

GAC Comment on Applicant Support

Applicant Support in New gTLD Applications

The GAC advises the Board:

- i. To specify ICANN's plans related to steps to expand financial support and engage with actors in underrepresented or underserved regions by ICANN78 in order to inform GAC deliberations on these matters.
- ii. To take steps to substantially reduce or eliminate the application fees and ongoing ICANN registry fees to expand financial support for applicants from underrepresented or underserved regions.
- iii. To take timely steps to facilitate significant global diversification in the New gTLD program by ensuring increased engagement with a diverse array of people and organizations in underrepresented or underserved markets and regions, including by:
 - Raising awareness of the Applicant Support Program;
 - Providing training and assistance to potential applicants;
 - Exploring the potential to support the provision of back-end services; and
 - Providing adequate funding for the Applicant Support Program consistent with diversification targets.

RATIONALE

The GAC reaffirms the importance of increasing the number and geographical distribution of applications from underrepresented or underserved regions in future rounds of New gTLDs through the Applicant Support Program. The GAC reiterates its “support for proposals to substantially reduce or eliminate the application fees and ongoing ICANN registry fees to expand financial support” , in order to sufficiently cover all such applications.

Without a substantial reduction in, or financial support for, the application and ongoing fees, many potential applicants in underrepresented or underserved regions would be unable to apply due to the status of their economies, where available capital for ICT/digital initiatives has been historically limited.

The GAC highlights that non-financial support is also an important element of an applicant support programme, for example awareness raising, capacity development services and training. Assisting in the provision of back-end services may also be appropriate in some cases.