
YVETTE GUIGINEAUX:

Hello, everyone. Welcome to the ICANN Grant Program Webinar being held on Wednesday, December 7, 0600 UTC. My name is Yvette Guigneaux, and Pamela Smith and myself will be your remote participation managers for this webinar, which is being recorded and will be posted online shortly after we conclude.

This session, like all other ICANN activities, is governed by the ICANN Standard of Expected Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment policy.

If you have a comment or question you would like addressed, during the Q&A discussion portion of our presentation at the end, feel free to raise your hand or to follow the noted format instructions that will be placed in the chat.

And now I will hand things over to the Senior Vice President Planning and Chief Financial Officer, Xavier Calvez.

XAVIER CALVEZ:

Thank you, Yvette. Thank you, everyone, and welcome to this webinar. This webinar is about the ICANN Grant Program, which is in development. The ICANN collected over the past years a number of auction proceeds from the New gTLD program and these funds are an opportunity for ICANN to do good through a grant program and the community has developed recommendations for this program and the Board has adopted them and we are now in the phase of designing and

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developing this fine program so that it can then be the vehicle to distribute those funds through grants over the next few years.

I'll only say a few words and let the team then describe the current work that is going on and where we are. Obviously, this is an activity that ICANN has not carried out in the past. It's a new activity. We want to make sure we do this carefully, that we do this well, that we do this transparently and that we give true and full response and support to the community work that has occurred to develop guidelines on this program and that this program obviously achieves the purpose of enabling various applicants to do good with those funds in the benefit of the Internet.

With that, I'll let the team describe the process, the work that has already been developed, the work that is ongoing and the next steps on this program. With that, please, Giovanni, go ahead.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thank you, Xavier, and also thank you to Yvette, Pamela, and Sarah, and Mike and all those who have worked hard to make this webinar possible. My name is Giovanni Seppia, Vice President Implementation Operations department, and together with my colleague, Negar Farzinnia, Director in my department, we will run this webinar on the grant program.

The Implementation Operations department is quite a new department at ICANN which was created a couple of years ago within the office of the Chief Financial Officer. We are responsible for the implementation of Board-approved non-policy recommendations as well as for the

implementation of some projects, such as enhancing the effectiveness of the ICANN multi-stakeholder model and the grant program. With that said, we can move to the next slide, please.

So, the content of this webinar, this webinar is going to be divided into four sections. During the first part of the webinar, we will provide you with the ICANN grant program background, and afterwards we will share information on the grant program preliminary design and key elements which we have been working on during the past months.

During the following section, we'll speak about the first grant cycle and a tentative timeline for the launch of the first call of applications. And the webinar will end with an overview of the activities that the Implementation Operations department, my department, is working on to make sure that the design of the program is completed and also the first call for applications is launched in a timely manner.

I'm now going to leave the floor to my colleague, Negar Farzinnia, who is going to walk us through the first two sections of this webinar. Thank you, Negar.

NEGAR FARZINNIA:

Thank you, Giovanni. Hello, everyone. Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. As Giovanni noted, my name is Negar Farzinnia and I'm a member of the Implementation Operations team and I'm glad to have the opportunity today to provide you with a bit of an update on the ICANN Grant Program.

I will start off by providing a bit of background on this project and then we'll go over some preliminary design and key elements of this project before we move on to the other sections of the presentation. Let's go to the next slide, please. And one more. Thank you very much.

So, if you may recall, as part of the 2012 New gTLD Top-Level Domain Program, any established entity could apply to form and operate a registry. In cases where more than one application was received for the same or similar top-level domains, ICANN encouraged the applicants to resolve the contentions among themselves, but in some cases, that was not possible. And in such situations, the Applicant Guidebook outlined a last-resort mechanism which is an auction that was operated by an ICANN authorized provider.

Of the overall 1,930 applications, there was a total of 234 contention sets, of which 16 to date have resulted in an auction of last resorts, the proceeds of which are referred to as auction proceeds.

As per the guidelines that were noted in the Applicant Guidebook, the proceeds from the auctions were set aside until the use of these funds could be determined properly. Let's go to the next slide, please.

So, here's a quick overview of the timeline of the activities leading up to Board action on this program. In 2015, the ICANN Board and community started discussions regarding how best to determine the use of the auction proceeds. These discussions ultimately led to the creation of the cross-community working group on the new gTLD auctions proceeds that was chartered by all supporting organizations and advisory committees and this cross-community group started their work in

January of 2017 to develop a mechanism to allocate the auction proceeds.

By September of 2020, the cross-community working group finished their work and submitted their final report to the Board for consideration. And ultimately in June 2022 the Board accepted the recommendations from the cross-community working group on auction proceeds and directed ICANN Org to develop the grant program. Next slide, please.

The final report of the cross-community working group on auction proceeds includes 12 recommendations, implementation guidelines, and other related material. The 12 recommendations cover various information about mechanisms through which the grant program could be established, conflict of interest provisions, application tranches, objectives of the proceeds allocations, safeguard measures, ICANN accountability mechanisms, appeals, and any resulting bylaws changes, review mechanism of the program of the cycles of how the grants are funded or applied and really some details around ICANN Org and constituent parts of the ICANN ecosystem applying for proceeds, among a number of other elements that are noted here on this slide. So, let's go to the next slide, please.

Ultimately, once the Board received the final report, they reviewed the recommendations of the cross-community working group's final report, the feasibility information related to those recommendations against the 2018 Board principles and an ICANN Org assessment document. And as a result of this review, on 12th of June of 2022, the Board formally approved these recommendations and directed ICANN Org to take all

actions as directed within the Board scorecard and resolution to ultimately implement the ICANN Grant Program that is aligned with ICANN's mission and based on some governance practices.

The Board also requested for ICANN Org to develop a preliminary design and implementation plan which ICANN Org completed and provided an update on that to the Board on 10th of October of 2022, as per the deadline that was set by the Board in its resolution. Next slide, please.

Okay, let's talk about the preliminary design and some of its key elements. The Grant Program is going to be carried out as a brand new department of ICANN Org under the oversight and authority of our Chief Financial Officer and SVP of Planning, Xavier Calvez, and this department will be responsible for all aspects of the program and will manage all necessary resources, whether they're internal or external contractors, vendors, whatever resource is needed to conduct this program effectively. And of course it is anticipated that elements of this program will be outsourced where appropriate.

The Grant Program is going to be operated in a series of grant-making cycles until the proceeds are depleted. And during each cycle, the program will be using an independent panel to assess the projects and determine the list of the projects that were going to be recommended to the Board to be awarded grants.

The Board will decide whether it will approve the full slate of applications recommended for funding by the panel in each cycle, and in taking that decision, they will consider whether the rules of the process were followed by the panel properly.

Some of the key considerations when designing the Grant Program and each of the grant cycles are of course transparency, safeguarding against conflict of interest, diversity of the composition of the independent panel, as well as a geographical distribution of the grants. Next slide, please.

So, as you can see on this chart, the program design sets out the steps that are required to conduct a full cycle of grant. The design purposefully focuses on the first cycle of the program with the intention that there may be some refinements and improvements that we need to make in the future cycles in order to enhance the performance and the conducting of the Grant Program in the future cycles.

So, overall, each cycle is going to include five phases. As noted here, first phase is going to be about planning and setting up the cycle, after which on phase two we will open the application window. Once the application window closes and during phase three, we will conduct application due diligence, assessment, and selection of the applications that are to be awarded grants.

Phase four is where the grants are awarded to the selected applicants and applications and, last but not least, phase five will go through post-award processes and closure of the cycle. And in the next few slides, we will talk a bit more detail about each of these phase, so let's go to the next slide, please. Thank you very much.

Okay. So, for the first cycle, the planning is going to include implementation design of all of the elements of the program, including

setting up the grant department. This is work that's already in progress and is moving forward.

The planning for the grant cycles is going to include setting up outreach and awareness activities, developing all of the program materials for internal operations, for applicants, and for the panel that will conduct the assessment of the applications as well as setting up the independent application assessment panel and their onboarding. So the design and implementation of all of these elements have started. They are in progress and it is with the ultimate goal of starting the first grant cycle that we are developing all of these elements. Next slide, please. Thank you.

So, phase two [inaudible] grant cycle is the application window. This is the phase that's going to include the launching of the call for proposals and an open window for applicants to submit their applications to apply for grants. During this phase, ICANN Org will obviously continue its outreach activities and will prepare for the evaluation activities that will take place once phase two concludes. And with that, let's go to the next slide.

And we'll talk a bit more about phase three now, which is about performing due diligence and application evaluation and assessment. This includes eligibility review of the applicants based on the defined criteria, the assessment of the applications based on the guidelines provided, and this will be performed by an independent panel; and ultimately the independent panel will be putting together a list of the selected applications which the panel recommends to be funded.

The list of the applications will then be submitted to the ICANN Board for its review and the Board will consider whether the rules of the Grant Program were followed based on its findings and will approve or reject the whole slate of the applications.

So, phase three is obviously a very substantive phase of the project in terms of the amount of due diligence and evaluation and assessment that needs to be done. And with that, let's go to the next slide and we'll talk about the phase four a little bit, which really centers around awarding grants to successful applications.

And this includes not only informing the applicants about the outcome of their applications, but also publishing the list of successful applications and conducting contract negotiations and, more importantly, disbursements of funds to the grantees. So another critical phase of the project and one that's going to involve a lot of processes to be developed so that we can conduct an effective cycle of grants. And let's go to the next slide, please.

And with that, we'll get to the last phase of the grant cycle which is about evaluation of each of the granted projects post-implementation. This is to ensure that the projects are being implemented as proposed and that the granted funds are used as detailed in the application. This phase is going to include reporting on the results, the procedures, and the usage of funds for complete transparency as well as a thorough review of each of the program cycles to ensure that the grant cycle functioned as we planned and expected, and also to determine if there are any areas of improvement to help enhance the next grant cycle.

So, after every cycle of grant giving, we are going to be conducting a cycle review, but in addition to that, we will also be conducting an overall program review every few cycles, and this is to ensure that the objectives of the Grant Program are being met and to assess the impact of the Grant Program in its entirety.

So, with that, let me pass the presentation over to my colleague, Giovanni, to walk you through a few more details about the first grant cycle and the next steps. Giovanni, over to you.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thanks a lot, Negar, and [inaudible], can we move to the next slide, please? And the one after, please.

So, as Negar says, the program will operate in a series of grant cycles, and for each cycle, which is likely to run on an annual basis, we will make available a portion of the proceeds.

During the first cycle, we have planned to make available \$10 million US dollars for being awarded to successful applicants. The awards will range from \$50,000 US up to \$500,000 US and we have set those limits, the lower one, to ensure that smaller organizations can apply and the upper one to mitigate certain risks that we have started to investigate and analyze. The award range and available funds are expected to expand in future cycles, based on lessons learned during the first cycle. And grantees may apply for additional grants in future cycles, which is quite important, because in some grant programs, once an applicant has received a grant, there is a barrier for the applicant to submit

further applications which is not going to be the case for the ICANN Grant Program.

If you can move to the next slide, which is the timeline for moving towards the launch of the first applications. So, as you can see from this tentative timeline, we have assessed the different steps that will bring us towards the launch of the first call for applications and this timeline is based on current estimated completion timeframes for the various activities. As you can see, there is a large part, which is dedicated to phase one which is about planning and cycle setup. This phase one is going to be much better for future cycles because, in this case, this is really the startup of the program, and therefore this is quite a longer, let's say, phase; a long time to be dedicated to this phase.

So, this timeline shows that we will be able to launch the first grant cycle by no later, let's say, than the end of the first quarter—calendar quarter—of 2024. This is our objective, and afterwards, we will, as soon as the first grant cycle is launched, there will be of course the window for the applicant to submit their application, and afterwards there's going to be a window for the evaluation procedure and the evaluation, as Negar pointed out, is touching on the eligibility of the application, the applicants, and also on the content of the application; and subsequently is going to be the process for submitting to the Board the list of selected and eligible successful applications, which once the Board has approved, will move on to the grant agreement negotiation. So there are different steps, as you can see, in this timeline; and as Negar has mentioned, during the five phases of the program. If we can go to the next slide, please. And the one after.

So, what we are currently working on is, as we have said, to design the program. So really just to put together all the information and all the good practices that are going to inform some decisions about the way the program is going to be managed and launched in the coming months.

Among those activities, as you can see, is the indeed collection of good practices to inform possible decisions. This is quite an important task because it's in line not only with the recommendation of the cross-community working group on the auction proceeds but it's also in line with the directions that the Board has given to ICANN Org for the implementation of the program.

We are also determining which activities are going to be outsourced, and therefore once there is a decision on which activities, we will be preparing the procedures for the request for proposals. And this is also a very important element of the program because we are currently investigating what internal resources we can leverage on and what are those elements of the program that will have to be outsourced.

We have also started working on listing and soon we will start producing the [inaudible] once key decisions on the program are made, and producing the program literature, but above all publishing the program literature in a timely manner is extremely important because the program literature will be the literature for the applicants and those interested to go through everything about the program, when to submit the application, how to submit the application, what are the rules for the eligibility, what are the criteria for the evaluation of the project, the application.

We are also setting up the Grant Department and also we are refining the risk assessment at [thematic] phase level. We have already started working with the subject-matter expert and the risk management team to identify and analyze possible risks that are going to be across the program and we are going to ensure that there are going to be mitigation measures for each identified risk.

And finally we are also producing a [concise overview] of the resources and ensuring cost optimization throughout the program.

And certain activities are currently developed in parallel, and therefore we expect and we are working hard to optimize the timelines that you have seen in the previous slide to make sure, again, that the launch of the first call for applications is done in a timely manner; and as I said, no later than the first calendar quarter of 2024.

With that said, the last slide—next slide, please. So the last slide is about this community space that we have already opened and this is the community space where you can find all the information about the Grant Program. We will post all the information on this community space as well as on a dedicated ICANN Org page that we are going to set up. So please stay tuned on those pages as well as on the ICANN Org page that will soon be made available.

With that said, I'm happy to open the floor for any question and answer that you may have, any questions that you may have, and we will answer to any question. So the floor is open for any questions. Thank you.

PAMELA SMITH: Hi, Giovanni. This is Pamela Smith speaking for the record. I don't have any questions from the chat but I do see that Anne Aikman-Scalese has her hand raised.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Please.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Yes, thank you to Xavier, Negar, Giovanni. Appreciate the summary and having worked on auction proceeds towards the end in the cross-community working group, it's nice to see this come to the implementation phase. I was curious about the review in relation to eligibility, in part because the risk associated with determining eligibility where oftentimes in connection with grant-making organizations, there is an objective scoring system involved in that sort of activity, so that one can avoid the risk of denying eligibility to certain applicants that can lead to risks for ICANN as an organization, and I wondered how you will recruit for that expertise, I guess, primarily and what would be the potential budget associated with the staff that has the experience and the expertise to manage these risks.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Thank you, Anne. It's a very good question, indeed. As we have said, we are currently designing the implementation of the program, and indeed the eligibility element of the applicant and also the application level are elements that we are currently working on. As I said, also collecting good practices at not only US but also international level to inform a

decision about the eligibility criteria and also the criteria for the evaluation of the project.

So, at present, we are putting together a series of information that will, let's say, support a decision on the eligibility at the different levels. And indeed, as you said, there is a high-risk component for possible applicants that may see their proposal turned down because of failure in the eligibility at the level of the application or at the level of the applicant. We will make sure this is—as I was saying, it's important to produce crystal clear program literature. So we will make sure that the program literature, especially the applicant guide, contains all clear information about what an applicant is expected from the perspective of the eligibility of the applicant itself and also the application.

I am not able to answer you about the budget, because again, we are still putting together the information. So at this stage, we are able to share the information that we have shared with this webinar. Again, there is this community space where we will make sure that we will upload information, both on the community space and ICANN Org as soon as it becomes available.

So, just asking you a bit more patience for let's say wait a bit more and in the coming months, rest assured that we will address any possible detail including the eligibility criteria and the criteria for the evaluation of the application. But it's a really good point and this is something that I and Negar and the rest of the core team and subject-matter expert are currently working on to define all the elements that you have just brought up.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Thanks. Just a quick follow-up question. I do believe that eligibility criteria were specified by the cross-community working group and there are even examples given with respect to the types of things that should be funded and things that should not be funded. For example, anything in ICANN's operating budget was supposed to be off the table in terms of eligibility.

But I guess, in this regard—and I know that you have indicated intention to and will follow the cross-community working group report with respect to determining those eligibility guidelines. But the part of my question that had to do with expertise and recruiting for expertise in grant-making and evaluating eligibility is still quite important because ICANN is now going to take this on as a start-up of an activity that ICANN has not been performing in the past and this may be potentially the best way to go in terms of making sure that ICANN's mission overall is fulfilled and that alternative was discussed within the working group, but not having executive-level grant-making expertise that is used to managing these risks, I would think that we would have to recruit for that and it's going to be important to look for people with significant experience to staff this department.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Absolutely and we are fully on the same page that when it comes to the expertise and the skills that are required not only to manage the Grant Department but also to make sure that any evaluation of the eligibility of the content of the application is done in a very highly professional

manner. This is something that, as I said, we are working on. We are also investigating the way at international level, at a global level, independent panels for the evaluation of projects are formed, are managed, and this is something that again we will share information as soon as it becomes available. But rest assured that those are elements that you're bringing up that we have at the top of our priority list to be checked and to be properly addressed.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Thank you.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Thank you, Anne. Thanks a lot.

PAMELA SMITH: Xavier, I see your hand is up.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Yes. Thank you. Just to complement what Anne and Giovanni were discussing and thank you for emphasizing those points that we agree with you are really important. Being also in charge of risk management at ICANN, I'm very sensitive to your points that you raised and we definitely look at this program, as part of its design with an intent to ensure we identify all the potential risks associated with this new activity for ICANN with the purpose to be able to create features of the program that help mitigate those risks.

I just want to give you an example. Some may wonder why we are suggesting that the first cycle, for example, would be limited to \$10 million. This is an illustration of looking at the risk of putting a lot of funds, for example, up front in the first cycle where we are really learning through the process.

So we purposefully determined to limit the first cycle to a size that allows to minimize or limit the risks that large sums of monies couldn't be poorly dealt with in terms of applications and distribution because we would be dealing for the first time with this cycle. So that's an illustration of our risk identification that then translates into measures in terms of design that help mitigate those risks.

The point that you made about competence and expertise is obviously very important. We do have some expertise in the organization or experience in grant-making program, despite the fact that this is not an existing activity of ICANN. Some of our staff members have come to ICANN with that experience or expertise which we intend to leverage and is useful and important. It's probably not sufficient, nonetheless, so that's absolutely a point for us to pay attention to, to acquire that experience through hiring, and we intend to do that.

I also want to emphasize that, within the Board, there is grant-making experience, past experience by several board members including in the caucus group that is providing oversight over the program on an ongoing basis.

So I think we are very conscious of the points that you raised. We do have already some mechanisms in place to address those points and

definitely intend to continue further addressing them as part of the program, and as an ongoing basis through the governance of the program. Thank you.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Thank you, Xavier. Pamela, any other questions we have?

PAMELA SMITH: There are no further questions in the chat, Giovanni, and I don't see any other hands. Oh, wait a minute. Anne Aikman-Scalese has her hand raised again. Anne?

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: I didn't want to monopolize, but with respect to Board review, I noticed that there will be a slate presented and I noticed that you were all quite careful to say that the Board will determine whether the rules were followed, that it's not the Board passing on whether they like the grant or don't like the grant. The independent panel evaluation was such an important part of the cross-community working group work and it appears that the Board will just be determining, hey, were the rules followed here?

But the part I didn't quite understand about that is the part that says the entire slate is approved or the entire slate is disapproved. Isn't it possible that, in connection with a particular grant that is proposed to be made that conflict of interest was an issue or that, in a particular grant, that eligibility was an issue. So why is it treated as a slate that the Board must approve all or deny all?

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thank you, Anne. Again, it's a great question. Let's say that those are elements that we are indeed looking into and any possible conflict of interest, anything that is around an application is going to be checked before. So there's going to be prior checks that are going to be made about the applicant, the conflict of interest, any possible issue around the application.

And therefore, the moment that the Board is delivered a slate of successful applications on the basis of the evaluation criteria and on the basis of the checks that have been made, the slate is going to be a sound slate with a sound rationale for Board approval. I mean, there could be at any moment of course contingencies may arise and of course we will design procedures for those specific cases as well.

However, just a point to say that the moment the slate reaches the board, it's going to be a slate with, as I said, a sound rationale, sound background checks, and therefore all the applications that are included in that slate are going to be super checked and super processed. It's not that we are delivering something fresh from the oven. It's going to be something that has been carefully investigated. I see Xavier's hand up.

XAVIER CALVEZ:

I completely agree with what Giovanni has said, and by design we need to ensure that all the examples that you are taking, and for example of maybe some applications, having eligibility challenges within the state that's approved, therefore if we would have these types of issues, we wouldn't need to have evaluated and identified these issues earlier in

the process, therefore disqualifying those applications so that then the slate that is offered for review by the panel and then submitted to the Board is free of those types of issues.

Should that not be the case, the whole point about the entire slate being either accepted or rejected is so that we don't put the Board in the situation of cherry picking the winners and the losers within the slate, which is exactly the opposite of what we want to leave the Board in which is a place where there is as little as possible, and [inaudible] this process in my views, no perception of conflict of interest of the Board in choosing some applications to win and denying some applications to lose. And therefore, if the Board would [inaudible] all those applications are okay, these three are not because there's an eligibility issue, that puts the Board in a situation of choosing winners and losers and that's exactly a potential conflict of interest situation that we don't want to put the Board into and for which the design of the program by the CCWG has embedded and ensured that there was an independent panel for the [region].

So, this mechanism of the entire slate accepted or rejected is helping to prevent the Board to be put into a situation where the board members have to choose applications and therefore be perceived, be exposed to potential conflict of interest. So that's the rationale for it. And of course that logic, that approach, requires that [inaudible] we have done thorough and 100% good job of having adequately allowed the applications to go through the process or denied applications to go through that process because they would not be ultimately possible to approve.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Thanks. And a very quick follow-up question, Xavier. Would you remind me what we did to try to protect these grants proposed to be made from requests for reconsideration and other challenge processes that ... Because of my concern about the slate approach might be would any one of the grants be potentially subject to a dispute process or that could hold up all the rest of the grants because of some sort of dispute?

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you. I'll go quickly on it. We all have the same answers to Anne's point. So, for everyone else, Anne is referring to the fact that during the discussions of the CCWG, one point that was raised that the existing ICANN accountability mechanisms or any decisions that ICANN takes, whether they're through the Board or the Org, are not applying to the decisions on each application and grant, so that the grants are not triggering long and possibly costly processes of challenges for sometimes very limited dollar values of the grants themselves, so that both [burden] and funds are not diverted through long, costly, and overwhelming accountability mechanisms.

So the CCWG discussed how to avoid that being the case, and one of the recommendations of the CCWG is to suggest the exclusion of the applicability of existing ICANN accountability processes to the particular grant. So this is something that the team, with also the contribution of the Board, is looking into addressing that recommendation and how to best address it. There's work and analyses ongoing at the moment to evaluate the feasibility or lack thereof of that recommendation and

what options the Board has in order to address that concern in the most effective manner.

So this is something ongoing, absolutely something that we are working on actively because this is a very important feature of the program, the ability or not to make appeals on the decisions that have been made and to grant or not grant the funds to applicants. So this is a very important feature of the program, one that we're working on at the moment and that we will provide more information as work progresses on that topic.

So, thank you for raising that point. Sorry we don't have a definite answer at the moment, but we do want you to understand we're working on it.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Well, I'm sure that when you say working on it, consideration is being given to the fact that bylaws would probably have to be amended.

XAVIER CALVEZ: That is part of the consideration and the evaluation. Yes, thank you.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: And bylaws amendments are subject to empowered community action, but presumably that would not be hopefully a big problem in this arena. Okay, thank you.

XAVIER CALVEZ:

You're welcome.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thank you, Anne. I see there are several questions in the chat from Molehe Wesi. I hope I pronounced your name well. I'll start from the last one which is about if ICANN has considered [co-funding] in case where might have problems with existing sponsors grants. This is indeed an element that we have been considering, and indeed in the global grant programs, there are some programs that allow, for instance, for projects to have multiple let's say funds come in from different parties, and this is an element that we are currently looking into, and again we will check best practices that will inform a decision.

When it comes to the evaluation processes for appeals for the client application, this is part of a CCWG recommendation and we are currently investigate, as Xavier was also saying, the possible different appeal mechanisms for declined applications and this is going to be part of the applicant guide and also of the information that we will release when we come to an informed decision on this specific subject.

Then there is a question about the timeline for the [all] application from the moment the call for application is launched to the moment ICANN starts the negotiation of the grant agreement with a successful applicant. And indeed there is a timeframe that goes from the moment the call for application window closes and the moment that the grant agreement negotiations start. This is quite difficult for any grant program, and first of all the applicants will be informed up front about all these timeframes because all these timeframes will be published and

included in the applicant guide, so that the applicant knows what is the timeframe for the evaluation, what is the timeframe from the evaluation to move to the Board approval of the slate and afterwards to start the grant negotiation.

So, currently, the best practices what we see around is that the timeframe from closing the call for applications to the start of the negotiation is between three to six months, and the negotiation can last let's say quite long. In most of the cases, however, the grant template is made available as we plan to do it as well in advance, so that the applicant already can see what kind of grant agreement is going to be requested to enter into; and therefore as soon as [inaudible] those elements are published well in advance, the applicants are aware that there's going to be a sort of timeframe for all this text to be completed and indeed there could be an applicant that has submitted an application that has been successfully evaluated and therefore is part of the slate that the Board is going to be requested to approve, and in that case, if the applicant for a million of reasons—they can win the lottery, they can move to another job, they can do whatever kind of let's say moment of their life and they can go through—in that case, they may decide to withdraw from the list of successful applicants because they are no longer interested in funding. And in that case, we have already foreseen and we have investigated good practices when it comes to having a reserved list of projects and successful applicants, so that in case there are withdrawals from the list that is submitted, we can pick up a list, a sort of reserved list.

So this is something, again, that we are currently investigating. We have not made any informed decision yet, any decision about having the

reserved list, having all the appeals mechanisms, the co-funding or not co-funding. All those elements are elements that we are currently looking into and are part of the implementation design.

So, again, thanks for your patience and we'll make sure that those information is made available as soon as we reach a decision.

I hope I answered all the questions that Molehe has.

PAMELA SMITH: Giovanni, Anne Aikman-Scalese's hand is up.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Please.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Thank you. I don't want to but in again if anyone else is asking, but I'm not seeing other questions, so I guess I'll go ahead. In relation to future rounds of future cycles of grant making and the large sum of money that's in this auction proceeds fund, which I know is being managed investment wise, a question that came up tangentially in the CCWG was about ICANN's mission in relation to applicant support for new gTLDs and the fact that applicant support programs in the 2012 round were not terrifically effective and whether there's a financial aspect there.

I have a vague recollection in the CCWG deliberations there was a general feeling that applicant support for new gTLD application could not in fact somehow be synchronized with grant applications and

independent evaluation process for these funds and I think it's possible in terms of what we are saying to the public that we will get that question, why not? I'm just wondering how we would answer that.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thank you, Anne. Again, this is part of the many elements that we are currently looking into the implementation design, and as you pointed out, there was this element during the past gTLD round that was indeed brought up at different levels and in different community stakeholder groups. So again this is part of the work that we are currently looking into and, as I said, the work is to go through the recommendations made by the CCWG, all the rationale behind the recommendation, the scorecards that are produced for those recommendations and also, as I said, during my part of the presentation to look into what could be good practices.

So, again, this is a work in progress. That is the answer I can give you at present. I'm really thankful for all the questions that you've been having today because they're really touching base on elements of the program that we are working on. And I wish I could be ... Because my attitude is to say that what has to be done in the future should be done yesterday, so I wish I could already provide you the information that you are looking for. I am just asking you a bit more patience. We are going to work over Christmas as well on all the elements, just to make sure that everything is launched and completed and investigated in a timely manner. So, again, thanks for your patience.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: So, are you saying that we don't know yet with applicant support would qualify ineligibility? Is that what you're saying?

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Yeah, correct.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Okay. Because in many ways, it would be really great if it could.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Yeah. The cross-community working group has already set some objectives, so some areas that the Grant Program should support. So, those were part of a recommendation of the cross-community working group, so we are trying to look into those areas that the cross-community working group has suggested as areas for possible support with the grant program. So, that is something again that we are looking into. Any other questions?

PAMELA SMITH: Giovanni, there's nothing further in the chat and I don't see any other hands raised.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Okay, last call. Last chance. It's not really the last chance because you see here on the screen my email and Negar's email and we are happy and available at any time to address any question that you may have. Again, we may come back to you to say please be patient, we'll get back

to you with official information and informed decisions in the near future but please mainly stay tuned on the community space that Pamela has posted several times in the chat where we are going to upload any future information and possible details about the Grant Program and also the different elements of the program.

As Xavier pointed out, this is not going to be the last webinar. This is just the first step towards a series of webinars that we will have with the community in the future, as soon as more details about the program become available.

And with that said, I'd like to thank Xavier, all those who have attended, our board members, as well as Sarah, Mike, Yvette, Pamela, and Negar for making this webinar possible. Thank you so much.

This is adjourned, so it's not the end of the process but it is just really a first step. So, thank you so much. Thank you, everybody, and it's great to have received so many good questions. We have taken them board and they will make us think even more about the importance of delivering a top-quality grant program. Thank you, all. This is the end of this webinar. Thank you.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Thank you.

PAMELA SMITH: Thanks, everyone. Thanks for your time. Bye-bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]