

NACHO AMADOZ

Absolutely. I'm not talking about artificial intelligence, but I hope that with that kind of intelligence we're going to improve the products. But in search engines right now, there's some of the search engines existing that are based on a shell of Google. And like Constellio, if you want to have an example of such a search engine, you can discriminate positively.

Human resources, you can discriminate positively. For instance, we've been implementing that in the Quebec government. So, when you're talking about the status of woman, for instance, well, then you will discriminate the vocabulary that's going to be filtered by the search engine in such a way that you will only be able to address the topics that are concerned by that entity within the government. And if you're talking about revenue, Quebec, money, well, then you will discriminate some kind of economic and business.

So, this is how it works and it does work, but probably with an engine like this one. This is one of the points where we .québec very interested in participating, of course, because we're sure that we will be able to address some of the issues that we have, including,

of course, discriminated positively the use of French in the results that we will generate to complete.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you so much for the addition, Louis. Okay. Seeing no more, we're moving on to the second topic. All right. The second topic is the geographic names panel review, and we are going to give you an update on the exchanges we've had with ICANN since Dublin. Just to make a very quick recap I'm referring to what happened during the Dublin meeting.

So, I think that the highlight of that meeting when it comes to this issue was when Ronald and I made a presentation to the GAC, to the governments, talking specifically about our concern for the 18 to 25 U.S. thousand dollars fee for the geographic names that were going to be applied for in the next round. On top of all the other costs that we see reflected such as we've seen in the session before this one.

And our interaction with the GAC was useful we think. It had a lot of questions and there was quite a bit of a feedback back from the GAC and follow-ups. We had a call prior to the meeting and after the meeting, you remember? Yeah. And we made it to the GAC communiqué, which is an important piece of advice that the GAC launches at the end of every ICANN meeting.

And in this regard, the GAC said, in addition to what was said in the session, the GAC is of the opinion that the AGB text as proposed

introduces some ambiguity in the role of the geographic names panel and the application of the fees associated with their conditional review.

The GAC recalls its concerns with the text on this topic and finds that an additional fee should only apply in exceptional cases, excluding the general case where the authenticity of supporting documents can be confirmed by the relevant GAC representative, as described in the relevant section of the AGB.

Which is one of the items that Ronald has been specifically raising, even with the joke about we will buy you a business class flight to the city to confirm that the mayor exists and that the mayor is who says he is or she is and that the city exists. So, no need to pay 25 U.S. thousand dollars for that. And that joke, you know, has made some fortune because, you know, it's a good example of how absurd this price tag is.

Okay, after that, we sent to ICANN on January, a letter indicating that this was still a concern. We saw that the final version of the guidebook had reduced that fee already to a cap of 12,000 U.S. dollars. And we said to them, in ICANN language, we are happy of our cooperation, blah, blah, blah, but \$12,000, come on, all these very well put in good words.

And the response from ICANN was good in the sense that she manifested on behalf of ICANN how this is something that they are treating seriously and she understands the concern. And we also

have to understand that they are kind of bound by what the policy established. Yes, but still \$12,000 we believe is way too much.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Just a short notice. I just came from a session where we had a presentation on the fees and it now said it's not to exceed \$12,000 and it will be a pass-through fee. So, the provider, if he has to do some work and it says it's \$2,000, then it will be \$2,000. So, it's not \$12,000 automatically, is what I understood from the last session.

And if we, let's say, .vienna, are presenting a letter that says the mayor is blah, blah, blah and the GAC representative signs this letter, I've met the mayor and it is okay, let's say this one, then they do not have to work and then we probably get zero, yeah?

So, it is not exceeding 12,000, but it will be then that the amount that the evaluator has really to spend. And, for example, the Amazon case will then be solved for 12,000 euros which eight governments involved, et cetera. So, I think it's a trade-off and if we as the providing applications to the next round documented as good as possible, you can probably go with much lower fees and I think this is something that we, yeah, have achieved let's say.

NACHO AMADOZ

Yeah, I mean, the exchanges -- oh sorry, Andreas.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

Yeah, Andreas for the record, but the question is, what is the reason to charge zero euro or U.S. dollar if you can charge 12,000 U.S. dollars? That's the question and if it's not ICANN and ICANN, I don't know gives the contract with somebody either say, oh, they were always cost and it's 10,500 even for Vienna which is straightforward.

NACHO AMADOZ

We put that question in the bucket of why is this so much more expensive than in 2012 on top of why the RSPs have to pay on top of that which is, you know, a long list of questions. But you know that we completely agree with the absurdity of this additional fee.

And this is not something that is affecting the current members as such because we will not have to pay, but this is representing the principle of what the group stands for, which is, you know, the representation and the interest of the GeoTLD groups present and future, be they members or not. So, this is something that we are still trying to clarify as much as possible and to reduce the costs and the friction as much as possible.

There is now an RFP. I tried to look at that and I wasn't able to because the page failed, but maybe it's me and VPNs and I don't know what. But if we can try to see what's going on and what is being provided and we'll keep on top of that, we'll get back to the group with more information the moment we have it.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Ronald again, in combination with the GAC communiqué, it says there should be additional fees only in exceptional cases, I think this could be a goodwill solution. Exceptional cases not to exceed 12,000, yeah, but exceptional cases is not in the guidebook. Yeah?

NACHO AMADOZ

Exactly. So, oh, there's an additional question from Maxim. Good to see you. Go ahead.

MAXIM ALZOBA

Maxim Alzoba for the transcript, if any. I suggest GeoTLDs apply for this RFP. So, you to be the party confirming who are the geos or not also you may talk to GAC in the process like full transcript et cetera, so no transparency issues. And it's going to be a job because if ICANN denies that, I'd say it could be brought as a PR of sorts like the only parties who really know who GeoTLDs are, are denied. So, who am I trying to select to do this? And also, it opens a variety of interesting ideas. Thanks.

NACHO AMADOZ

As all good things we can take it with fun because I think that we have to take it with humor because otherwise -- But I think we also have to take that seriously and the GeoTLD group is in the best position to judge this. And the rapport with the GAC is established, and we know what a public administration looks like. Apparently, ICANN doesn't, but we do know that the city of Vienna exists. So maybe we should do something on that. Andreas.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

I mean, there was also a working of retiring of TLD so which means this was also not an external party. It was inside of the multi-stakeholder groups. So probably why not building a working group with ICANN, GAC representatives, GeoTLDs and they judge somehow. And if then still is complaints, move those complaints somebody to an external party. Yeah, I mean take that in serious terms. So, retirement of ccTLDs was a topic which was discussed for two years and now is the conclusion on that and it was not an external party decided. It was part of the ccTLD group.

NACHO AMADOZ

Point is valid, which is okay. We'll come back to that. Let me go quickly to the third point because we have two more to cover and I've taken or we've taken a lot of time, especially in the first one. But I think it was worth it because it had a lot of content.

So, the third one, very quickly with that, which is what we are planning to engage with the new gTLD in the plans of the group. If you attended the brainstorm session or the first monthly regular call, we talked a lot about our communication plan ideas for 26, leading up and building up to the community forum in 2027 in Lisbon.

Our idea is to work on trying to attract potential new members to the group and for that, we have like two stages, right? The one that we have now, which is we don't know who these potential

members may be because we don't know who applied for what and then after reveal day, when we will know what we will have on the map for us to focus on.

Just very quickly in that regard, we have moved our general assembly down the road to the end of November 19?

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

19 and 20.

NACHO AMADOZ

19 and 20 of November, so that we could work with the information from Rebuild Day and discuss about that and give this communication plan some time to build. And then our focus here is Lisbon 2027, so that we could prepare a workshop around the ICANN meeting and get all these potential new members and current members to work together to see how we improve the group and how we can help them better.

Someone, I think it was Maxim, in the list mentioned NTAG, and Sue replied that we are part of NTAG, so that we are also working with NTAG in that regard and this is something that we also have in our strategy.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

So let me do it officially. 19 and 20 November will be the yearly gathering of the GeoTLD group. It will be held in Vienna so mark your calendars. Vienna is nice at that time. Christmas markets are

already open. This is not the reason for moving in that late, but it is at least you can come with your spouses, wives, whatever, and they have attractive opportunities also in Vienna.

We will then know potential new applicants that could join the group and this is I think essential for the group. Let's say there are 50 new GeoTLDs out in the world, if we can get these 50 or let's say 40 of them to the group, we are considerably authorized to represent the interest of the GeoTLD group. If we don't get new members, we only have 20 out of 100, which would then lower our reputation. So, I think it's crucial to get and to attract new members that apply in the next round.

Currently, it's speculation how many we have. At the Vienna meeting, we will know and we will focus any of our work, of our efforts towards Lisbon, where we plan to have a half a day or full day meeting and invite new applicants to Lisbon to get them to join the GeoTLD group. This is our main focus for this upcoming year and it will result in probably changes of the GeoTLD group structure.

If we have 50 new members, all coming from northern Alaska or however, as you promised, for .quebec, the Inuits and Eskimos and so on. We are no longer more or less centrally European based GeoTLD group because there will be others. So, be focused, please come to Vienna, let's discuss these things. Let's try to get as many as possible to Lisbon and help develop the group's strategy.

NACHO AMADOZ

Louis you wanted to reply I think, but we had Maxim first. Please, be super quick because I've eaten a lot of the time talking, sorry about that, but we have to get to the next point. So, first Maxim and then Louis. First Maxim.

MAXIM ALZOBA

Maxim, just a warning. During the session about applications, it was mentioned the thing called name collision tools which everyone is going to try. And I really suggest that if you or your applicant whom you are going to help, et cetera, are going to do it, please ensure that between the keyboard and the server everything is under control.

Because if the string you're applying for leaks, at least you might face name collisions or worse auctions because if it leaked to the party which dislikes you, all they need is to add to DNS servers some kind of watchdog, trying to access these DNS non-existent TLDs every 15 minutes in the root and you are going to pay 100 dollars more. Thanks.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thanks, Maxim. Louis, super quick.

LOUIS HOULE

If you want to know how it's going to work with the Inuit and the First Nations tomorrow morning, nine o'clock, how it works, I will

give a little presentation of how an ASCAPI name could be one of our GeoTLD members.

NACHO AMADOZ

Great, thank you for that, Louis. Andreas, yeah, super, super quick.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

Yeah, super, super quick. So probably you should think about to have a hybrid meeting because that's important so at least or part of it. So, if people around the world can attend because it's an important meeting.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Both the Vienna meeting and the Lisbon meeting will be hybrid.

NACHO AMADOZ

Okay with that and rushing it, but we'll be around so we can talk about it, I'll give the word to Wim to talk about the UA local initiative. Sorry about --

WIM DEGEZELLE

I'll do it in two minutes because you still have one minute to talk about the dinner tomorrow. I will put a link in the chat so it's very short, it's about UA not AI for a change. So universal acceptance local initiative is, we talked about the previous meetings, a framework where with the sponsorship and the help of ICANN the

group can sponsor individual GeoTLDs to set up UA events and training.

We launched this work a year ago, the first event was in March last year and we currently have I think sponsored five events by members, we've worked with five members. And an initiative by .gal to work on the capacity building in the Galician region is underway and two more planned for this year.

The important message to say now is we have still one spot available in the current financial year, before the end of June 2026. We want to organize a universal acceptance event and you would like to get some sponsorship from the universal acceptance initiative, local initiative then please let us know as soon as possible.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

And there is just one thing, there will be a session on UA on Wednesday nine o'clock in the morning and I will present some of these local initiative, of these supported initiatives. Perfect.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you so much and sorry about the time. So IOB, we have one point, which is my favorite point, which is dinner and we have our informal dinner tomorrow at 8:00. And we are going to go to the Hyatt, to the Indian restaurant.

So, anybody that wants to join, just let us know so that we can plan and reserve the table for the people that we need. And with that, we still have 30 seconds more. Any other business?

SUE SCHULER

Yeah, we are going to take a group photo. So, anybody that's a member of this group, please stick around after the end of this meeting and we'll meet up there. We'll kind of have Maxim on the screen so he can be a part of the group photo as well.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Sue, for that. Louis.

LOUIS HOULE

I would like to ask you when recording will be off, I want to make a little survey with you.

NACHO AMADOZ

Come again with that?

LOUIS HOULE

When the mic will be off, I will ask you a question.

NACHO AMADOZ

Okay. So, let's finish the recording then.

NIKKI SCHULER

Please end the recording. Thank you.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]