



Track 1

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Work Track 1 Timeline

Dec 2017

- Work on completing WG Deliberations
- Begin Review of WT Recommendations and address areas that need further work/clarification

Jan - Feb 2018

- Complete Review of WT Recommendations

March 2018

- Take WT Recommendations to Full WG

4.2.5 AGB: Questions and Concerns

The AGB was developed over the course of several years, countless volunteer hours, with numerous iterations and explanatory memoranda, and much debate in public comments, during ICANN meetings, online fora and other channels. As a result, it is a piece of documentation that represents bottom up, multi stakeholder compromise and as such, is unlikely to be considered perfect by all parties, as compromise generally requires concessions.

In the deliberations of the DG, the views exchanged on the AGB were diverse. As the AGB was a singular document intended to support the program, it was likely foreseeable that there would be sections that may be less relevant to certain parties than others. The AGB provided the requirements to be considered by applicants, consultants, backend providers, registrars, rights holders, governments, and others interested in the program.

4.2.5 AGB: Questions and Concerns

Some members of the DG suggested partitioning the AGB into distinct, audience driven sections, believing that it may improve readability and understanding of rules. Others suggested that the AGB could be made more process-driven, providing step-by-step instructions. Still, others even suggested that the AGB was the wrong vehicle for implementation of the policy entirely, although an alternative was not suggested.

As a result of the many program reviews being performed by various facets of the community, it remains likely that there will need to be revisions to the AGB. In addition, in the event that there are substantive changes to the existing New gTLD policy, the AGB must be adjusted accordingly to reflect those changes. Any changes to the AGB for subsequent procedures must be subject to community discourse, as occurred in the past.

4.2.5 Rationale for Policy Development

The DG did not anticipate policy development work in regards to the Applicant Guidebook, although it could be necessary if there is broad support for an alternate vehicle for implementation of the new gTLD policy. A potential PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures may want to consider providing implementation guidance, particularly around the structure of the AGB, for consideration by ICANN in developing the next AGB, though modifications to the AGB (provided the AGB remains as the implementation vehicle) would presumably remain an iterative, community-inclusive process.

Applicant Guide Book Recommendations

AGB Changes are relatively minor and more implementation orientated

Implementation Recommendation on the Structure or Design of the AGB

Reduce the amount of background and rationale, move to Appendices.

The AGB should be:

1. Less historical
2. Less of a policy approach
3. Create a practical guide that can be used in applying for a TLD
 - a. Improving the Table of Contents along with the Index → making the document easier to find relevant information and to search
4. Step-by-step, possibly by type of application
 - a. **Feedback: Subdividing the AGB into audience-driven sections?**

4.2.14 Applicant Support

In an effort to increase global diversity and representation across regions within the New gTLD Program, the ICANN community developed the Applicant Support Program (ASP). The ASP sought to provide financial and non-financial support to applicants from developing economies, thereby reducing competitive disadvantages that may prevent them from participating in the New gTLD Program. The ASP is also in support of Implementation Guideline N, which states:

- ICANN may put in place a fee reduction scheme for gTLD applicants from economies classified by the UN as least developed.

As of June 2017, UN:

- Afghanistan Angola Bangladesh Benin Bhutan Burkina Faso Burundi Cambodia Central African Republic Chad Comoros Democratic Republic of the Congo Djibouti Eritrea Ethiopia Gambia Guinea Guinea-Bissau Haiti Kiribati Lao People's Democratic Republic Lesotho Liberia Madagascar Malawi Mali Mauritania Mozambique Myanmar Nepal Niger Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe Senegal Sierra Leone Solomon Islands Somalia South Sudan Sudan Timor-Leste Togo Tuvalu Uganda United Republic of Tanzania Vanuatu Yemen Zambia

4.2.14 Applicant Support

The ASP was the implementation of the final report delivered by the Joint SO/AC New gTLD Applicant Support Working Group (JAS WG), chartered by the GNSO and the ALAC. The ASP provided financial and non-financial support via three mechanisms:

- Financial assistance in the form of a reduction in the new gTLD evaluation fee (i.e., \$47,000 USD as opposed to \$185,000 USD) for applicants meeting qualifications.
- Pro bono services via the Applicant Support Directory, which was created to connect potential applicants who wish to establish a new public interest gTLD registry in their community with organizations who wish to offer either financial or non-financial assistance.
- Establishment of a funding mechanism for the ASP, which received \$2,000,000 USD in seed funding.

4.2.14 Applicant Support Questions & Concerns

The topic of support for applicants from Developing Countries received considerable attention from members of the DG. Members noted that of the 1,930 complete applications received by ICANN, only three applied for financial assistance via the ASP program, with a single application meeting the criteria. DG Members were concerned with the lack of usage of the Applicant Support Program and identified a number of possible reasons that may have contributed to the limited number of applications for the ASP program:

- The measures introduced to prevent gaming of the ASP may have discouraged possible applicants
- There was a short trajectory from the JAS WG Final Report, implementation of the recommendations, and the launch of the New gTLD Program, inclusive of the ASP.
- The lack of, or otherwise inadequate, outreach efforts for the ASP.
- The lack of financial support beyond the application fee reduction for other aspects of the program, like objections, string contention resolution, post-delegation operations, and other expenses associated with running a gTLD registry.

4.2.14 Applicant Support Questions & Concerns

Some DG Members provided suggestions on how to address some of the issues identified above, hopefully increasing utilization of the ASP or similar program, such as:

- Improving the outreach for the ASP as well as improved outreach in general for the New gTLD Program in Developing Countries.
- Creating a round dedicated to applicants from Developing Countries, which is discussed in greater detail in section 4.2.16 on Application Submission Limits.
- Making the assistance more comprehensive, so that it extends beyond just the application fee reduction.

With only three ASP applications out of a total of 1,930 applications, it is clear that usage of the ASP was minimal. However, there may be a number of reasons why this may be the case. A possible PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures should seek data in understanding why usage was limited, as it will help inform the development of any updated solutions. The PDP-WG may also want to consider identifying success criteria for the program related to communications, funds made available, usage of the program, and other factors.

4.2.14.4 Rationale for policy development

Support for applicants from developing countries was identified in Implementation Guideline N, but the substantive recommendations are found in the JAS WG Final Report, together with the Board working group that developed an implementation model. In its resolution to approve the ASP, the ICANN Board noted that not all JAS WG recommendations were accepted.

A possible PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures may want to review the existing Implementation Guideline and consider possible additional recommendations to improve the support for applicants from developing nations. Work to support this effort may include identifying recommended support mechanisms, evaluation criteria, clear objectives, success criteria, and other elements. Given the interest in the subject within the DG and the wider community, this subject may warrant policy development.

Finally, the ASP was identified in ICANN Board guidance on initial input on areas for possible policy work.

Applicant Support Recommendations

Policy Recommendation – Provide a Process to Transition to the “Regular” Application Track

If an applicant did not qualify, they were eliminated from the entire application round, instead of being given the opportunity to raise the additional funds and complete the applicant process via the regular process. ASP’s who did not qualify risked losing their deposit and their application.

- a) Need to allow applicants the opportunity to transition to regular application track if they do not qualify
- a) Accept that some may try to game the system, but need to make the system “approachable” for those who need it; risks can be reduced by penalizing those who try to game the system

Applicant Support Recommendations, cont'd

Implementation Recommendation - Improve Promotional Efforts

- a. Improve outreach for the New gTLD program in general and the ASP in Developing Countries
- b. Engage with ccNSO/GAC Members/ALAC on how to create awareness and education in such regions:
 - i. Expand training and awareness opportunities; Inclusion of the Applicant Support program in all promotional activities related to new TLD applications
 - i. Be present in potential markets. Showing up once or twice won't attain the level of traction required. This is still a new field in many countries and it takes time/presence to build awareness

Applicant Support Recommendations, cont'd

- c. Find suitable partners with the relevant global reach to deliver the message to the appropriate audiences, e.g. Internet Society chapters, global university networks (who have numerous international campuses and programs) or aid organizations that specialize in technology and communications in underserved markets
 - i. Implement appropriate training programs for developing locally situated registries/registrars that will address and support the needs of potential business, educational and social entrepreneurial LDC end-users
- d. Compare volume to users of domain names registered in regional TLDs
 - i. Identify the number of domain names registered in “regional” new gTLDs compared with the number of internet users in such regions and then compare with same numbers in regions like Europe and North America

Applicant Support Recommendations, cont'd

Implementation Recommendation – Utilize Partnerships to Maximize Outreach

North American companies going into regions to carryout studies is a hurdle and undermines the programs potential

- a. ICANN may need to remove itself from promoting outreach to underdeveloped areas
- b. ICANN needs to partner with organizations in potential regions before taking further actions
- c. Developmental entities and agencies could be helpful
 - i. Initiatives funded by multi-lateral agencies
 - ii. Promoting access to economy

Applicant Support Recommendations, cont'd

Recommendation – Provide Support Beyond Reduced Application Fees

Support is needed beyond simply reducing the amount of the application fee for other aspects of the program, like objections, string contention resolution, post-delegation operations, and other expenses associated with running a gTLD registry including backend registry services, escrow services, marketing and sales

- a. Focus on the application process and assisting those who want to apply. Support their applications through the entire process; facilitate introductions and engagement with RSPs that are willing to support discounted services for ASP participants
- b. Strong need for mentorship and continued support to be built into the support program; Including knowledgeable technical and managerial personnel
- c. Provide support not just to committed applicants, but also to groups considering/evaluating whether to apply. Provide the tools to help them evaluate their idea and its potential before looking at applying for support.

Applicant Support Recommendations, cont'd

Recommendation – Understand Obstacles & Provide Assistance Accordingly

“Money is not Necessarily the Biggest Obstacle.”

- a. Technical support needed
- b. Technical competence of the applicant is important; support in the processing of the application(s)
- c. Evaluation of total cost of ownership of TLD
 - i. Attorney’s fees
 - ii. Maintenance
- d. Need a mechanism to provide support for processing applications
- e. Advise on how to develop a TLD; how to develop a particular market for a TLD
- f. TLDs linked to identity - higher chance of not competing with others and likely to succeed in a community or region
 - i. What are the biggest problems in a region and how can a TLD help overcome the obstacles or help?
- g. Where basic infrastructure and reliable access continues to be a challenge, ICANN must accept that the existing availability of TLDs (ccTLDs and existing gTLDs) may be sufficient in regions where resources may be more effectively utilized in critical local Internet infrastructure

Next Meeting

Thank-you for your Time and Thoughts!

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, 19 December 2017 at 20:00 UTC