At-Large's Subsequent Procedures Scorecard: Applicant Guidebook

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Draft shared with At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG) Call
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Topic/Area:	[12] APPLICANT GUIDEBOOK [2.4.1]		Priority:	MEDIUM	Settled On:	07.09.2020
Related:	• None					
Key Issues:	What improvements can be made to the AGB to make it as comprehensive, clear and user-friendly not only to applicants but also commenters, reviewers, evaluators or anyone interested in participating in all aspects of the New gTLD Program application process.					
Policy Goals:	• Some form of the Applicant Guidebook should be utilized for future new gTLD procedures. • However, usability, clarity, and practicality must be priorities when drafting future versions					
Assigned CCT-RT Rec's:	None					
References:	• SubPro Draft Final Report, 20 August 2020 • Production Document_SubPro Draft Final Report, 15 April 2020 • SubPro WG Pre-Launch Activities_Summary Document, 7 January 2020					

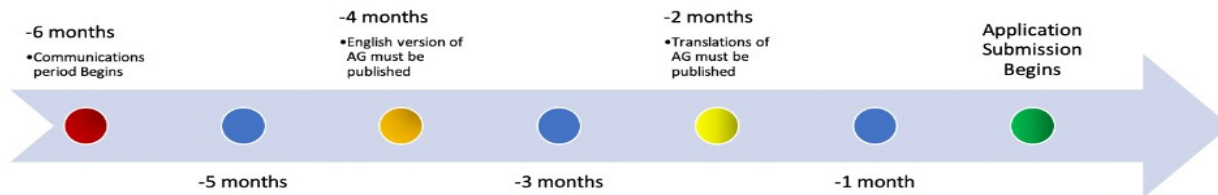| What has SubPro PDP WG concluded?	**What will SubPro PDP WG recommend?**	Is this acceptable? What else needs to be done and by/with whom?
1. WG generally agreed that an AGB of some form should continue to be utilized, therefore should focus on ways to improve AGB to better serve key programmatic goals – of importance is making AGB widely accessible, easy to understand for a broad, global audience. So, all recommendations and IGs to support **usability, clarity, and practicality** of the AGB for its primary audience.	Affirmation 12.1: WG affirms use of AGB for future new gTLD procedures as was the case in 2012 round. Further affirms AGB should continue to be available in the 6 UN languages as was the case in 2012 round. Affirmation 12.2: WG affirms Implementation Guideline A from the 2007 policy, "The application process will provide a pre-defined roadmap for applicants that encourages the submission of applications for new TL domains." Affirmation with Modification 12.3: • WG reaffirms with amendment, Implementation Guideline E from the 2007 policy, "The *commencement of the* application submission period will be at least four (4) months after the issue of the *Applicant Guidebook* and ICANN will promoted the opening of the application round."	Yes, all acceptable.

- The term "Request for Proposal" in the original Implementation Guideline substituted with "Applicant Guidebook" to reflect actual name of document used in 2012
- The term "application submission period" replaced with "commencement of the application submission period".

Recommendation 12.4:

- WG recommends focussing on the user when drafting future versions of the AGB and prioritizing usability, clarity and practicality.
- AGB should effectively address needs of new applicants and those already familiar with the application process; also those who do not speak English as a first language in addition to native English speaker.

Recommendation 12.5: English AGB must be issued at least four (4) months prior to commencement of application submission period.

Recommendation 12.6: All other translated versions of the AGB, including in the 6 UN languages, must be available no later than two (2) months prior to the commencement of the application submission period.

Implementation Guidance 12.7: All translation of the final AGB (per Affirmation 12.1)) should be available at or as closed as practicable in time to the point at which the English version is published.

	Implementation Guidance 12.8: To promote usability and clarity, write the AGB using Plain Language standards to the extent possible and avoid complex legal terminology when not necessary. [1] Implementation Guidance 12.9: To ensure AGB is a practical resource for users, core text should be focused on the application process. Historical context and policy should be included in appendices or a companion guide linked to relevant provisions. Include step-by-step instructions with clear guidance about how process may vary in the case of applications for different categories of TLDs or other variable situations. Implementation Guidance 12.10: In service of usability, ICANN Org should ensure AGB has robust Table of Contents and Index. Online version should be tagged and searchable, so that users may easily find sections of text applicable to them. Recommendation 12.11: Application fees for each application must be published in that round's AGB.	
Main Positions of Concern:	No specific issues found to be problematic, no further intervention needed.

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[1] https://www.plainlanguage.gov/about/definitions/