Subsequent Procedures Implementation Review Team

Meeting #31

ICANN

4 March 2024, 20:15-21:30 UTC / 16:15-17:30 AST

Agenda

1. Welcome + SOI Update

2. **Next Round Policy Implementation Plan**

3. **Communication and Engagement Planning Document**

4. **Ongoing & Upcoming Public Comment Proceedings**

5. **ASP Handbook Briefing**

6. Upcoming IRT Meetings

7. AOB

Next Round Policy Implementation Plan

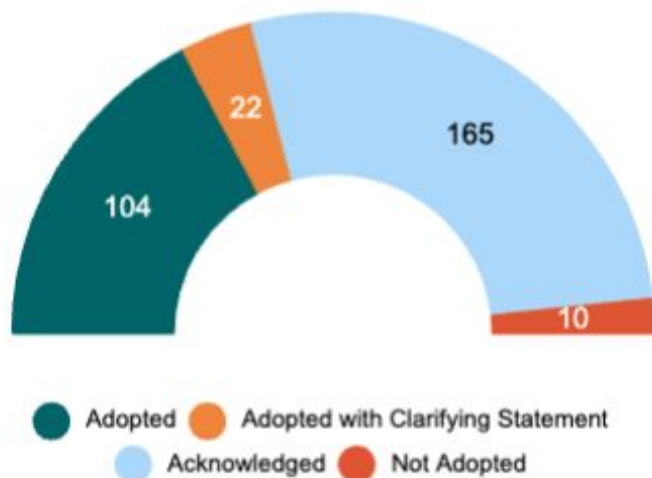Agenda Item #2

Next Round Policy Implementation Plan

Work Stream	Next Round Policy Implementation
Responsible Entity	ICANN org: Global Domains & Strategy
Work Stream's Lead Department	Next Round

Version 3 | February 2024

Posted on the SubPro IRT workspace

Final Report Outputs: Status

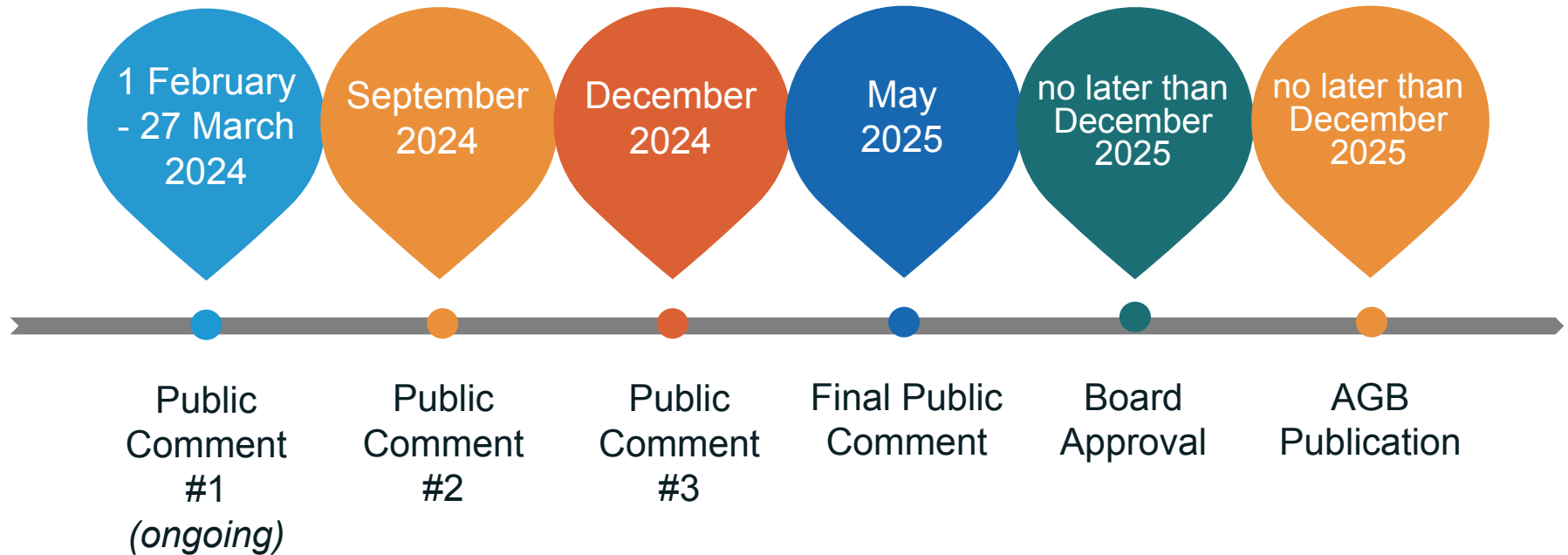|	Adopted	Adopted with GNSO Council-Approved Clarification	Acknowledged (Implementation Guidance)	Not Adopted
Recommendations	93	21		10
Affirmations	7		34	
Affirmations with modification	4	1	6	
Implementation Guidance			125	
Total	104	22	165	10

- [March 2023 Scorecard](#)
- [September 2023 Scorecard](#)
- [October 2023 Scorecard](#)

Dependencies

The timeline for drafting the AGB is dependent on the successful delivery of all dependencies listed:

1. GNSO Council issuance of supplemental recommendations, if any, with regard to those outputs that the Board did not adopt and the Board's subsequent consideration of those recommendations.
2. Completion and/or Board consideration of the following dependencies:
   - IDN EPDP Phase 1 and Phase 2 Final Reports,
   - NCAP Study 2.
3. Board action on all outstanding Advice pertaining to the Next Round.
   - GAC: Auctions; Applicant Support (ICANN77 Communique),
   - ALAC: Closed Generics (Nov 2023),
   - SSAC: SAC114 (Comments on Draft Final Report).
4. Board to agree on framework for PICs/RVCs.

Timeline for AGB

1 February - 27 March 2024	September 2024	December 2024	May 2025	no later than December 2025	no later than December 2025
Public Comment #1 *(ongoing)*	Public Comment #2	Public Comment #3	Final Public Comment	Board Approval	AGB Publication

Open for submission

Topic
2. Predictability
8. Conflicts of Interest
10. Applicant Freedom of Expression
11. Universal Acceptance
21. Reserved Names
21. Geographic Names

N..B. No extension will be granted.

Public Comment #2 | September 2024

Topic	IRT Discussions
30. GAC Consensus Advice and GAC Early Warning 28. Role of Application Comment 3. Applications Assessed in Rounds	✓
24. String Similarity Evaluations Root Zone Label Generation Rules 19. Application Queuing 31. Objections	ongoing
20. Application Change Requests 5. Applications Submission Limits 16. Applications Submission Period	March 2024
23. Closed Generics 22. Registrant Protections 25. IDNs	April 2024
18. Terms and Conditions 33. Dispute Resolution Procedures After Delegation	May 2024
15. Application Fees 27. Applicant Reviews	June 2024

All dates are TBC.

Public Comment #3 | December 2024

Topic	IRT Discussions
35. Auctions 32. Limited Challenge/Appeal Mechanism	July 2024
36. Base Registry Agreement 4. Different TLD Types	August 2024
29. Name Collisions 7. Metrics and Monitoring DNS Stability	September 2024
34. Community Applications 9. Registry Voluntary Commitments / Public Interest Commitments	October 2024

All dates are TBC.

Vendor Engagement

- **Auctions: Mechanisms of Last Resort / Private Resolution of Contention Sets:** Selection

  - ICANN org is working with a vendor to conduct research on auction mechanisms that may help applicants with limited financial resources (such as bid credits and multipliers). In addition, ICANN org is working with the vendor to assess potential methods to prevent or strongly disincentivize private resolution of contention sets. This work is being conducted in line with the IRT timeline, and ICANN org currently expects to discuss the auctions topic with the IRT by July 2024.

- **Community Priority Evaluation:** Contracting

  - ICANN org is working with a selection of vendors to review the definition of "community" and to assist in the development of evaluation criteria. This work is being conducted in line with the IRT timeline, and ICANN org currently expects to discuss the topic with the IRT by October 2024.

Communications and Outreach Planning Document

Agenda Item #3

Communication and Outreach Planning Document

ICANN org plans to share Communications and Engagement Planning Document (Plan) with the IRT **no later than 10 May 2024**.

High-Level Structure for the Plan

1. Introduction: Overview of ICANN's New gTLD program: Next Round (Program)
2. Stakeholder Assessment
3. Identification of Key Program Stakeholders
   a. Identification of key ASP stakeholder groups, taking into account GNSO Guidance Process Recommendations on target audiences for communications, outreach, and awareness-raising
4. Communication Goals and Objectives
5. High-level Messaging for identified stakeholder groups for the Program and ASP, respectively

Communication and Outreach Planning Document

6. Communication Channels
7. Working with the Community
   a. Identifying leaders, influencers, networkers within the ICANN community and broader industry
   b. Determining how they can best support awareness-raising, engagement and capacity-development efforts.
   c. Providing materials, resources, and documentation that can help community members to raise awareness and engage with their own networks.
8. Communications Timeline
9. Reporting - Articulation of regular reporting on Communications and Outreach plans, schedule, activities, as well as risks or challenges encountered.

Ongoing & Upcoming Public Comment Proceedings

Agenda Item #4

Public Comment: String Similarity Review Guidelines

- String similarity review is part of the Initial Evaluation of the next gTLD round. GNSO Phase 1 Final Report on the Internationalized Domain Names Expedited Policy Development Process ask for developing guidelines to manage the process.

- String similarity review guidelines provide details on preparing for, and organizing, the review of applied for strings with respect to other applied for strings, previously delegated TLDs, and reserved words or their variant strings.

- The current Public Comment shares a draft set of criteria and methodology for string similarity review. The input will help formulate detailed guidelines and methodology in second phase of this work.

Public Comment: Applicant Support Program Handbook

12 February - 2 April 2024

- For each section of the Applicant Support Program (ASP) Handbook, commenters will indicate whether the section in question accurately reflects the policy recommendations on Topic 17, Applicant Support, based on the recommendations of the Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP Final Report and the guidance of the GNSO Guidance Process on Applicant Support.

- ICANN org is seeking input on several key topics, specifically on Section 5, which is about Applicant Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria:
  - 5.5.3: Indigenous/tribal people's organizations (Question 5: Section 5, pp. 22-23)
  - 5.5.5: Micro or small sized business from a less-developed economy (Question 5: Section 5, pp. 25-27)

- The Public Comment period for the draft ASP Handbook is 50 days, which is 10 days longer than the standard 40 days, to take into account the ICANN79 Community Forum. **Currently, the New gTLD Program team does not anticipate that the timeline for the ASP will allow for an extension of this 50-day Public Comment period.**

Public Comment: Registry Service Provider Evaluation

13 March - 22 April 2024

- Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation:

  - ICANN org is seeking feedback on the RSP Handbook as it relates to the fulfillment of the Topic 6 recommendations of the *Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process*.

  - New gTLD applicants are required to use evaluated RSPs.

  - Organizations may apply to be one of each type of RSP (Main, DNS, DNSSEC, or Proxy) under one application fee. Main RSPs may apply for one or more Exhibit A Registry Services and IDN Services.

  - All applications undergo an initial technical screening and technical testing using the new Registry System Testing (RST) 2.0 service. Applications from organizations exhibiting no Specification 10 service disruptions in the previous six months are exempt from a secondary technical screening.

Public Comment: Registry System Testing 2.0

- Registry System Testing (RST) 2.0:

  - ICANN org is seeking feedback on the RSP Handbook as it relates to the fulfillment of the Topic 39 recommendations of the *Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process*.

  - Feedback in relation to the **RST Test Specifications** and **RST API**.

  - Both are already in the public domain and feedback can be submitted via GitHub.

ASP Handbook Briefing

Agenda Item #5

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- The [Draft ASP Handbook](#) is out for public comment until 2 April.

- Section 1 - Introduction

    - This section discusses ICANN's mission, the primary purposes of the New gTLD Program, and the objectives of the Handbook. The Handbook is intended to be a step-by-step guide to applying for such support and includes information on application deadlines, criteria, processes, and evaluation.

- Section 2 - Overview

    - Reinforces aim of the ASP to serve the global public interest by fostering diversity, encouraging competition, and enhancing the utility of the DNS. The intent is to make New gTLD program application fees and process accessible to entities (potential ROs) who otherwise would be unable to apply due to financial and resource constraints.

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- Section 2 - Overview (cont'd)
  - Overview of the support - not only support to pay application and evaluation fees, but also non-financial support in the form of access to a list of pro bono/volunteer service providers, Application Counselors, ASP training program, and reduced or waived base RO fees (Pending Board consideration of the community's supplemental policy recommendation 17.2).
  - ASP Evaluation Phases & Categories
    - Phase 1:
      - General Business Due Diligence
      - Phase 2 (see High-Level Eligibility Flowchart):
      - Public Responsibility Due Diligence
      - Financial Need
      - Financial Stability
      - Eligible Entities

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- Section 2 - Overview (cont'd)

  - Qualifying for ASP does **not** automatically mean an approved New gTLD Application. All applicants, supported or not, need to complete a New gTLD Program Application. Applicants that apply for, but do not qualify for, support are still welcome to submit a New gTLD Program application and pay the full gTLD application fee and any applicable evaluation fees.

- Section 3 - Applicant Support Program Timeline

  - Applications can be submitted from Q4 2024 to Q4 2025, and will be evaluated on an ongoing basis

  - Applicants should expect to receive the results of their application within 12-16 weeks of submission

  - ASP application submission period is 12* months long

  - Deadline to submit ASP applications is 6* months prior to start of the New gTLD Program application submission period (which is Q2 2026) (*with option to extend)

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- Section 4 - Reduction of New gTLD Program Application Fees
  - Qualified ASP applicants will be eligible to receive a [50-85%] reduction in the New gTLD Program Application fees.
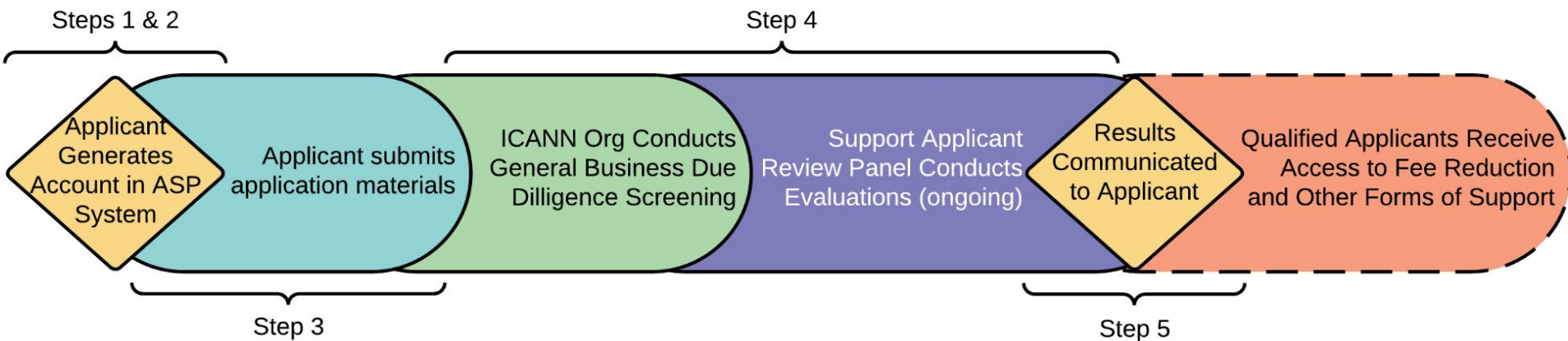
New gTLD Program Application Fee/Cost Description	Reduction for Qualified ASP Applicants
New gTLD Program Application base fee reduction	[at least 50%; up to 85%]
[Other applicable evaluation fees within the New gTLD Program]	[at least 50%; up to 85%]
Auction [bid credit/multiplier] [TBD - based upon further research]	[TBD]

Table 2. List of New gTLD Program Application and Evaluation Fees with Relevant ASP Fee Reductions for Qualified Applicants.

- Section 5 - Applicant Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria (see p. 25 of Draft Handbook)
  - This section outlines the eligibility criteria mentioned above (towards the end of slide 9) in further detail. It also includes a reminder that ASP applicants are advised **not to submit information about their intended New gTLD Program application string** when applying to the ASP

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- Section 6 - Applicant Support Program Application Process

  - This section of the Handbook provides a high-level overview of the ASP steps:

    - Register

    - Access application materials

    - Submit Application

    - Evaluation Process

    - Evaluation Results

Steps 1 & 2

Applicant Generates Account in ASP System

Applicant submits application materials

Step 3

ICANN Org Conducts General Business Due Dilligence Screening

Step 4

Support Applicant Review Panel Conducts Evaluations (ongoing)

Results Communicated to Applicant

Step 5

Qualified Applicants Receive Access to Fee Reduction and Other Forms of Support

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- Section 6 - Applicant Support Program Application Process (cont'd)

  - Applicants may change or update their applications throughout the processing and evaluation period. In general, all applicants will be required to update ICANN org in a timely manner of any material changes to information previously submitted on their application, which may then need to be re-evaluated by ICANN org and/or the Support Applicant Review Panel(s) (SARP(s)). Once an applicant's ASP evaluation begins, changes to the application will need to be submitted via an application change request. ASP applicants are **not** permitted to re-apply or re-submit an application to the ASP once the results of the ASP evaluation are complete.

- Section 7 - ASP Application Evaluation

  - ASP application evaluation will occur in **two phases**:

    1. ICANN org-managed General Business Due Diligence Screening evaluation.
    2. Independent third-party vendor-managed evaluation

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- Section 7 - ASP Application Evaluation (cont'd)
  - ICANN org will utilize the ASP criteria and indicators to conduct the General Business Due Diligence Screening evaluation, and after this step, the SARP(s) will assess the ASP criteria categories.
    - SARP(s) - Recognizing that the ASP criteria categories are distinct and may require different evaluative capabilities, the third-party vendor may establish several SARPs to fully assess the applicant.
    - Evaluations will be conducted on a pass/fail basis against each required criterion and its related indicators.
    - SARP(s) may conduct independent research or ask CQs of applicants, if necessary.
    - Applicants are assessed on an ongoing basis.

Draft ASP Handbook - Overview

- Section 7 - ASP Application Evaluation (cont'd)

  - Applicants who do **not** qualify for support (may submit a request for challenge–pending outcome of this topic), and may proceed to the main New gTLD Program (paying full application fee)

  - Minimum fee reduction (50%) to be the same for all. In the event that ASP funds remain available, qualified supported applicants may receive additional fee reduction up to 85%, to be **distributed equally**.

  - In the event that ICANN org's budget for minimum fee reduction is exhausted during submission period, ICANN org may pause accepting new ASP applications and communicate that available funds have been exhausted. Complete applications submitted before the pause will still proceed through evaluation.

- Section 8 - Terms and Conditions (TBD, AGB T&Cs dependency)

- Section 9 - Additional Information

  - This section contains useful reference information (including on the AGB)

ASP Handbook Dependency Topics

- Updates to AGB:

    - New gTLD Program Eligibility

    - Background Screening

    - Cybersquatting History Check and Legal Compliance check (section 1.2.1)

- Challenge mechanism for ASP - pending discussion of challenges/appeals

- Bid credit/multiplier - pending outcome of research

- JVs/private auctions/ICANN auctions - pending auctions topic

- Terms and Conditions for ASP - pending AGB T&Cs

- ICANN org execution of full portfolio of support - pending Board consideration of supplemental recommendation 17.2

Public Comment & Request for Proposals

- **ASP Handbook Public Comment**
  - On the Draft of the ASP Handbook, currently ongoing: 12 February 2024; closes 02 April 2024
  - Please note that the Public Comment period for the draft ASP Handbook is 50 days, which is 10 days longer than the standard 40 days, to take into account the ICANN79 Community Forum.
  - Currently, the New gTLD Program team **does not** anticipate that the timeline for the ASP and the next round opening (targeted for April 2026) will allow for an extension of this 50-day Public Comment period.

- **Support Applicant Review Panel (SARP) RFP Announcement**
  - Announcement published 12 February 2024; RFP closes 8 April.
  - Thanks in advance for sharing the RFP with your networks.

Upcoming IRT Meetings

Agenda Item #6

Provisional Meeting Schedule

#	Date	Time UTC	Topic	Wiki page
32	06-Mar-24	20:15-21:30	20. Application Change Requests	https://community.icann.org/x/doAvEQ
33	19-Mar-24	13:00-14:00		
34	21-Mar-24	20:00-21:00		

Dates, times, and agendas will be confirmed closer to the meetings.

AOB

Agenda Item #7

Thank You and Questions

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