GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) Working Group

Update to the CPWG (22 Nov 2023)

Maureen Hilyard & Satish Babu

Statement from GNSO ICANN78 Policy Outcome Report

GGP on Applicant Support

The GNSO Guidance (GGP) on Applicant Support Working Group did not hold a working session during ICANN78 because it is currently reviewing and analysing Public Comment submission on its Guidance Recommendations Initial Report. The report provides guidance recommendations relating to the identification and prioritisation of metrics, including indicators of success, as well as those relating to financing the program when qualified applicants exceed allocated funds.

Guidance Recommendation 1:

AWARENESS & EDUCATION

INITIAL REPORT:

Increase awareness of the Applicant Support Program of the next round of gTLD applications among those who may need and could qualify for support.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:

- Awareness and education were the original focus of this recommendation
- "Underserved" regions identified as a target group but a clearer definition is required by ICANN (NCSG)
- Expanding reach to private sector entities, the not-for-profit sector, social enterprises and/or community organizations (GAC & BC)

CHANGE TO INITIAL STATEMENT – TO ADD:

"Target potential applicants from the not-for-profit sector, social enterprises and/or community organizations from under-served and developing regions and countries. This should not exclude any entities from outreach efforts, such as private sector entities [from developing/ underrepresented regions], recognising that the goal is to get as many qualifying applicants as possible."

Guidance Recommendation 2:

PRO BONO SERVICES

INITIAL REPORT:

That the Applicant Support Program has cultivated pro bono services as well as ICANN-provided information and services to be available for supported applicants to inform their gTLD applications; that ICANN will communicate the availability of pro bono services and the parameters in which they are offered to potential supported applicants; and that supported applicants report that they found the information and services offered by pro bono providers to be useful.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:

- BC reinforce that support could be technical, educational, language, not necessarily financial
- GAC suggested that Org provide "matchmaking" of applicants and pro bono services

STATUS UPDATE:

I suspect that there won't be much change to this recommendation. I am aware that Org will not include any "matchmaking" and I have to agree. It will be up to the potential applicants to make the approach to pro bono service providers themselves. A recent survey has revealed strong interest from pro bono services which is encouraging.. We just need information about the services being offered and when they will be available.

Guidance Recommendation 3:

RESOURCES

INITIAL REPORT:

That the Applicant Support Program has the necessary resources to achieve its goals based on the GGP Guidance Recommendation Report.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:

- General support
- One response – requiring Org clarification of the term "necessary resources. (GAC)

NO CHANGE MADE TO THE INITIAL STATEMENT

* defining "necessary resources" was deemed too broad to be in the scope of the GGP team

Guidance Recommendation 4:

APPLICATION PROCESS

INITIAL REPORT:

Make application materials and the application process timely and accessible to a diverse set of potential applicants, with the aim of facilitating successful applications in the Applicant Support Program among those who may need and could qualify for support.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:

- Different developing countries may require different approaches to outreach and awareness (NCUC)
- GAC emphasised the importance of timeliness to ensure that applicants have the necessary information about what support they may in order access, especially when they may not be aware of what they don't know, to make a successful application. GAC suggested providing more ICANN Learn courses

NO CHANGE MADE TO THE INITIAL STATEMENT

Guidance Recommendation 5:

SUCCESSFUL DELEGATION BY SUPPORTED APPLICANTS

INITIAL REPORT:
Of all successfully delegated gTLD applications, the goal is that a certain percentage of them should be from supported applicants.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:
- The GAC say that the current 0.5% target of successfully delegated gTLD applications, is not ambitious enough
- GAC & ALAC proposed that the current target should be considered a floor and not a ceiling, and that ICANN should strive to exceed this minimum.
- Also, it must be emphasised that support need not be solely financial, e.g. pro bono services.

CHANGE TO INITIAL STATEMENT :
ICANN must ensure that, of all successfully delegated gTLD applications, 10 or 0.5% are from supported applicants. However, this indicator of success should be considered a floor, not a ceiling, and ICANN should strive to exceed this minimum.

While they did not accept a "stretch target", staff added into the rationale that resources should be made available if the number of qualified applicants exceeds or greatly exceeds the indicator of success, since the indicator of success should be seen as a floor and not a ceiling, that is, if expectations are met and exceeded, then it could be seen as exceptionally successful.

Guidance Recommendation 6:

SUSTAINABIILTY OF SUCCESSFUL DELEGATIONS

INITIAL REPORT:

ICANN org to investigate the extent to which supported applicants that were awarded a gTLD are still in business as a registry operator after three years.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:

- NCSG queried what data might be collected to ascertain the long-term effects of the ASP over time
- Many applicants in this next round may be new to the industry and may not be able to show much progress even after three years

CURRENT STATUS:

Staff are seeking more specificity to determine when the three-year countdown begins. For example, dotkids which was the only successful supported applicant in 2012 was only just delegated a couple of years ago. I provided Org with some suggestions for minor textual changes based on the dotkids scenario. Staff may add "with periodic checks thereafter"

Guidance Recommendation 7:

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

INITIAL REPORT:
In the scenario that there is inadequate funding for all qualified applicants in the Applicant Support Program, the recommended methodology for allocating financial support should be for ICANN org to allocate limited funding by way of fee reduction equally across all qualified applicants, while not hindering the efficiency of the process. In this context the working group agreed to assume, for the sake of equity, that one application equaled one string. This recommendation is made in the context of no additional funding being made available, however the group recommends that ICANN org, as a high priority, makes every effort to provide additional funding so that all successful applicants are supported.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:
• NCSG suggested prioritising groups of applicants.

This would be too difficult. Currently the priority is underserved regions, countries, communities.

NO CHANGE TO THE INITIAL STATEMENT
* Neither the staff or the GGP team are considering prioritising applicants

Guidance Recommendation 8:

RISK MITIGATION

INITIAL REPORT:
To mitigate the risk that the allocation of support under the Applicant Support Program could be diluted to the point of being unhelpful, ICANN org should designate a minimum level of support each qualified applicant must receive, and develop a plan if funding drops below that level.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:
- GAC warns Org against diluting the support to the point that it is not helpful at all

CURRENT STATUS:

The GGP group and staff are trying to consider what is the minimum level of support? How do we provide funding in the event that the number of qualified applicants exceeds the designated minimum level of funding?
At the same time, it is important that successful applicants have a sense of how much they will receive.

Guidance Recommendation 9:

COMMUNICATION

INITIAL REPORT:

ICANN org should develop a flexible, predictable, and responsive Applicant Support Program to transparently communicate the results of the evaluation process and allow applicants to know about their range of support allocation as early as possible.

PUBLIC RESPONSE:

- GAC would like applicants to know in a timely manner if they are eligible for support or not.

NO CHANGE MADE TO INITIAL STATEMENT

ICANN | GNSO
Generic Names Supporting Organization

GNSO Guidance Recommendation Report

Next steps

Final set of recommendations from the GGP will go to

1) the GNSO Council and then to

2) the Implementation Review Team