

Client Alert

Intellectual Property Group
Tax & Personal Planning Group

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New Domain Names for Global NGO Community

The Public Interest Registry (“PIR”), the not-for-profit operator of the .ORG domain, recently announced that it has formally submitted its applications to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) for the .NGO and .ONG domain extensions. If approved by ICANN, the new domain extensions may go into effect as early as January 2013.

The .NGO and .ONG domains would provide an exclusive domain extension for charities and other non-profits seeking immediate recognition online and broader opportunities for public engagement, funding and partnerships. The widely recognized acronym “NGO” stands for “Non-Governmental Organization”. The acronym “ONG” is widely recognized in Europe (meaning, for example, “Organisation Non Gouvernementale” in French).

The .NGO and .ONG domains would be administered as closed domains exclusively for charities, non-profits and NGOs. There would be a verification component at the time of registration. Charities, non-profits and NGOs that currently have an .ORG extension would not be required to make the transition.

PIR has also announced it will offer an online directory service of NGOs registered with the extension to increase visibility, searchability and the ability to share information in a closed group setting. Additionally, PIR reports that it plans to reinvest the money it receives from .NGO and .ONG registrations into the non-profit sphere. PIR will help grassroots NGOs in the developing world get online by allowing them to set up websites through a cost-effective web service.

Olshan will circulate further information as it becomes available. If the new domain extensions are approved, we believe that all U.S.-recognized charities should consider adding the .NGO domain. While not required, adding the new domain may help a charity in its marketing efforts and would enhance its public recognition as a not-for-profit organization. It may also prevent another not-for-profit from using the charity’s domain name. Please feel free to contact the attorneys listed below if you would like to discuss this client alert.

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