

# ICANN Grant Program

## At-Large Operations, Finance and Budget Working Group

Presenters:

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Thursday, 14 December 2023



# Agenda

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- Background on the ICANN Grant Program
- Making A Difference
- Grant Program Implementation Progress
- First Grant Cycle
- Our Ask of You
- Q&A

# Background on the ICANN Grant Program

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- The ICANN community formed a Cross Community Working Group on Auction Proceeds (CCWG-AP) in January 2017 to develop a proposal for how proceeds from Auctions of Last Resort for new gTLDs should be distributed.
- In 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 in October 2022.
- Since then, work has been ongoing to design the program and to establish the resources needed for its implementation.

# Making A Difference

# Making A Difference

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- The ICANN Grant Program represents a significant milestone in ICANN's ongoing efforts to nurture a robust and inclusive Internet ecosystem.
- By funding projects that encourage, facilitate, and support ICANN's mission and its vision of a single, open, and globally interoperable Internet, ICANN has the exceptional opportunity to:
  - Make a difference in the Internet ecosystem,
  - Positively impact people across the globe in furtherance of ICANN's mission.
- Grantmaking can be a catalyzing force for change.

# Making A Difference

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- The types of initiatives that the Grant Program will fund include those that support the ICANN mission by:
  - Benefiting the development, distribution, evolution, and projects that support the Internet's unique identifier systems.
  - Providing capacity development for underserved populations.
  - Advancing developments, innovation, and open standards for the benefit of the Internet community.
  - Contributing to diversity, participation, and inclusion across stakeholder communities and geographic regions.

# Grant Program Implementation Progress

# Operational Readiness Update

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## Grant Program Department Recruitment:

- The program will be managed by a dedicated ICANN department whose staffing is complete.

## External Expertise and Support:

- Aspects of the program will benefit from external vendors with a 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) ran from 5 June till 7 July 2023. ICANN is in the final phase of selecting the vendor(s).

# Update on Recommendation 7

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- Board approved the new approach to Recommendation 7 at ICANN78:

Using the applicant Terms and Conditions to bar applicants in the Grant Program from using ICANN's accountability mechanisms on individual application decisions.

Removing the prior dependency on amendment of the Fundamental Bylaws.

Request for Reconsideration currently with the BAMC.

# First Grant Cycle

## Key Elements & Timeline

# First Cycle Key Elements

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- For the first cycle, USD 10 million available for distribution.
- Grant awards will range between USD 50,000 up to USD 500,000.
- Maximum duration of projects is 24 months.
- Disbursement of grant in installments with first installment after the signature of the grant agreement and following installments after the submission and approval of regular grantee reports.

\*\*Key elements may be subject to change in future cycles.

# Applicant Eligibility

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Applicants must:

- Be entities that are charitable in nature:
  - U.S. 501(c)(3)
  - Non-U.S. equivalent of 501(c)(3)
    - an equivalency determination must be made by a qualified tax practitioner
- Meet all applicable U.S. trade laws and regulations and must not be the subject of any U.S. sanctions
- Meet all applicable standards for reputation and background checks

# Activities Eligibility

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- Activities must be consistent with and within ICANN’s mission “*to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet’s unique identifier systems*” as described in Section 1.1 of ICANN Bylaws.
  
- Non-eligible activities include (non-exhaustive list):
  - Any political or lobbying activity, including activities to influence legislation and/or the outcome of any specific public election, or to carry on, directly or indirectly, any voter registration drive
  - Any activity that may lead to private benefit of individuals
  - Any unlawful activity according to the country where the applicant is based and/or where the project is developed
  - Any activity already supported with funding from ICANN.

# Work in Progress

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- Applicant Guide to be published in January.
- Specific themes and work areas from program objectives.
- Assessment criteria and rubric used by independent panelists to assess applications based on:
  - Clarity and relevance,
  - Quality and effectiveness,
  - Soundness and feasibility,
  - Appropriate resources,
  - Competency and expertise of the applicant.
- Eligible and ineligible expenses that can be included in the project budget.

# Timeline for the First Cycle Launch

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- First cycle of the ICANN Grant Program open for applications in late **Q1 of 2024**.
  - Awareness campaign to start at the time the applicant guide is published.
- Call for applications open for **60 calendar days**.
- 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.

# Our Ask of You

# Spreading the Word

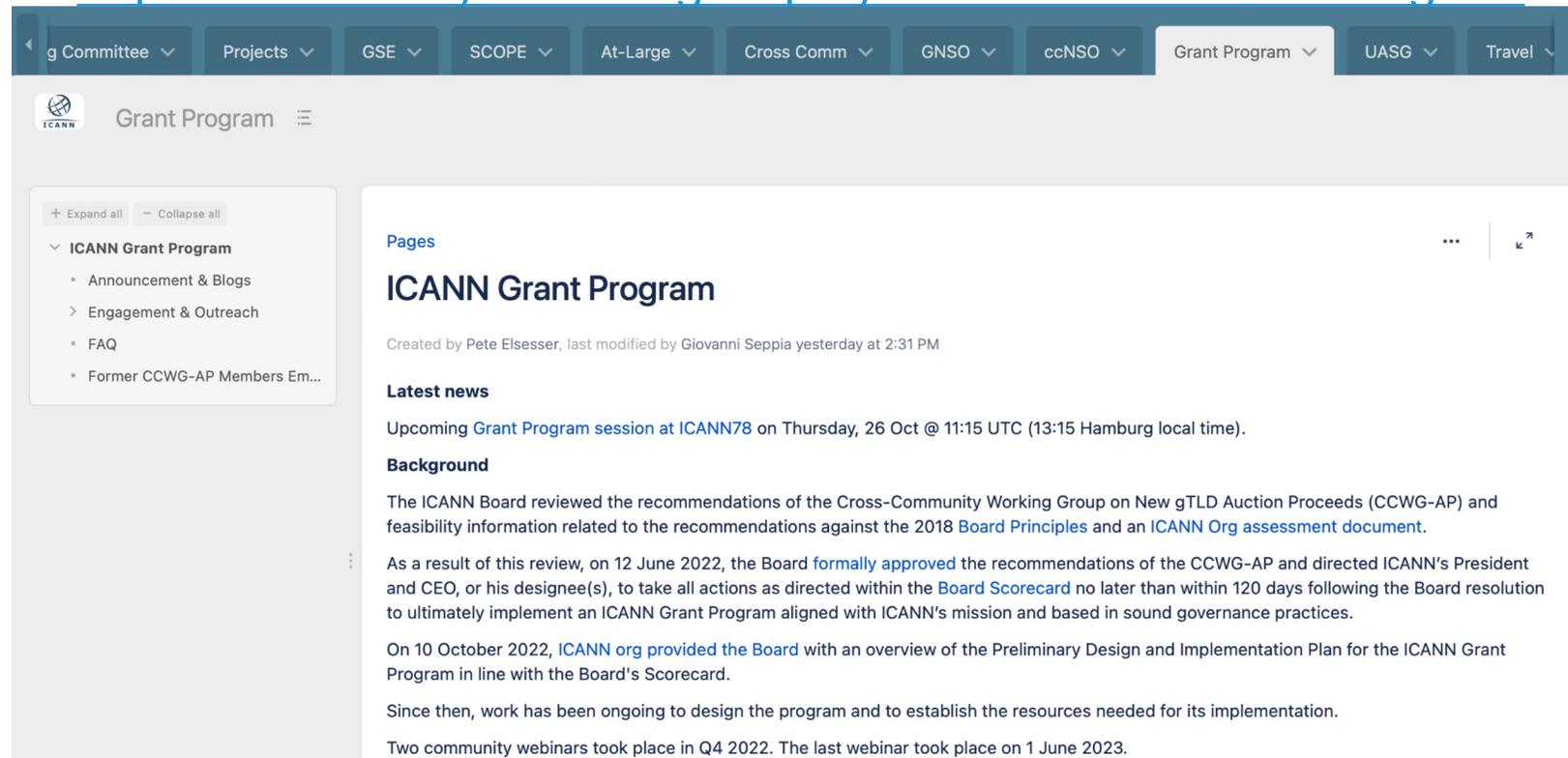
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- Plug the Grant Program in your meetings and events.
  - Comms Toolkit forthcoming
- Invite us to speak at your engagements.
  - Virtual or in-person
- Share our contact information with key stakeholders.
  - Especially in underserved/underrepresented regions
- Encourage organizations to apply even if you or they are unsure.
  - Don't make any promises, but offer support for proposal ideas
- Share feedback with us about what you are hearing in the community.

# For More Updates, Stay Tuned at:

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 the ICANN Grant Program wiki page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with dropdown menus for various ICANN groups: g Committee, Projects, GSE, SCOPE, At-Large, Cross Comm, GNSO, ccNSO, Grant Program (selected), UASG, and Travel. Below the navigation bar, the page title "Grant Program" is displayed with the ICANN logo. A sidebar on the left contains a list of sub-pages under "ICANN Grant Program": "Announcement & Blogs", "Engagement & Outreach", "FAQ", and "Former CCWG-AP Members Em...". The main content area features a "Pages" section with the title "ICANN Grant Program" and a note that it was created by Pete Elsesser and last modified by Giovanni Seppia. Below this, there is a "Latest news" section with a link to an upcoming session at ICANN78. The "Background" section provides a detailed overview of the program's origin, mentioning the Board's review of recommendations from the Cross-Community Working Group on New gTLD Auction Proceeds (CCWG-AP) and the Board's formal approval in June 2022. It also notes that ICANN provided the Board with a Preliminary Design and Implementation Plan in October 2022 and that work has been ongoing since then, including two community webinars in Q4 2022 and the most recent one on June 1, 2023.

# Q&A