ICANN GRANT PROGRAM

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Agenda

Vision

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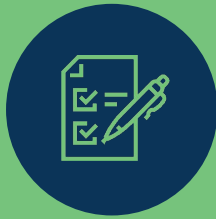
As the independent, trusted, multistakeholder steward of the Internet's unique identifiers, ICANN is dedicated to serving its mission and acting in the global public interest. The ICANN Grant Program offers an opportunity for ICANN to maximize its impact by supporting creativity and innovation that furthers our vision of a single, open, and globally interoperable Internet.

What is the ICANN Grant Program?

The ICANN Grant Program is a competitive, global program open to applications from eligible organizations for projects that are consistent with ICANN's mission and align with the objectives of the Grant Program.

The ICANN Grant Program will make a difference in the Internet ecosystem and positively impact people across the globe by investing in creative and innovative solutions that further our vision of a single, open, and globally interoperable Internet.

The expected outcome will be a broader and more diverse user base with greater capacity to further develop and improve the Internet around the world.

ICANN's mission is to help ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

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Grant Program Development

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Where did the funds come from?

In 2012, ICANN launched the New gTLD program to introduce new generic top-level domain names.

Any established entity could apply to operate a gTLD registry.

Ultimately, 1,200+ new gTLDs were added to the domain name system.

In some cases, more than one eligible entity applied to operate the same or similar gTLD; however, only one registry can operate each top-level domain.

Where did the funds come from?

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.

How did the program come to be?

The ICANN community outlined that "*proceeds from auctions will be reserved and earmarked until the uses of funds are determined. Funds must be used in a manner that directly supports ICANN's Mission and Core Values and allows ICANN to maintain its not-for-profit status.*"

ICANN's multistakeholder community formed a community group to develop a plan for the proceeds and the ICANN Grant Program emerged as the method to grant proceeds in line with ICANN's mission.

The ICANN Grant Program is the culmination of years of work by the ICANN community. It is a testament to the multistakeholder model in action.

Key Elements

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Grant Program objectives

The types of efforts that ICANN will encourage and fund through the Grant Program includes those that support ICANN's mission by:

Benefitting the development, distribution, evolution of the structures that support the Internet's unique identifier systems

Providing needed **capacity development and infrastructure support** in communities that need them most

Advancing work related **open access, future-oriented developments, innovation, and open standards** for the Internet community

Addressing **diversity, participation, and inclusion** across regions and all stakeholder communities

What funding is available?

The ICANN Grant Program will operate in cycles until all funding is used

Each cycle, an allocated portion of available proceeds will be made available for grants

During this first cycle, up to $10 million will be made available for grants to successful applicants

Awards of between $50,000 and $500,000 will be available

$50,000

$500,000

Cycle 3, 4, 5…

Cycle 2

Cycle 1

Up to $10m

For future cycles, these amounts and the total amount allocated for the next cycles may differ

Who can apply?

Applications may be submitted by eligible organizations from across the globe. For the first cycle, applicants must:

Be a charitable organization

Must not be the subject of any U.S. sanctions

Have no conflicts of interest with ICANN

Meet all applicable standards for reputation and background checks

Have a bank account in the organization's name

What activities are eligible?

A variety of activities may be proposed for consideration. However, all proposed activities must:

> Be consistent with ICANN's mission

> Not duplicate activities already funded by ICANN

> Must support ICANN's legal status as a nonprofit public benefit corporation:
> - No political or lobbying activity
> - No activity that may lead to private financial benefit of individuals
> - No unlawful activity according to the country where the applicant is based

What can be funded?

ICANN requests applications that are aligned with its mission and the objectives of the program.

ICANN's mission is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems as described in the ICANN bylaws.

Under the vision and objectives of the program, ICANN requests applications that address the following work areas:

What can be funded?

Theme 1: The Internet's unique identifier systems

Work Areas

✓ Supporting standards development in relation to the Internet's unique identifier systems.

✓ Supporting long term usability and sustainability of the Domain Name System.

✓ Strengthening the security and stability of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

✓ Enhancing Universal Acceptance to ensure truly multilingual and digitally inclusive systems.

✓ Promoting innovative projects that expand the use of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

✓ Improving the performance of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

What can be funded?

Theme 2: A unified Internet

Work Areas

✓ Advancing work related to open access to the Internet.

✓ Enhancing Internet interoperability to cope with unexpected contingencies, including those that may exclude certain communities from the global DNS.

✓ Enhancing the resiliency and sustainability of the Internet at the local, national, or global level.

What can be funded?

Overarching themes to be considered by applicants in the design of their projects:

Diversity, participation, and inclusion of underserved populations; and

Impact and outcome that can be sustained through capacity development.

Is there anything that cannot be funded?

✕ Any projects that duplicate activities already funded by ICANN.

✕ Any activity that may lead to private financial benefit of individuals beyond incidental items such as payment of reasonable employment salaries.

✕ 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 unlawful activity according to the country where the applicant is based and/or where the project is developed.

How will applications be selected?

Applications received by 20:00 UTC on 24 May 2024 will pass through several stages to determine whether or not they will be successful in receiving a grant, including:

Admissibility Checks
to determine application meets administrative requirements such as application completeness, submission in English etc.

Eligibility Checks
to determine if applicant and the application meet the eligibility requirements to qualify for consideration.

Independent Application Assessment Panel Review
an independent panel will assess applications and provide a recommendation for funding based on criteria.

Evaluation criteria

Generally, the Independent Application Assessment Panel will assess proposals against the following criteria:

✓ Proposal objectives and activities are clearly aligned with the objectives of ICANN Grant Program and ICANN's mission to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet.

✓ The proposal clearly identifies a problem for a target population; describes strategies to solve the problem; presents key performance indicators to monitor progress; and outlines expected results.

✓ The proposed work plan is comprehensive and incorporates adequate planning for the expected activities.

Evaluation criteria

Generally, the Independent Application Assessment Panel will assess proposals against the following criteria:

✓ Applicant has considered potential risks with implementing this project (organizational, political, economic, environmental, etc) and presented strategies to mitigate those risks.

✓ The costs associated with the project are allowable, reasonable, clearly described, and aligned with the project activities.

✓ Project leadership and any consortium partners or subcontractors (if applicable) exhibit skills and experience to manage the project, administer grant funds, and address the technical aspects required.

Recommendation 7
Path Forward

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CCWG-AP Recommendation 7

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"Existing ICANN accountability mechanisms such as IRP or other appeal mechanisms cannot be used to challenge a decision from the Independent Project Applications Evaluation Panel to approve or not approve an application. Applicants not selected should receive further details about where information can be found about the next round of applications as well as any educational materials that may be available to assist applicants. The CCWG recognizes that there will need to be an amendment to the Fundamental Bylaws to eliminate the opportunity to use the Request for Reconsideration and Independent Review Panel to challenge grant decisions."

CCWG-AP Recommendation 7 objectives

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Preserving the auction proceeds for funding projects.

No IRPs or Reconsideration Requests can be brought by any person/entity to challenge a decision on an individual application within the Grant Program.

Recommendation 7 Implementation

Rec 7 Language Refinement to remove "from the Independent Project Applications Evaluation Panel" as ICANN will make certain decisions on application admissibility and eligibility.

Fundamental Bylaws Amendment process to define and enable within the ICANN Bylaws limiting access to ICANN's accountability mechanisms by the community.

Completion of these actions by Q4 calendar quarter 2024 before any Board decision on the first slate of successful applications.

Recommendation 7 Next Steps

✓ Socialization of the revised path with the community.

✓ Letter to the CCWG-AP Chartering Organization asking their support to the Recommendation by 17 May 2024.

✓ Adoption of the revised Recommendation 7 by ICANN80.

Next steps

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Application Window

Opening
25 March 2024

Closing
24 May 2024

Upcoming Key Dates

15 Mar 2024	25 Mar 2024	Jun-Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024
Grant Program Applicant Guide V.3 released in English with Privacy Policy and Grant Platform Guide.	Call for proposals and application opens in grant portal until 24 May 2024.	Admissibility and eligibility initial checks + Independent Panel Assessment.	Final eligibility checks on successful applications.	Slate of successful applications delivered to the Board.
APPLICANT GUIDE V.3	**APPLICATION WINDOW**	**APPLICATION ASSESSMENT**	**FINAL CHECKS**	**EXPECTED BOARD RESOLUTION***

*Subject to dependency on Recommendation 7 language refinement and Fundamental Bylaws amendment process.
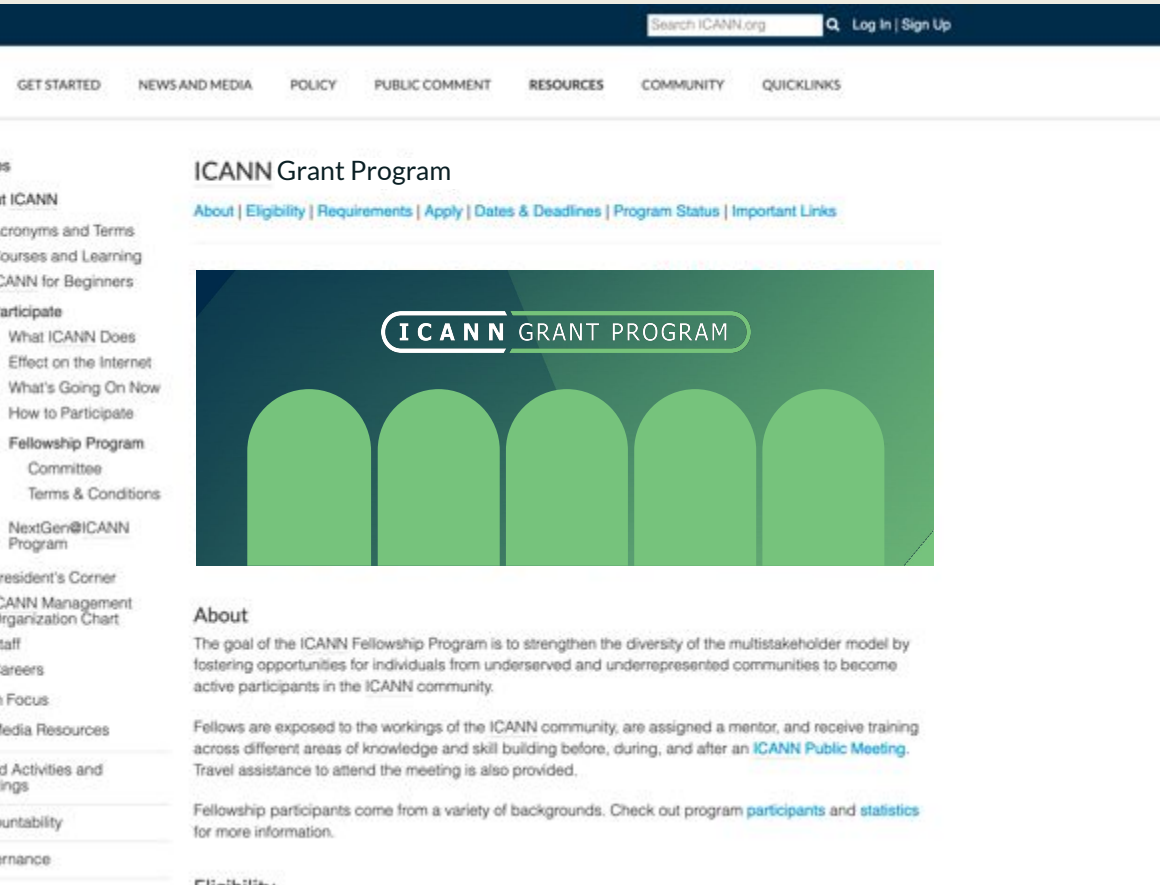
Reviews

Continuous improvement is key to ensuring the ICANN Grant Program functions as intended and as optimally as possible to ensure transparency, accountability, and the best use of the proceeds in the public interest.

At the end of each cycle, ICANN will conduct an internal review to ensure that the program was implemented as planned and all processes and protocols were followed. This will also provide an opportunity to reflect and learn from the process to inform and improve the second and future cycles.

A less frequent strategic review will take place to ensure that the goals and impact of the program are being met.

The timing of this review will be conducted based on the needs of the program and are distinct and separate from ICANN's Bylaws-mandated reviews.

Where can I stay up-to-date?

Visit the ICANN Grant Program webpage at: **https://icann.org/grant-program**

I have questions, who can I contact?

For any comments, questions, or feedback regarding the Grant Program, please contact **grantprogram@icann.org** or the ICANN Helpdesk at https://www.icann.org/en/help