

Question 157: No Known Opposition

Is there any opposition to the applying entity, application, or applied-for string that the applying entity is aware of? If yes, please explain.

1. No Known Opposition

The applying entity is not presently aware of any formal opposition to the .chess application, the applied-for string, or the proposed operation of .chess as a Community gTLD. The application is supported and endorsed by FIDE, the international governing body for chess, and has been structured to serve the interests of the global chess community.

The applying entity nevertheless recognizes that a community as large and diverse as the global chess community may include participants with differing perspectives concerning the operation of a new community-based namespace. In particular, operators of existing online chess platforms, other commercial participants, prospective registrants, rights holders, or participants outside FIDE's formal organizational structure could raise questions concerning the scope, governance, eligibility requirements, allocation procedures, or commercial operation of .chess.

The applying entity has sought to address these potential concerns through the structure of the application, the separately submitted .chess Community Registration Policy (attached to the response to Question 137), the Community Registration Policies proposed for inclusion in Specification 12 of the Registry Agreement, FIDE's continuing governance role, and mechanisms for verification, dispute resolution, community consultation, and periodic policy review.

2. Potential Opposition from Existing Online Chess Platforms and Commercial Participants

Operators of existing online chess platforms or other commercial participants could express concern that .chess might be used to favor a particular commercial platform, displace existing online chess services, condition access to the namespace upon use of particular services, or provide the Registry Operator or its Affiliates with an unfair commercial advantage.

The .chess TLD is not intended to replace existing online chess platforms, become the exclusive location for playing chess online, or require members of the chess community to use any particular commercial chess service. Rather, .chess is intended to provide trusted naming

infrastructure through which the diverse institutions, organizations, businesses, professionals, players, and other participants comprising the global chess community may establish identifiable online presences.

The Community Registration Policy approved through FIDE's governance process establishes the community-based eligibility, name-selection, allocation, verification, and governance framework for the TLD. In addition, the applying entity has proposed separate Community Registration commitments in Questions 151–153 that expressly address platform neutrality.

Under those proposed commitments, the Registry Operator will apply registrant eligibility requirements on a platform-neutral basis. Eligibility will not depend upon a Registrant's use of, affiliation with, or commercial relationship with any particular online chess platform, the Registry Operator, or an Affiliate of the Registry Operator, except where that relationship independently establishes eligibility under an otherwise applicable eligibility category.

Similarly, the Registry Operator will not provide preferential access to or activation of a domain name based solely upon such a commercial relationship, and priority within applicable community launch phases will be based upon the Registrant's institutional or community status under the applicable launch criteria rather than commercial affiliation with a particular platform, the Registry Operator, or its Affiliates.

Accordingly, participation in the .chess namespace will not require a Registrant to use a particular online chess platform or purchase products or services from the Registry Operator or its Affiliates. Existing online chess platforms and other chess-related businesses may themselves qualify as eligible community members where they satisfy the same applicable eligibility and name-selection requirements.

These commitments are intended to ensure that .chess complements, rather than displaces or privileges among, the diverse platforms, services, businesses, organizations, and other channels through which the global chess community currently interacts.

3. Concern that the Registry Operator Could Commercialize a Community Asset for Its Own Benefit

Because Chess Domains Limited will operate the registry as a commercial enterprise, some participants could question whether control of .chess might be used primarily to advance the commercial interests of the Registry Operator or its Affiliates rather than the interests of the identified community.

The application contains structural safeguards intended to address that concern. Registrant eligibility, name selection, community-priority allocation, verification, the Registration Eligibility Dispute Resolution Policy ("REDRP"), FIDE oversight, community consultation, and periodic policy review constrain the Registry Operator's ability to redefine the community or operate the namespace solely for its own commercial interests.

The Registry Operator may operate the TLD on a commercially sustainable basis. Commercial sustainability, however, does not alter the stated community purpose of the namespace or the Registry Operator's obligations under the Community Registration Policies proposed for inclusion in Specification 12. The additional platform-neutrality commitments described above further provide that access to and allocation within the namespace will not be conditioned upon or favored because of a commercial relationship with the Registry Operator, its Affiliates, or a particular online chess platform.

The governance framework is therefore designed to ensure that commercial operation of the registry remains consistent with the TLD's stated purpose of serving the global chess community.

4. Concerns Regarding FIDE's Role

Some participants outside FIDE's formal organizational structure could question whether FIDE's endorsement and governance role would cause .chess to serve only FIDE, its Member Federations, or persons formally affiliated with FIDE.

The identified community and the eligibility framework are intentionally broader than formal institutional membership in FIDE. FIDE provides the established international governance structure supporting the application and represents the organized global chess community through its Continents, Zones, Member Federations, Affiliated Organisations, competitions, rules, rating and title systems, and other activities. The Community Registration Policy nevertheless recognizes participation in the broader chess community beyond formal FIDE membership.

Eligible categories therefore extend to clubs, organizers, players, arbiters and other officials, trainers and coaches, contributors, media organizations, software and database developers, educational institutions, businesses, nonprofit organizations, sponsors, and other persons and organizations having an objectively verifiable nexus to the chess community.

FIDE's role provides institutional organization, endorsement, accountability, and continuity for the community application without limiting the eligible community exclusively to formal FIDE members.

5. Concerns Regarding Eligibility or Exclusion

Some individuals or organizations could question whether the eligibility requirements are too restrictive or could exclude legitimate participants in the global chess community.

The eligibility framework is designed to establish a meaningful and objectively verifiable community boundary while recognizing the many different ways in which individuals and organizations participate in chess. Eligibility is therefore not limited to formal membership in FIDE or a Member Federation.

Different forms of objective evidence may be appropriate for different categories of community participation. Where centralized records exist, eligibility may be established through those records. For other categories, reasonable documentary or other objective evidence may demonstrate participation in, contribution to, or support of the chess community.

The REDRP provides an administrative challenge mechanism for an Applicant that believes a registration or activation request was improperly denied under the eligibility or name-selection requirements, as well as for third parties challenging the compliance of an existing Registrant or registered domain name. This mechanism provides an additional safeguard against erroneous or inconsistent application of the Community Registration Policies.

6. Concerns Regarding Valuable or Generic Chess-Related Second-Level Names

Members of the community could disagree concerning the appropriate allocation of valuable or significant second-level names corresponding to FIDE bodies, Member Federations, chess disciplines or formats, tournaments, organizations, players, trademarks, well-established chess terminology, or other desirable names.

The application addresses this potential source of disagreement through specific name-selection classifications, reserved-name provisions, community-priority launch procedures, verification requirements, and dispute-resolution mechanisms. The applicable rules focus upon the relationship among the requested domain name, the Registrant, and the chess community rather than treating willingness or ability to pay for a domain name as sufficient entitlement to it.

These requirements are intended both to protect important community identifiers and to provide predictable standards for allocating names among eligible community participants.

7. Trademark and Rights-Holder Concerns

Trademark owners and other rights holders could question whether community-priority allocation, reserved-name provisions, or community eligibility requirements affect their rights.

The .chess TLD will remain subject to the applicable ICANN Rights Protection Mechanisms and other requirements of the Registry Agreement. Community eligibility and name-selection requirements operate in addition to, rather than in place of, applicable ICANN rights-protection requirements.

Possession of trademark or other rights in a term therefore does not, by itself, establish that an Applicant satisfies the separate community eligibility requirements applicable to .chess. Conversely, the Community Registration Policies do not eliminate or supersede the protections available to rights holders under applicable ICANN requirements.

8. Concerns About Registry Decision-Making and Accountability

Some participants could question whether the Registry Operator will have excessive discretion over eligibility determinations, name selection, reserved names, allocation decisions, or future policy amendments.

The application addresses these concerns through published eligibility and name-selection criteria, objective verification standards, the REDRP, FIDE's continuing governance involvement, community consultation requirements, transparency measures, and periodic policy review.

The separately submitted Community Registration Policy establishes a formal governance framework for the continuing administration and evolution of the namespace. The Community Registration Policies will be reviewed at least once every five years, and amendments affecting core community eligibility, name-selection, or community-purpose commitments are subject to the applicable community consultation and FIDE governance processes.

In addition, the Community Registration Policies approved by ICANN for inclusion in Specification 12 will constitute enforceable obligations under the Registry Agreement. These

mechanisms are intended to ensure that fundamental community commitments do not depend solely upon the discretion of registry management.

9. Conclusion: Opposition Does Not Undermine the Identified Community

The applying entity recognizes that a large, international, and diverse community will not necessarily have uniform views regarding every aspect of the operation of .chess. The possibility that an individual platform, commercial participant, prospective Registrant, rights holder, or other stakeholder could disagree with a particular aspect of the application does not alter the organized and longstanding character of the identified global chess community.

The application has been structured to accommodate the diversity of that community while maintaining objective community boundaries, established institutional governance, transparent registration requirements, platform-neutral access, accountability mechanisms, and procedures through which community concerns can be raised and addressed.

The applying entity is not aware of any current formal opposition to the .chess application and believes that the safeguards described above address the principal categories of concern that could reasonably arise concerning the operation of .chess as a Community gTLD.