



**Comments to the ICANN Board on the Topic of the Final Steps in the
RFP for sTLDs Process
at the Public Forum, Rome, March 6, 2004**

Mr.Chairman, Members of the Board,

Having had an opportunity to review the information provided to the Community yesterday, regarding the completion of the sTLD RFP process, we would like to make the Board aware of the business realities that are impacted by the decision to establish a period of as many as 180-days for selection of new sTLDs. And ask that this period be shortened. We believe that this can be done, and still achieve the necessary due diligence which we expect to fulfill with regard to “.travel”.

To put my comments here into context, Tralliance Corporation will be transferring the requisite filing fee of \$45,000 this Wednesday, March 10th, and submitting its application for “.travel” by March 15th, both, per the RFP timeline. Filing our application will be the culmination of an effort that began almost four years ago when we started working within the ICANN community to move the sTLD RFP initiative forward, bringing it to this point.

The 6-month timeframe announced yesterday has drastic consequences, not only for “.travel”, but for all applicants. In our case, this elongated period will force me, as Chief Executive of Tralliance, to take actions to put the planning and development underlying a successful TLD, essentially, on hold. More specifically, once we pay our fee, and file our application, I will be forced to tell my staff that they will be put on a 150-day furlough – until August 1st. That return-to-work-date, is, of course, contingent upon “.travel” being selected to go forward with the technical and commercial part of the evaluation process in the Autumn. I ask you to consider the fact that the most important prerequisite in applying for a sTLD is to gather and demonstrate constituency support. The travel industry is an incredibly diverse and distributed one and in order to meet ICANN’s requirement, we have expended significant resources to deliver what was asked of us. Today the entire industry stands behind the Tralliance-led initiative. Yet, yesterday we heard that the travel and tourism industry will be forced – yet again – to sit and wait, and sadly watch the momentum that we have diligently and consistently built up for the “.travel” initiative over the last four years, dissipate over the coming six months.

Businesses need certainty and predictability. They also demand timeliness.

After so much investment, the impact on the successful launch of this new and important Registry – as a result of this unreasonably long timeline to complete what has been an endless process is – in a word, distressing.

We believe that the requisite evaluation process can be completed in weeks instead of months – particularly as any Staff time required for the evaluation is extremely limited. However, in no event should this phase of the process go beyond 3 months for completion of the process. Because of the nature of ICANN, we have all witnessed more deadlines missed than kept. Therefore, we respectfully request that the Board mandate the selection for new sTLDs be completed before Kuala Lumpur [July 17, 2004].

We ask the Board to exercise its authority over this matter, and thank you for your careful consideration of this request, which is made on behalf of the global travel and tourism constituency, and the other sTLD applicants that may apply in this round.

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President & CEO
Tralliance Corporation