Topic 28: Role of Application Comment
AGB Language

Community Action Period

The Community Action Period (CAP) takes place in the 90 calendar days following application publication[1]. During this time, the public has the opportunity to take the following actions related to submitted applications: submit comments[2] and file objections[3]. Additionally, during this time, GAC members may issue GAC Early Warnings[4]. ICANN org reserves the right to extend the CAP, should the volume of applications or other circumstances require it.

1 Application Comments

1.1 Application Comments Overview

Comment mechanisms are part of ICANN's policy development, implementation, and operational processes. In line with ICANN's commitment to preserving the operational security and stability of the Internet, promoting competition, achieving broad representation of global Internet communities, and developing policy appropriate to its mission through bottom-up, consensus-based processes, the public will have the opportunity to submit comments on posted applications (referred to as "application comments").[5]

Applicants and commenters should be aware that application comments are a mechanism for the public to bring relevant information and issues to the attention of ICANN org and evaluators. If a comment is not relevant to specific evaluation criteria, it may not have a material impact on the outcome of the evaluation.

A single application comment period applies to all applications, including community-based applications. To the extent that third parties submit expressions of support for or opposition to a community-based application, these comments must be submitted before the end of the Community Action Period to be considered during Community Priority Evaluation.[6]

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[1] See [cross-reference] for more information on application publication.
[2] See [cross-reference] for more information on application comments.
[3] See [cross-reference] for more information on objections.
[4] See [cross-reference] for more information on GAC Early Warning.
[5] Application comments are not to be confused with ICANN's Public Comment process. While ICANN's Public Comment gives the ICANN community, Internet stakeholders, and the general public an opportunity to provide input on ICANN's work and policies, application comments relate specifically to applications for new gTLDs.
[6] As further described in the [Community Priority Evaluation section], applicants will also have the chance to attach letters of support to their application before submitting it.

1.2 How to Submit Application Comments

ICANN org will open an application comment period at the time applications are publicly posted on the [Next Round's website][7]. Comments will be posted on the [Community Action Forum] (CAF), and all interested parties, including applicants, will be able to review and comment on them.

In order to submit a comment, commenters will need to have an ICANN account and will be asked to indicate their affiliation and whether they have a relationship with the applicant. In addition, commenters will be required to specify the application(s), string(s), and specific evaluation(s) and process(es) to which their comment(s) relate(s). Commenters will be able to provide attachments along with their comments.

Should a commenter believe that they possess information related to confidential portions of the application, which may not be appropriate to submit publicly, they will have the option to submit a request to ICANN, which will provide guidance on the process to follow in order to submit the comment confidentially. The comment will be forwarded to the applicant, who will have the opportunity to respond. To ensure transparency, this option should only be used for comments related to confidential portions of the application, and ICANN will refer the commenter to the CAF should the comment refer to public portions of the application.

Any party posting comments must abide by the ICANN Terms of Service.

1.3 Application Comments Timeline;

The CAF will remain open through all stages of the evaluation process, to provide a means for the public to bring forward any relevant information or issues regarding an application. However, only application comments received during the 90-day Community Action Period (as per section [cross-reference]) will be made available to the evaluation panels performing the Initial Evaluation reviews. Evaluators may take into consideration comments posted after the deadline, but they are not obliged to do so. As mentioned in section [cross-reference above], ICANN org reserves the right to extend the CAP.

Should applicants wish to respond to comments relating to their application and have their response made available to evaluation panels, they will be able to do so until 30 calendar days following the end of the CAP.

Some processes that occur during round processing may require additional operational comment periods.[8]

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[7] See [cross-reference] for more information.
[8] See [cross-reference] for more information on change requests.

1.4 Application Comments in the Evaluation Process

Evaluators will review relevant comments and responses relating to the application(s) they will evaluate. For more information relating to application comments in the evaluation process and Community Priority Evaluation, please refer to sections [cross-reference evaluation] and [cross-reference CPE] respectively.

1.5 Application Comments in the Dispute Resolution Process

Application comments have a very limited role in the dispute-resolution process. A distinction should be made between application comments, which may be relevant to ICANN's task of determining whether applications meet the established criteria, and formal objections that concern matters outside those evaluation criteria.[9]

Comments on matters associated with formal objections might not be considered by panels during Initial Evaluation. These comments will be available to and may be subsequently considered by an expert panel during a dispute-resolution proceeding[10].

It should be noted that the Independent Objector may consider application comments when making an independent assessment whether an objection is warranted.[11]

2 Objections

3 GAC Early Warnings

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[9] See [cross-reference] for more information on objections.
[10] See [cross-reference] for more information on dispute resolution.
[11] See [cross-reference] for more information on the Independent Objector.