

Akram Atallah  
President Global Domains Division, ICANN  
By e-mail

6 February 2014

Dear Akram,

As CEO of London & Partners, London's official promotional agency (and the parent company of Dot London Domains Ltd, the applicant for .london gTLD), I am the Mayor of London's lead representative on .london. I write to express both our excitement at the approaching launch of .london, but also to highlight our concerns and disappointment regarding two issues which significantly impact on our ability to have a successful launch. We see London's own top-level domain as a fantastic opportunity for the city but currently feel like we have our hands tied behind our back as we approach our launch.

The first issue is name collisions. I am advised that the issue is highly complex and that ICANN are having to seek a balanced approach taking into account the evidence and many opinions on the severity of the potential risks posed. However, I would like to highlight that if it goes ahead as planned, .london domains are set to go on sale with over 3,000 genuine terms blocked, hence bringing overarching consequences to the ability to sell and promote .london. The list includes names that London entities are highly likely to register, containing for example:

*burberry, business, capitalfm, fashion, heathrow, hotels, madametussauds, mayor, paulsmith, police, selfridges, shard, soho, tatemodern, thames, theatre, thetimes, transport, westminster*

I therefore urge you to separate out the genuine risks from the mass of domain names which are likely to be the most popular search terms relating to .london. In this way we ask that you provide a route that unblocks those names which pose no genuine risk ahead of our launch.

The second issue derives from the very commendable efforts to protect Intellectual Property rights in new gTLDs. Although we are very much in favour of these efforts, one of the unintended consequences of this approach is the difficulty in gaining approval for our Pioneer programme within ICANN's framework. Earlier drafts of the Registry Agreement allowed for a Registry to use 100 names for the promotion of the TLD, but this was later changed by Rights Protection Mechanism requirements (RPMs). We have been working with London-based organisations for several months on a Pioneer programme to showcase .london at launch. Following the new rules set out by the RPMs, we have had to apply for approval for this Programme, and submitted our Launch Application Request ("Request") on 15 January 2014. Two and a half weeks after our submission, we have now been advised that we will likely not receive a response for another two weeks.

I understand that Berlin and Vienna also requested exceptions to certain elements of the RPMs but had to abandon these efforts after failing to receive approval in 6 to 8 weeks. It is imperative for the promotion and success of .london that we have this limited flexibility in order to move forward with our launch plans. On this issue, I respectfully ask for your involvement to swiftly review and approve our Request so that we can use the best that London has to offer to showcase its new gTLD.

On a more positive note, one of the functions of London & Partners is to operate the city's convention bureau, as such we are delighted to assist ICANN with bringing ICANN's 50<sup>th</sup> meeting to London later this year. We are speaking with your operational and PR teams about how we can use this opportunity together to showcase the new gTLD programme. We would be very pleased to reserve the name [icann50.london](http://icann50.london) for your use to host the website for the London meeting. We believe this would be a wholly appropriate way for ICANN to showcase new gTLDs.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to move forward the two issues raised above, resolution of which will enable us to launch .london in the best way possible.

Finally, I look forward to showcasing .london and the new gTLD programme together this June.

Yours sincerely,



**Gordon Innes**  
**CEO, London & Partners**

Cc: Fadi Chehade  
Sally Costerton  
Christine Willett  
Mark Carvell [UK GAC representative]