

CC2 Themes – Work Track 1

1.6 Application Submission Period

1.6.1 One of the overarching questions in Community Comment 1 focused on whether applications should be accepted during defined windows of time (also known as “rounds”). If the WG determines that a system of rounds is the right approach, is three (3) months an appropriate length of time to accept applications? What considerations should be taken into account when determining the length of the application window?

Nominet, BC, BRG, Afilias, GAC UK expressed that a three-month application window could be sufficient in the case that rounds are implemented. Note that Afilias stated that it does not support rounds in principle.

“We believe that the concept of an application window worked well in the previous round. We would agree that a three month window would be reasonable PROVIDED that the AGB2 is settled well beforehand and the window timing is publicised least 6-12 months before opening. If the process and AGB2 is only settled just before the window opens (seems likely given all previous experiences!) then perhaps a longer window will be needed.” – Nominet

“With enough advance notice, a 3-month application period should be sufficient. We should avoid duplicating the “now or never” situation that occurred with the last round, and schedule rounds closer together. But we also need to balance the impact on ICANN staff in evaluating applications. We have learned much from the latest round and hopefully won’t run into as many situations that may cause delay.” – BC

“Yes, 3 months is a reasonable application window, as long as ICANN provides reasonable notice (at least 2 months) before the application window opens. However, this would need to be on a regular and defined basis to provide predictability and assurance to potential applicants that wish to apply at a future date.” – BRG

“While we do not agree with the concept of “rounds”, if ICANN were to use this model, 3 months should be an adequate time to accept applications.” – Afilias

“The principal problem that would arise from a continuous process is that all applications would be treated on a first come first serve basis that would put some applicants for the same string at a serious disadvantage in comparison with wholly commercialised applicants with ready access to finance and human resources to develop a proposal quickly to gain first advantage. The process for resolving string contention by comparative evaluation and application prioritisation eligibility for example in the case of community-based applications, would not be practicable with an ongoing process, unlike in the case of a defined window for an application round. The three months window provided for the current round with adequate notice appears to have worked well.” – GAC UK

Jannik Skou suggested a longer application window.

Sample excerpt:

“4 (four) months is sufficient, provided ICANN announces the opening of the application window at least 8 (eight) months in advance AND, if ICANN promises to launch a new round with current rules (or new rules if implemented) every two years!” – Jannik Skou

Demys and RySG suggested alternative models to the approach discussed in the question.

Sample excerpts:

“We suggest a continuously available application system, eliminating the need for rounds entirely. A way to avoid potentially malicious attempts is to publish the applied-for TLDs immediately at their application and keep them on hold for 3 (or so) months (length as per 'rounds' windows suggestions) during which time a rival applicant may apply.” – Demys

“Allowing for subsequent procedures that contemplate a “rolling” first-come, first-served open period allows all applicants—now and future—the opportunity to apply when they want to. A continuous process will prevent bottlenecks in application processing and allow applicants to apply for a gTLD when it is right for their business, rather than when a short window allows. While we support a “rolling period,” we understand that there has to be a way to deal with contention for the same string if there is pent-up demand since the 2012 round. A hybrid approach might be considered by the Working Group (e.g. a short window followed by an immediate rolling period).” -- RySG

ALAC expressed skepticism about the public benefit of ongoing gTLD proliferation.

Excerpt:

“Regardless if done in rounds or in “first come first served” continual application processes, At-Large is skeptical of the public benefit of ongoing gTLD proliferation. More information, such as the data being collected by the CCT-RT, needs to be collected in order to make an informed judgment regarding the benefit or harm caused to Internet user by further gTLD expansion.” -- ALAC

1.6.2 - If we have a few next ‘rounds’ followed by a continuous application process, how should the application submission period be handled in the lead-up rounds?

Nominet and BRG provided suggestions for structuring lead-up rounds.

Sample excerpts:

“The sort of electronic submission process used for round 1 was quite complex but seemed to work. Once the window has closed then applications should be published and processed in line with the agreed AGB2. For rounds 3 and beyond ahead of a potential continuous application process then timing and any refinement of rules and processes necessarily needs to wait until round 2 has been processed, but we would suggest a target date of less than two years between subsequent rounds going forwards.” -- Nominet

“To provide predictability and help applicants plan more effectively, a timeline should be agreed. For example, an application window could be set to run annually (or more frequently) and the post-application-to-delegation steps can continue in parallel with any subsequent application window. This can continue until such a time if/when a continuous application process is adopted.” -- BRG

RySG and Aflias suggested that future windows should be implemented in support of moving towards a continuous process.

“Any “lead-up” rounds should reflect the end-goal of the continuous application process as closely as possible. This will allow these rounds to be a means of refining the continuous application process.” -- Aflias

“The strategic goal for future applications should be the implementation of a continuous process on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the RySG appreciates that there may be one or two further ‘application rounds’ imposed before this goal can be realistically achieved. In this respect, the RySG recommends that a clear commitment is given to a schedule of further application rounds, with shorter timespans between each round, in line with the original target of one year (AGB section 1.1.6).” --RySG

Jannik Skou expressed that applicants in the next round should have priority over additional/subsequent round applicants.

ALAC emphasized the potential harm to Internet users caused by gTLD proliferation, regardless of application process.

1.6.3 - Do you think the length of the submission period will impact Applicant Support and what factors do you think should be considered in determining an appropriate length of time?