NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

gTLD

Applicant Support Program

Pre-ICANN87 Update for the Governmental Advisory Committee

26 September 2026

ICANN

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Executive Summary

78	56	5
ASP applications submitted	qualified for support	ICANN regions represented

The Applicant Support Program (ASP) application and evaluation phase for the 2026 Round is complete. ICANN received 78 submitted ASP applications, of which 56 qualified to receive support. The supported applicant cohort spans all five ICANN regions and four eligible entity types[1].

Key Developments Since ICANN86

- The ASP Application System closed on 12 August 2026, aligned with the close of the New gTLD Program application submission period.
- Final ASP results are available: 56 Fully Approved[2], 3 Not Eligible for Support, 4 Withdrawn, and 15 Terminated after remaining incomplete at system close[3].
- At the 12 August submission deadline, ICANN had received more than 1,600 primary gTLD applications; the final application count is subject to adjustment based on receipt of the required evaluation fees. After Reveal Day, ICANN will be able to report publicly on how many supported applicants submitted gTLD applications.
- Capacity development is moving into its next phase, building on the Supported Applicant Toolkit, Applicant Readiness Pathway, pro bono and mentor resources, discounted RSP resources, and general applicant readiness efforts.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation has produced its first formal findings on awareness, outreach, communication, and engagement, and is transitioning toward measuring supported applicant experience and outcomes across the applicant journey.

What Comes Next

The next phase of reporting will track the progress of supported applicants through Reveal Day, evaluation, contention resolution where applicable, contracting, delegation, and transition toward registry operations. Capacity development and monitoring activities will evolve alongside those milestones.

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[1]Eligible entity types include: Micro/Small Business From a Less-Developed Economy, Nonprofit, Charity, or Equivalent, Social Impact or Public Benefit Micro/Small Business, and Indigenous/Tribal People's Organization

[2]Note: Qualification for support does not necessarily indicate submission of a gTLD application. Supported applicant participation in the 2026 Round will be reported following Reveal Day.

[3]Note: Regarding the terminated applications, ICANN made multiple attempts through different communication channels to reach applicants with outstanding actions, but did not receive a response.

Final ASP Results

Final results following closure of the ASP Application System:

78	56	3	4	15
Submitted	Fully Approved	Not Eligible	Withdrawn	Terminated

In addition, 99 organizations initiated the ASP process but did not ultimately submit an ASP application for evaluation.

Final Disposition of Submitted Applications

Status	Applications	Share of Submitted
Fully Approved	56	71.8%
Not Eligible for Support	3	3.8%
Withdrawn	4	5.1%
Terminated	15	19.2%
Total	78	100%

"Terminated" reflects applications that remained incomplete when the ASP System closed, in line with the closure of the gTLD application submission period.

Supported Applicant Cohort Profile

56 organizations qualified for support:

Regional Representation		
ICANN Region	**Supported Applicants**	**% of Cohort**
Asia / Australia / Pacific	30	53.6%
North America	14	25.0%
Africa	7	12.5%
Europe	4	7.1%
Latin America / Caribbean	1	1.8%
Total	56	100%

Eligible Entity Type		
Eligible Entity Type	**Supported Applicants**	**% of Cohort**
Micro/Small Business From a Less-Developed Economy	25	44.6%
Nonprofit, Charity, or Equivalent	24	42.9%
Social Impact or Public Benefit Micro/Small Business	6	10.7%
Indigenous/Tribal People's Organization	1	1.8%
Total	56	100%

Key Takeaways

- 56 organizations qualified for support through the ASP for the 2026 Round[4].
- Supported applicants represent all five ICANN regions, with more than half of the cohort from Asia/Australia/Pacific (53.6%).
- Micro or small businesses from less-developed economies and nonprofit/charity organizations make up nearly 88% of the cohort, representing 25 and 24 supported applicants, respectively.
- The cohort includes organizations across four ASP eligible entity types, providing a diverse base of supported applicants entering the 2026 Round.

[4]Note: Qualification for support does not necessarily indicate submission of a gTLD application. Supported applicant participation in the 2026 Round will be reported following Reveal Day.

- The regional and entity-type profile provides useful context for planning ongoing capacity development and support as applicants progress through the New gTLD Program.

Supported Applicants by Region and Entity Type

Region	Indigenous/ Tribal	Micro/Small – Less-Developed Economy	Nonprofit / Charity	Social Impact / Public Benefit	Total
Africa	0	6	1	0	**7**
Asia / Australia / Pacific	1	14	15	0	**30**
Europe	0	2	2	0	**4**
Latin America / Caribbean	0	1	0	0	**1**
North America	0	2	6	6	**14**
Total	**1**	**25**	**24**	**6**	**56**

Where an applicant applied under more than one eligible entity type, the table reflects the entity type under which the applicant qualified for support.

What the Cohort Profile Means for the Next Phase

- Supported applicants represent different organizational models, regions, languages, and levels of experience with ICANN and the DNS ecosystem.
- This diversity provides useful context for planning capacity development as supported applicants progress through the New gTLD Program.

Capacity Development

Capacity development helps supported applicants build the knowledge, understanding, and access to resources needed to navigate the New gTLD Program and progress toward delegation. The support elements below complement general applicant readiness, and will continue to be available as supported applicants advance through the next phase of the applicant journey.

Foundation Already in Place	
Support Element	**Current Foundation**
Supported Applicant Toolkit	Central guide to financial and non-financial support, learning resources, touch-points, and community connections.
Discounted RSP Services	Successfully evaluated Registry Service Providers may voluntarily offer discounted services to supported applicants.
Applicant Readiness Pathway	Self-directed learning organized around ICANN/DNS foundations, preparing to apply, applying through TAMS, and other application services.
Pro Bono Providers and Mentors	Access to volunteer professional services and industry/community experience.
Applicant Communications	Dedicated updates, reminders, resources, and opportunities to provide feedback.

Next Phase

The next phase of capacity development will focus on the needs of supported applicants as they progress through upcoming stages of the Applicant Journey. Using the Applicant Journey as the organizing structure, ICANN will identify needs at each stage, map existing ICANN and external resources, and identify where additional capacity development would be most useful.

Near-term activities will focus on upcoming milestones, with additional resources and learning opportunities developed as needs are identified and the 2026 Round progresses.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

Background and Approach

ICANN's continuous monitoring and evaluation work is designed to assess whether the ASP is reaching its intended audiences, whether applicants understand and can use the support available, and how the program contributes to supported applicants' progress through the New gTLD Program. The sections below outline the rationale for the areas being monitored and evaluated, as well as the mechanisms being used to assess them.

Policy and Implementation Context

- The GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) for Applicant Support was tasked with articulating measures of success, including the data and metrics that should be collected and analyzed.
- The GGP recommends both quantitative measures—such as outreach engagement, applicant participation, and supported applicant outcomes—and qualitative measures based on applicant feedback.
- ICANN engaged an external evaluator/researcher, developed an evaluation framework, and is providing programmatic data to support analysis.

Evaluation Follows the ASP Lifecycle	
Phase	**Examples of What Is Being Assessed**
Awareness & Outreach	Reach, usefulness and clarity of communications; barriers to engagement.
ASP Application Experience	Understanding of requirements, accessibility, applicant experience, and reasons for non-submission.
Support & Capacity Development	Usefulness and utilization of financial support, pro bono services, learning resources, and other support.
New gTLD Applicant Journey	Preparedness, barriers, progression through evaluation and later milestones.
Long-term Outcomes	Delegation and, over time, sustainability of supported registry operators.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Findings to Date

Awareness, Outreach, Communication, and Engagement (AOCE) Survey

The first formal evaluation activity examined how ASP outreach influenced awareness among prospective applicants and assessed the reach and clarity of ASP communications. The survey was distributed through ICANN outreach channels from January through April 2026 and received 35 responses.

4.5/5	4.2/5	51%
ASP website usefulness	Information helped respondents understand eligibility and how to apply	Reported no engagement barriers

Key Findings

- The ICANN website was the most common first point of contact, cited by 40% of respondents; word of mouth was second at 17%.
- All measured communication channels received positive mean usefulness ratings, ranging from 4.2 to 4.5 on a five-point scale.
- Respondents reported high comfort asking questions in interactive settings, including webinars, ICANN meetings, and conference sessions.
- Among reported barriers, technical complexity was most common, followed by lack of awareness of events/materials, event timing, language accessibility, and technology access.
- Suggestions emphasized more in-person/hybrid engagement, expanded digital engagement, community-driven outreach, partnerships, simpler practical materials, and more localized content.

What's Next

- Expand monitoring from outreach and awareness to supported applicant experience, preparedness, and use of ASP benefits and resources.
- Track supported applicant participation and progression through key stages of the New gTLD Program.
- Continue assessing ASP outcomes against the GGP indicators of success as additional measures become available.

Tracking Progress Against GGP Measures

The GGP established a set of indicators spanning awareness and outreach, applicant understanding and support, application submission and evaluation, delegation, and longer-term registry operations. Some measures can be assessed now; others become meaningful only as supported applicants progress through the 2026 Round.

Progress Against GGP Success Measures

GGP Area	Current Position	Next Evidence Point
Awareness & Outreach	AOCE evaluation completed; communications usefulness and engagement barriers measured.	Future applicant feedback and outreach effectiveness measures.
Applicant Understanding	Early AOCE findings show strong reported understanding of eligibility and how to apply.	Supported applicant survey and capacity-development feedback.
Pro Bono / Support Use	Resources available; utilization and usefulness to be measured.	Post-application survey and ongoing monitoring.
Application Submission & Evaluation	56 supported applicants qualified for support.	After Reveal Day, report how many supported applicants submitted gTLD applications and track progression.
Delegation	Not yet measurable.	Track supported applications that reach delegation and longer-term operation.

Delegation Indicator

GGP Guidance Recommendation 5 identifies a floor of no fewer than 10, or 0.5% of all successfully delegated gTLD applications, from supported applicants. ICANN received more than 1,600 primary applications for the 2026 Round[5]. With 56 organizations qualified for support, the size of the supported applicant cohort provides a solid foundation to work toward this eventual measure. The metric itself cannot be assessed until delegation outcomes are known.

[5] Note: The final total number of applications cannot be confirmed until payment of the gTLD evaluation fee is received.

Looking Ahead

Reporting will follow supported applicants through the 2026 Round:

Next Reporting Milestones	
Milestone	**Expected Reporting Focus**
Reveal Day	Number and share of supported applicants that submitted a gTLD application; regional and entity-type profile of participating supported applicants.
Evaluation	Progress through relevant evaluations; emerging applicant needs; capacity-development activities aligned with evaluation milestones.
Contention Resolution	Supported applicant participation in contention resolution and relevant ASP financial support, where applicable.
Contracting & Delegation	Progress toward contracting and delegation; readiness activities for the transition to Registry Operator.
Post-Delegation	Longer-term monitoring of supported registry operators and lessons for future rounds.

Looking Ahead to the Next GAC Update

The next pre-meeting GAC update can begin reporting on supported applicant participation in the New gTLD Program following Reveal Day, alongside progress in capacity development and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

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