



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

2 September 2014

Mr. Christian de Barrin
Chief Executive Officer
HOTREC
111 Boulevard Anspach Box 4
10000 Brussels
Belgium

Re: Concerns about Community Priority Evaluation

Dear Mr. Christian de Barrin:

Thank you for your letter of 2 May 2014, regarding HOTREC's concerns about the Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) process. We appreciate that you took the time to write to us, and we have posted your letter to the New gTLD correspondence page (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/program-status/correspondence/de-barrin-to-chalaby-02may14-en.pdf>). In response to your concerns, we would like to provide some clarification about the development of CPE.

The CPE process as defined in Section 4.2.3 of the Applicant Guidebook (AGB) was developed through several years of community input. To view historical versions of the Applicant Guidebook, visit (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/historical-documentation/matrix-agb>). As part of the multi-stakeholder process, the final criteria were agreed to by the wider community, and all new gTLD applicants applied based on the published criteria.

Additionally, before the CPE guidelines were finalized, ICANN solicited and accepted comments on the draft guidelines for the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU's) consideration. These comments were posted and made available to the community (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/cpe>). On 27 September 2013, the final guidelines were published to ensure quality, consistency, and transparency in the CPE process (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/announcements-and-media/announcement-27sep13-en>).

You stated that as "ICANN did not publish any information about the [CPE] evaluators, it is not possible for [you] to know whether the evaluators chosen to conduct the CPE have the necessary knowledge of the .hotel community as they pertained to the respective application." We would like to emphasize that the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) was selected as the CPE panel firm through ICANN's public Request for Proposals (RFP) process (see the 2009 call for Expressions of Interest: <https://archive.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/eoi-comparative-evaluation-25feb09-en.pdf>) as it is a leading provider of impartial intelligence on international political, business, and economic issues. EIU has a global network of more than 900 analysts and contributors, and continuously assesses political, economic, and business conditions in more than 200 countries. EIU evaluators are selected based on

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their knowledge of specific countries, regions, and/or industries as they relate to applications. The use of complex criteria to develop scoring systems is a core competency of the EIU. For more information about the process employed by the EIU to perform CPE, you may review EIU's process document, "Community Priority Evaluation Panel and its Processes" (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/cpe/panel-process-07aug14-en.pdf>).

You further stated that not publishing information about the CPE evaluators is "inconsistent with the other New gTLD Dispute Resolution Processes." Please note that the CPE process is a contention resolution mechanism, intended to resolve cases where two or more applicants for an identical or confusingly similar string successfully complete all previous stages of the evaluation and dispute resolution processes. The New gTLD Program's dispute resolution processes, such as the Community Objection process, provide parties with standing the opportunity object to an application and have their concerns considered by an independent panel of experts. The dispute resolution and contention resolution procedures were developed independently of each other with their distinct purposes in mind.

Finally, in regards to your concerns about the Clarifying Question process, we would like to clarify that Initial Evaluation and CPE are also independent processes, conducted by distinct evaluation panels. The Clarifying Question process implemented within Initial Evaluation was not intended to apply to CPE.

ICANN and the Economist Intelligence Union have conducted CPE in accordance with the Applicant Guidebook criteria and CPE guidelines. This includes honoring the "stringent requirements for qualification of a community-based application" (AGB Section 4.2.3). We acknowledge the concerns expressed in your letter, but ICANN is following the principles agreed to by the wider community to process all community-based applications in a consistent, fair, and transparent manner. To view a detailed report of the information considered by the CPE Panel in the evaluation of HOTEL Top-Level-Domain S.a.r.l.'s application, review the CPE report at (<https://www.icann.org/sites/default/files/tlds/hotel/hotel-cpe-1-1032-95136-en.pdf>).

We hope that this information is helpful to you. Should you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the New gTLD Customer Service Center at newgtld@icann.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine A. Willett", written in a cursive style.

Christine A. Willett
Vice President, GDD Operations