



World Intellectual Property Organization String Confusion and Legal Rights Objections

May 20, 2026 | 14:00-15:00 UTC

May 27, 2026 | 06:00-07:00 UTC



Understanding Legal Rights & String Confusion Objections in ICANN's New gTLD Program

What they are, when they are coming, and where to find key resources.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Context
- Timelines
- LRO
- SCO
- Procedural Matters
- Resources
- Q&A



WIPO as a Dispute Resolution Service Provider

WIPO Global Leader

- UDRP author
- 80,000+ cases resolved
- 140,000+ domain names reclaimed
- Multilingual case options
- Over 25 years of experience
- 85+ ccTLDs



New gTLD Objections



Why Objections Exist

Protect rights holders

Prevent user confusion

Maintain DNS stability and predictability

Ensure fair competition among applicants

The Four Objection Types

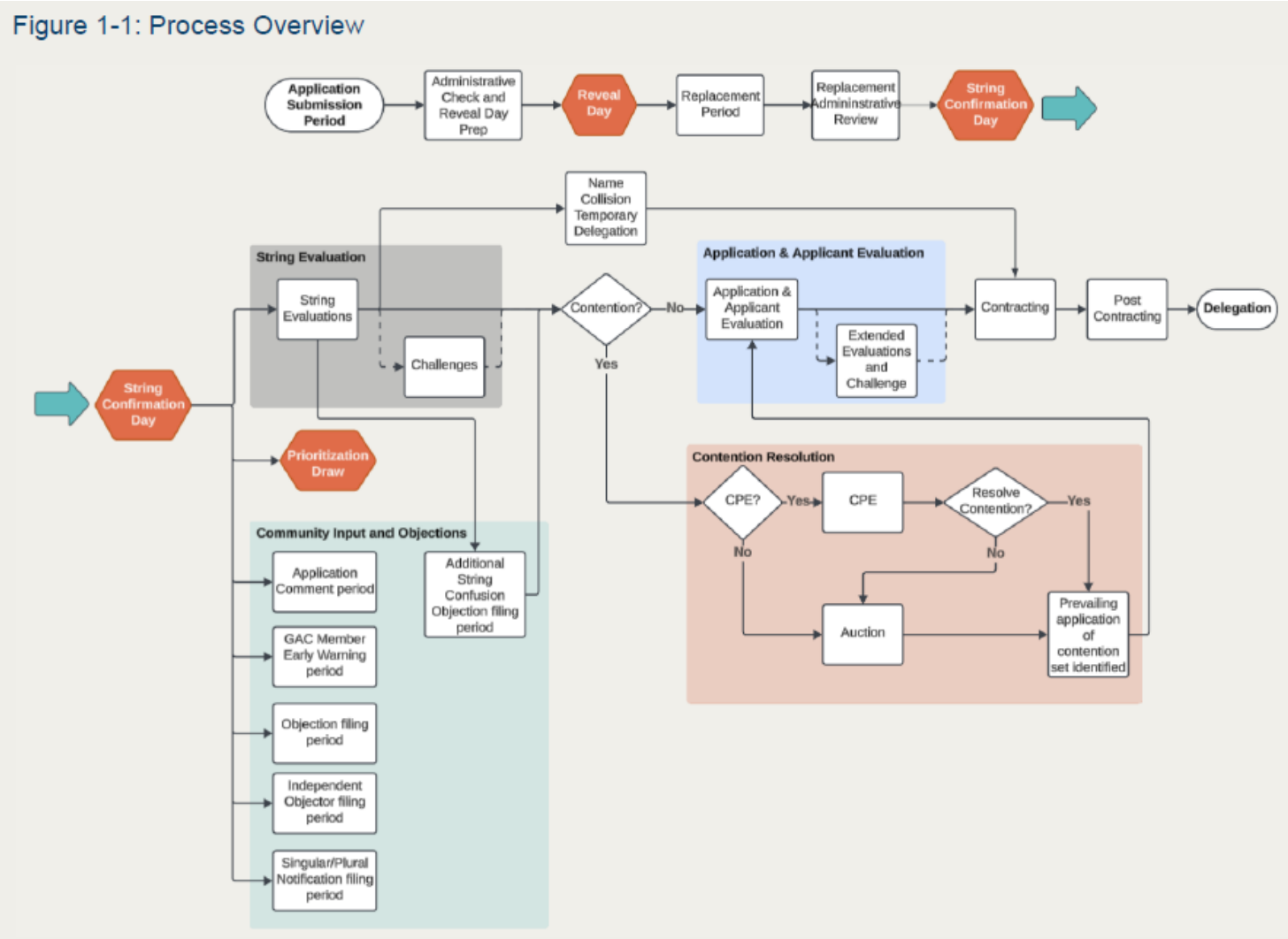
Legal Rights Objection (LRO) – WIPO

String Confusion Objection (SCO) –
WIPO

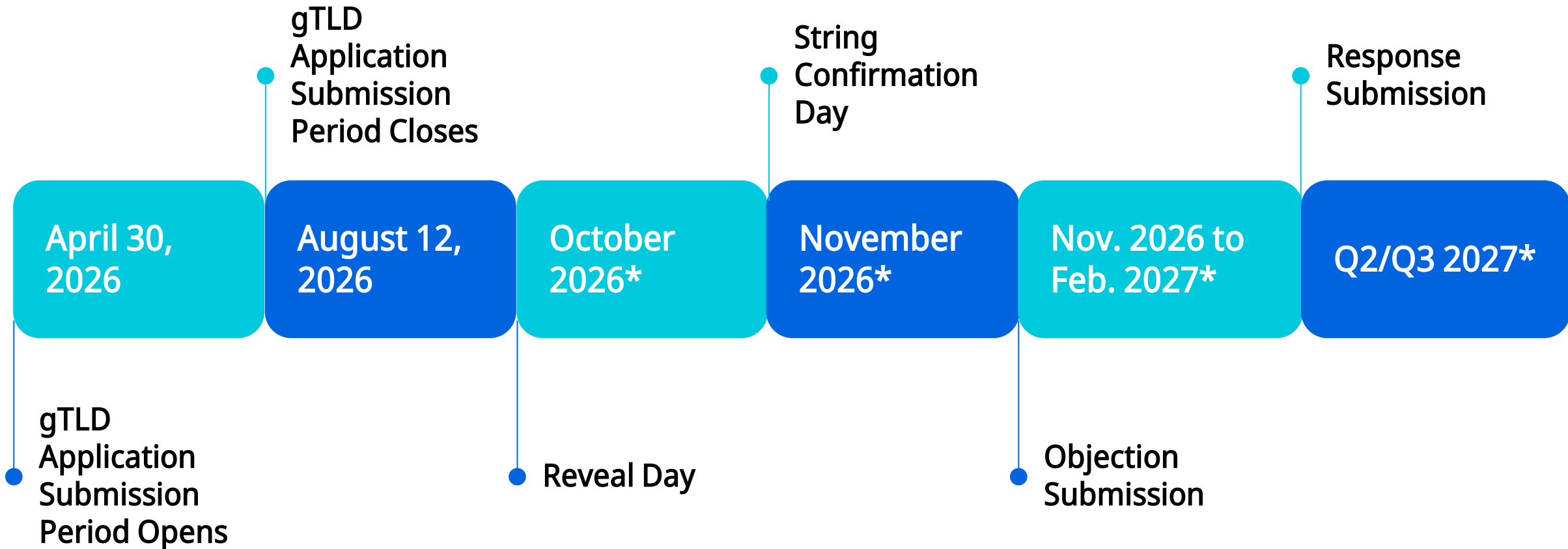
Limited Public Interest Objection – ICC

Community Objection – ICC

Objections in the New gTLD Lifecycle



Key Timelines



What is an LRO and Who can Object?



Ground

- string infringes existing legal (trademark-based) rights

Standing

- A rights holder (brand owner)
- An IGO (meeting criteria for registration of .INT domain name)

LRO Outcomes



Objection upheld:

Application is ineligible to proceed

- If upheld only for a variant string, other primary and unaffected variant strings may proceed

Objection denied:

Application continues to next stage of process

- Possibility of “RVC” modification before progressing to next stage

Empirical Outcomes and Substantive Lessons from 2013



Results of LROs in 2013



Proceeding Outcome

- 2 Objections Non-compliant
- 6 Proceedings Terminated
- 4 Objections Upheld
- 59 Objections Rejected

WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center End Report on Legal Rights Objection Procedure 2013



Evidentiary Burden on Objectors

Treatment of Descriptive Strings

What is an SCO and Who can Object?



Ground

- string is similar visually, aurally, or in meaning

Standing

- an existing gTLD,
- an existing ccTLD, or
- an applicant for another applied-for string

SCO Outcomes



Objection upheld:

- Objector is another applicant:
strings placed in a contention set
- .Brand String Change
- Objector is existing TLD

Objection denied:

Application continues to next stage of process

String Similarity Evaluation vs SCO



String Similarity Evaluation

Visual similarity only

String Similarity Evaluation Panel

Built into application process

SCO

Visual, aural, semantic

String Confusion Objection Panel

Requires filing by Parties with standing

Singular / Plural String Notifications

Notification period runs for 30 days immediately after String Confirmation Day.

Opportunity to Challenge within 21 days of Notification

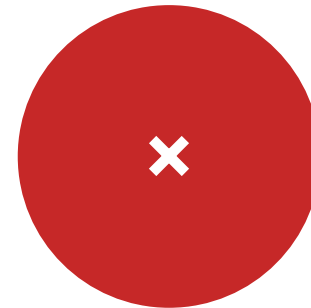
Outcomes:



No impact



Contention Set



Application
cannot proceed

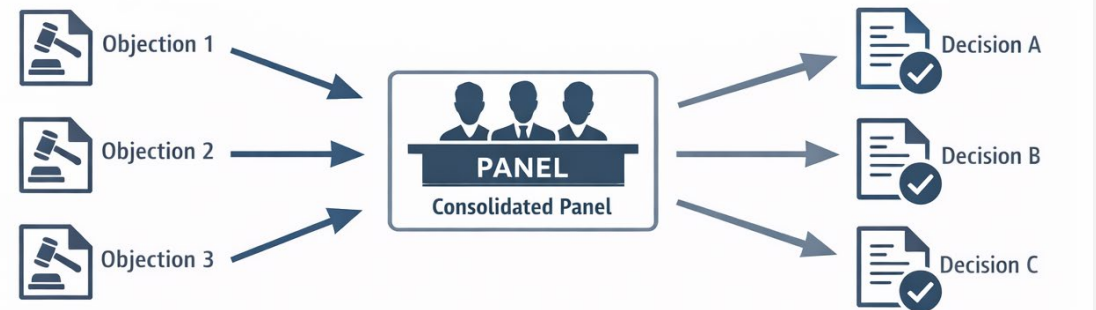
Quick Look Review

- Introduces a new procedural feature
- Applies to both objections and appeals
- Allows earlier panel involvement
- Helps deter abusive filings and reduce defense costs



Consolidation

- Available at both the objection and appeal level
- String Confusion Objections may be consolidated with a single Panel Determination
- No ability to consolidate objections on different grounds
- WIPO fees may be reduced



Cooling off period, Mediation, Settlement

Parties may pursue a consensual resolution at any stage

Available options include cooling-off periods and mediation

Proceedings may be suspended or ended through settlement

Appeals

- **Outcome:**
 - Reject the appeal and uphold Objection Panel Determination
 - Substitute own Appellate Panel Determination instead of the underlying Objection Panel Determination
- Filed by non-successful party in an objection
- respondent may, but is not required to, file a response

WIPO Schedule of Fees and Costs

Line Item Description	Per Objection	Per Appeal	Additional Details
Base Fees and Costs			
Filing Fee (Single-person Panel)	USD 2,000	USD 2,000	The Filing Fee for filing a Response is the same. The Filing Fee, for each party, is non-refundable.
Filing Fee (Three-person Panel)	USD 3,000	USD 3,000	The Filing Fee for filing a Response is the same. The Filing Fee, for each party, is non-refundable.
Single-person Panel	USD 8,000	USD 8,000	
Three-person Panel	USD 20,000	USD 20,000	Presiding Panelist: USD 10,000 Co-Panelist: USD 5,000
Mediation Services	USD 2,500	N/A	Applied to Mediator Fee, WIPO Mediation administration fee waived.
Virtual Hearing	USD 0	N/A	

Where to Find Guidance

[New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#)

Dispute Resolution Provider Rules

[ICANN New gTLD Program: 2026 Round webpage](#)

[WIPO Center Report on Legal Rights Objection Procedure 2013](#)

WIPO [LRO](#) and [SCO](#) webpages



LRO



SCO

What Stakeholders Should Keep in Mind

- Monitor published applications early
- Assess potential conflicts proactively
- Understand rights-based risks
- Prepare for possible contention or objection
- Review WIPO Rules before filing or responding

Q&A



Contact WIPO at lro@wipo.int or sco@wipo.int