

ICANN
POLICY FORUM

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ICANN Grant Program

Implementation Update

1 June 2023



Webinar Agenda

- Background on the ICANN Grant Program
- Grant Program Implementation Progress
 - Progress Highlights Since Last Webinar
 - Operational Readiness Update
 - Further Refining Objectives & Work Areas
- First Grant Cycle
 - How it Operates
 - Timeline
- Q&A

Background on the ICANN Grant Program

Background on the ICANN Grant Program (1/2)

- In 2012, ICANN launched a program to introduce New Generic Top-Level Domains (the New gTLD Program).
- Over 1,200 New gTLDs were introduced to the domain name system and any established entity in the world could apply to form and operate a new gTLD Registry.
- In some cases, more than one eligible entity applied to operate the same or similar top-level domain; however, only one registry can operate each top-level domain.
- There were several methods to determine the ultimate registry for the new gTLDs. In cases where resolution between two or more entities could not be reached, there was a “last resort” auction run by ICANN’s authorized auction service provider.
- The proceeds generated from these auctions are referred to as the “New gTLD Auctions Proceeds” or “Auction Proceeds” for short. These proceeds were reserved and earmarked until a community proposal for their distribution was produced.

Background on the ICANN Grant Program (2/2)

- The ICANN community formed a Cross Community Working Group on Auction Proceeds (CCWG-AP) in January 2017 to develop a proposal for how these proceeds should be distributed.
- On 14 September 2020, the CCWG-AP submitted its [Final Report](#) of 12 recommendations and related guidance to the ICANN Board for review and consideration.
- The ICANN Board [adopted](#) the CCWG's recommendations in June 2022. The Board directed ICANN org to produce a Preliminary Design and Implementation Plan for the Grant Program within 120 days which was completed on 10 October 2022.
- Since then, work has been ongoing to design the program and to establish the resources needed for its implementation.
- Two community webinars took place in Q4 2022.

Grant Program Implementation Progress

Implementation Progress Highlights Since Last Webinar

The implementation team progressed design work on key elements of the program, including the areas of:

- Selection processes
- Fund disbursement and monitoring
- Program literature
- Application platform requirements
- Communications and Engagement

ICANN org launched a living [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) section on the dedicated ICANN Grant Program [wiki](#).

In addition to the above, current work is focused on operational readiness and refining the program's objectives and work areas (see next slides).

Operational Readiness Update

Grant Program Department Recruitment:

- The program will be managed by a dedicated ICANN department and recruitment for a program Director and Coordinator is underway.

External Expertise and Support:

- Aspects of the program will benefit from external vendors with proven track record of expertise in the grant-making field to (i) support some eligibility checks, (ii) establish and manage the Independent Application Assessment Panel, and (iii) provide the management platform for the applications and grants.
- ICANN conducted a Request for Information (RFI) in April and May 2023 and the results provided confidence that the market can offer these services. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will run from 5 June - 7 July 2023. Contracting should be completed by early October 2023.

Further Refining Program Objectives and Work Areas

The CCWG-AP proposed a list of specific objectives for the distribution of the New gTLD Auction Proceeds and accompanied these recommended areas of focus with guidance for the implementation of objectives for the program.

CCWG-AP objectives of proceed allocation:

- *“Benefit the development, distribution, evolution and structures/projects that support the Internet's unique identifier systems;*
- *Benefit capacity building and underserved populations, or;*
- *Benefit the open and interoperable Internet*

New gTLD Auction Proceeds are expected to be allocated in a manner consistent with ICANN's mission.”

In line with the CCWG's guidance and the Board Scorecard on the CCWG-AP recommendations, ICANN org is working to further refine the objectives and translate them into specific work areas so that they are clear for both potential applicants and the Independent Panel.

First Grant Cycle

Key Elements & Timeline

How Will the First Cycle Operate?

- The Grant Program will operate in a series of cycles.
- While all cycles will have some common characteristics — including the assessment of applications by an Independent Application Assessment Panel — certain items will be piloted during this first cycle and evaluated for possible future improvements.
- For the first cycle, USD 10 million will be the overall amount available for distribution.
- Grant awards will range between USD 50,000 up to USD 500,000. These award thresholds will be reassessed for future cycles.

Timeline for the First Cycle Launch

- ◉ We anticipate that the first cycle of the ICANN Grant Program will open for applications in late Q1 of 2024.
- ◉ The application window will run for 60 calendar days. It will be supported by an awareness campaign that will commence in 3 months in advance of the application window opening.
- ◉ ICANN will produce and Applicant Guide, available in all six UN languages, to support applicants in applying to the program in advance of the application window opening.
- ◉ Evaluation of the applications (admissibility – eligibility – panel assessment) is expected to last five months.
- ◉ Grant agreement negotiations with selected applicants will start after the Board approves the proposed slate of successful applications.

Tentative Timeline

Phase 1: Planning and Cycle Setup

All activities leading to the launch of the first cycle, including the implementation design.

Phase 2: Application Window

Launch of the first Grant Cycle

Phase 3: Selection

Evaluation

Phase 4: Award

Board approval of slate and grant agreement negotiations

Phase 5: Post-Award

Disbursement of funds, grant monitoring

Publication of the Applicant Guide

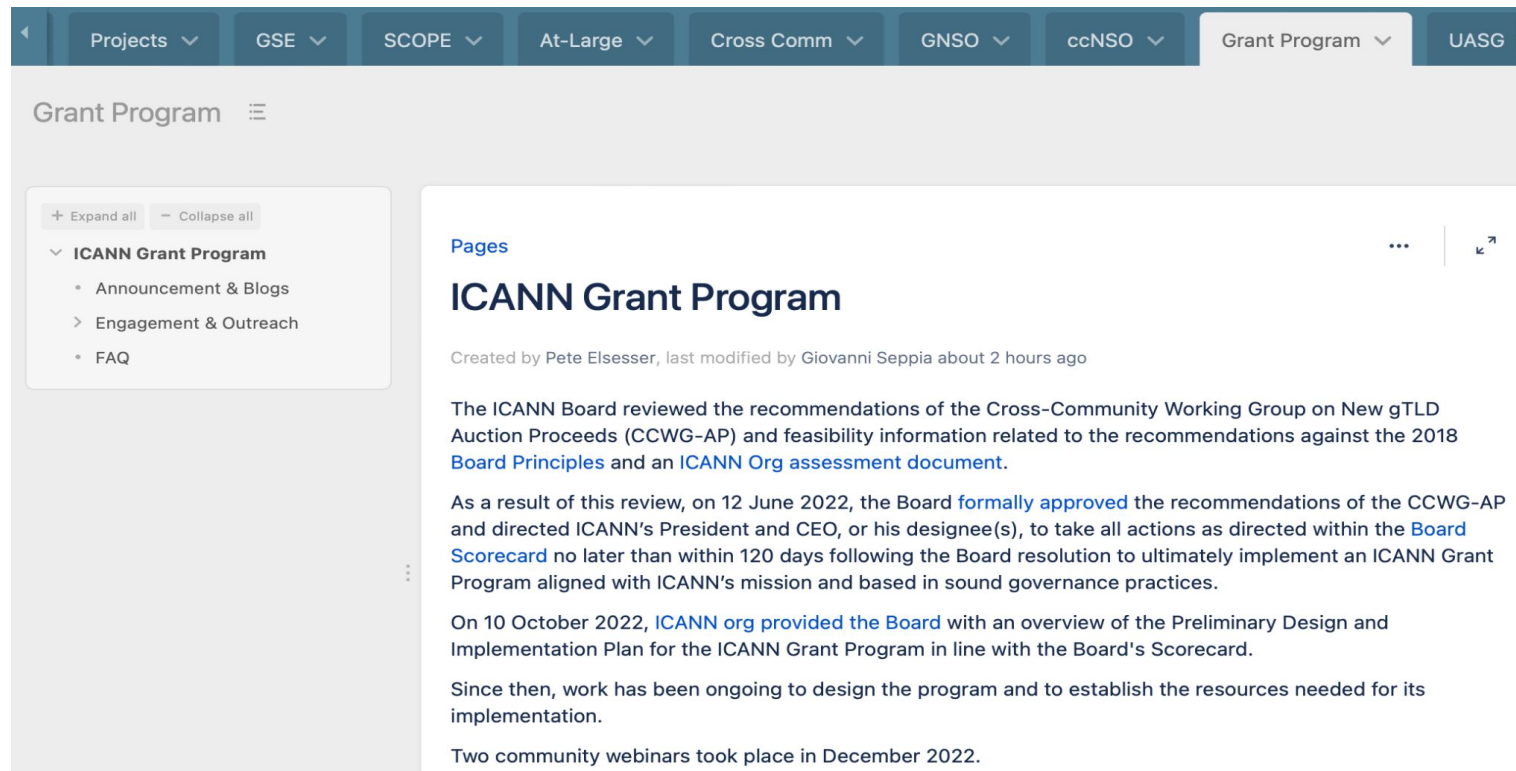
Awareness Campaign for Cycle 1



For More Updates, Stay Tuned Here:

To learn more about this program and its implementation progress,
visit the dedicated wiki space:

<https://community.icann.org/display/GP/ICANN+Grant+Program>



The screenshot shows a navigation bar with tabs for Projects, GSE, SCOPE, At-Large, Cross Comm, GNSO, ccNSO, Grant Program (selected), and UASG. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Grant Program". A sidebar on the left contains a menu with "Expand all" and "Collapse all" buttons, and a list of items under "ICANN Grant Program": "Announcement & Blogs", "Engagement & Outreach", and "FAQ". The main content area is titled "ICANN Grant Program" and includes the following text:

Created by Pete Elsesser, last modified by Giovanni Seppia about 2 hours ago

The ICANN Board reviewed the recommendations of the Cross-Community Working Group on New gTLD Auction Proceeds (CCWG-AP) and feasibility information related to the recommendations against the 2018 [Board Principles](#) and an [ICANN Org assessment document](#).

As a result of this review, on 12 June 2022, the Board [formally approved](#) the recommendations of the CCWG-AP and directed ICANN's President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all actions as directed within the [Board Scorecard](#) no later than within 120 days following the Board resolution to ultimately implement an ICANN Grant Program aligned with ICANN's mission and based in sound governance practices.

On 10 October 2022, [ICANN org provided the Board](#) with an overview of the Preliminary Design and Implementation Plan for the ICANN Grant Program in line with the Board's Scorecard.

Since then, work has been ongoing to design the program and to establish the resources needed for its implementation.

Two community webinars took place in December 2022.

Q&A