

GAC Discussion on New gTLD Program Next Round

Session 8

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Session Objective

GAC Members continue preparing for the next round of New gTLDs, building on the Capacity Development Sessions which precede this session, and further discussing topics of interest to governments.

The session will focus on an overview of upcoming milestones in preparation for the opening of the next round of New gTLDs, followed by a GAC discussion on GAC processes in preparation for the next round, including GAC Early Warnings. GAC members will also discuss GAC communiqué language on priority issues pertaining to new gTLDs.

Leadership Proposal for GAC Action

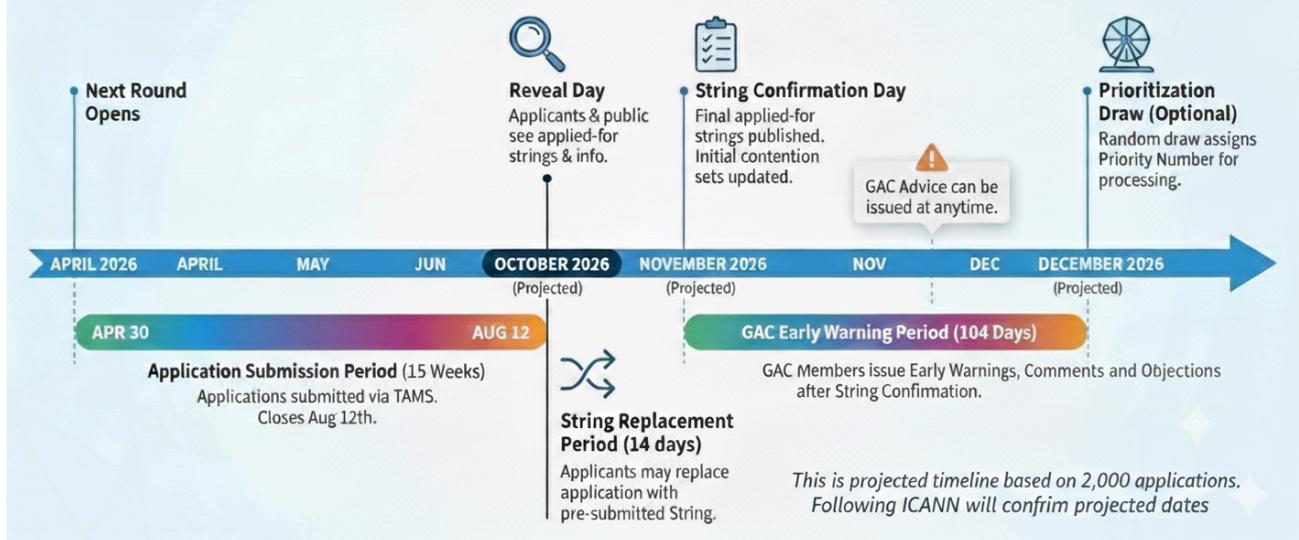
1. GAC Members to receive a status update from ICANN org on the timeline for the next round of New gTLDs and other pending next steps, including opportunities for GAC input.,
2. GAC Members to discuss and review the GAC Process for Early Warnings in preparation for the Next Round of New gTLDs, with the aim of finalizing it as part of the readiness steps for the next round.

Current Status and Recent Developments

Projected Timeline for GAC Members

GAC topic leads prepared a projected [timeline](#) for the New gTLD Program Next Round, including milestones and key processes. This is a projected timeline based on the assumption that 2000 applications will be received; following the close of the application window, ICANN will confirm dates for Reveal Day, String Confirmation Day and the Prioritization Draw.

ICANN New gTLD Next Round: 2026 Timeline & Key Processes



Applicant Support Program and Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program

Since ICANN84, the [Applicant Support Program \(ASP\)](#) and the [Registry Service Provider \(RSP\) Evaluation Program](#) have continued to process applications received.

The application submission period for the ASP closed on 19 December 2025 for all applicants/ Applicants that did not submit a complete application by 19 December 2025 will not proceed in the evaluation process.

The ASP launched on 19 November 2024, and closed on 19 December 2025. As of 22 January 2026, these are the overall program statistics:

- 52 applications **in draft** (applications that have been started but not yet submitted organization information);
- 49 **initiated** applications (applications that have submitted organization information);
- 4 **submitted** application (applications that have submitted application information for evaluation); and
- 1 application **withdrawn** by the applicant.
- 2 application has been **“conditionally approved”** (pending payment)
- 2 applications have been **“fully approved”** (payment received)

Statistics can be found on the [ASP Program Statistics](#) webpage which is updated monthly.

The ASP ICANN org team created [Applicant readiness materials](#), which were translated in the six ICANN languages, and published on the Next Round website. Materials include:

- the [ASP Application System User Guide](#),
- [ASP Applicant Checklist](#), and the
- [ASP Applicant Quick Start Guide](#).

On 30 January 2026, ICANN published the [List of Evaluated RSPs](#), which includes organizations that have cleared evaluation and organizations that have cleared some, but not all, of the technical evaluations. This list will be updated on an ongoing basis as the applicants progress through the evaluation process. The RSP Program is preparing to re-open in parallel with the opening of the gTLD application window.

Applicant Guidebook

Following the ICANN Board's adoption of the final Applicant Guidebook at ICANN84, ICANN published the final version on 16 December 2025. The authoritative version of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook, is available [here](#). To view the web version in html, [click here](#). The Guidebook is the essential roadmap to the program, providing interested parties with the application questions and all the information they need to apply for new gTLDs. It lays out the requirements to lead readers through application submission and evaluation processes.

In February 2026, the translations of the AGB in the six ICANN languages were published and is now available in PDF and HTML formats:

- Arabic ([PDF](#), [HTML](#))
- Chinese ([PDF](#), [HTML](#))
- French ([PDF](#), [HTML](#))
- Russian ([PDF](#), [HTML](#))
- Spanish ([PDF](#), [HTML](#))
- English ([PDF](#), [HTML](#))

Note: The English version is the authoritative version of the AGB.

Due to the complex nature of the AGB, and the fact it is a complex legal document which may be difficult to understand among those who are less familiar with ICANN and the Domain Name System, ICANN org is actively developing materials to help the wider community digest the AGB. ICANN org recognizes the need for supplemental, complementary materials to aid prospective generic top-level domain (gTLD) applicants in understanding the application requirements, and how to navigate the application and evaluation processes. This [content](#) is in the works as follows:

- [Key Topic Overviews](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Webinars and ICANN Meeting Sessions](#)

Key Topic Overviews

These documents provide succinct overviews of various AGB topics, relevant policies, and procedures, using plain language where practicable. The topics available now include replacement

strings and replacement period, trademark protections, geographic names, Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) early warnings and consensus advice, objections and appeals, and community input. More topics are in development. These overviews can be found on the New gTLD Program: Next Round website on the [Applicant Guidebook Resources page](#).

Next Round Website

The [website](#) for the New gTLD Program was launched following ICANN79, and it is expected to be a central source of information for the ICANN community as well as current and future new gTLD applicants. The website includes information about the program, tools and resources for applicants, updates on program status, and information regarding a specific round (e.g. 2012 versus the upcoming round). GAC members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the website to ensure they are up to date with materials and information related to the program which will be regularly posted here.

Background

On 16 March 2023, the Board [resolved](#) to instruct ICANN org to begin the implementation of all Final Report Outputs detailed in Section A of the "[Scorecard on Subsequent Procedures PDP](#)" (March Scorecard) and to make available resources required for the successful and timely opening of the next round of new gTLDs. The ICANN Board approved ninety-eight (98) recommendations contained in the Final Report on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process, and marked the remaining thirty-eight (38) recommendations as "pending".

The Board further directed ICANN org to deliver a comprehensive implementation plan to the Board no later than 1 August 2023, containing a work plan, relevant information for the Infrastructure Development stream, timelines and anticipated resource requirements to announce the opening of the next round of new gTLDs. ICANN org delivered the [implementation plan](#) for opening the next round of applications for new generic top-level domains (gTLDs), and on its [resolution](#) approved on 27 July 2023, the Board acknowledged receipt of the plan and directed ICANN org to provide the Board with periodic updates on its progress on program implementation, as well as to continue to prepare information for the Board Finance Committee on periodic requests for implementation funding as implementation work progresses through identified milestones. A [status update](#) on the New gTLD Program: Next Round was published by ICANN org on 24 February 2025.

The Board engaged with the GNSO Council on items marked as "pending", and following this interaction the GNSO Council transmitted to the Board the [New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Pending Recommendations - GNSO Council Clarifying Statement](#) (Clarifying Statement) on 5 September 2023, developed by the GNSO Council SubPro Small Team to address the Board's concerns on the pending Outputs. The GNSO Council noted the Clarifying Statement should be read as complementary to recommendations as stated in the Final Report and should be considered jointly with the Outputs for the purpose of implementation and operation of the New gTLD Program Next Round.

In September 2023, the ICANN Board published several documents of interest to the GAC pertaining to new gTLDs. Relevant sections of these documents are summarized below for GAC membership ease of reference.

- On 10 September 2023, the ICANN Board published the [September 2023 Scorecard: Subsequent Procedures PDP](#), i.e. an updated Board Scorecard on the SubPro PDP WG recommendations marked as “pending” in the Board Resolution on 16 March 2023.
- The Board also published on 10 September 2023 the [Board Scorecard on ICANN77 GAC Advice](#), outlining Board decisions following the issuance of GAC advice at ICANN77.
- On 21 September 2023, the Board published the [Board Scorecard on ICANN77 GAC Issues of Importance](#), outlining its comments and decisions on the GAC ICANN77 Issues of Importance following the Board-GAC Interaction on this topic.

The Board published on 26 October 2023 the [October 2023 Board Scorecard: Subsequent Procedures \(SubPro PDP\)](#), outlining Board decisions on pending recommendations from the SubPro PDP WG Final Report.

On 11 June 2024 the ICANN Board published the [June 2024 Scorecard: Subsequent Procedures Supplemental Recommendations](#). This June 2024 Scorecard: Subsequent Procedures Supplemental Recommendations (Supplemental Recommendations Scorecard) is intended to facilitate the Board's consideration of the [GNSO Council-approved Supplemental Recommendations](#).

Key Reference Documents

- [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#) (16 December 2025)
- [Board follow-up to GAC and ALAC joint Letter on the Applicant Support Program](#) (3 October 2025)
- [Board response to GAC and ALAC Letter on Urgent Review of the Next Round Applicant Support Program](#) (25 August 2025)
- [GAC and ALAC letter to Board on Urgent Review of Next Round Applicant Support Program](#) (15 August 2025)
- [ICANN Materials Provide Prospective New gTLD Applicants Clarity on Key Topics](#) (21 May 2025)
- Applicant Guidebook Resources - [Key Topic Overviews](#)
- [Board Reply to GAC Response to Board Update following Board-GAC Bylaws Consultation on ICANN80 GAC Advice](#) (29 January 2025)
- [GAC Response to Proposed Update to Recommendation 7 from the New gTLD Auction Proceeds Cross-Community Working Group](#) (20 January 2025)
- [GAC Response on the Board's Proposed Path Forward on Auctions: Mechanisms of Last Resort/Private Resolution of Contention Sets in New gTLDs](#) (13 December 2024)
- [GAC ICANN80 Advice Follow-up on Outreach and Engagement Report](#) (11 December 2024)
- [ICANN81 Istanbul Communiqué](#) (18 November 2024)

- Board follow-up on Board-GAC Bylaws Mandated Consultation Processes on GAC Advice:
 - [Follow-up](#) on 3 September 2024 Board-GAC Consultation regarding ICANN77 GAC Advice Item 4.a.i (Auctions) (3 October 2024)
 - [Update](#) following Board-GAC Bylaws Consultation on ICANN80 GAC Advice on the New gTLD Applicant Support Program (ASP) (3 October 2024)
- [Board Action on ICANN80 GAC Advice](#) (29 July 2024)
- [ICANN Board Proposed Path Forward for the GAC Consensus Advice in the ICANN80 Kigali GAC Communique](#) (23 July 2024)
- [Board Scorecard on ICANN78 GAC Issues of Importance](#) (9 May 2024)
- [Board Action on ICANN79 GAC Advice](#) (5 May 2024)
- [Draft New gTLD Program: Next Round Applicant Support Handbook](#) (12 February 2024)
- [Board Action on ICANN78 GAC Advice](#) (21 January 2024)
- [Overview of Analyses of Costs and Benefits of a Next Round of the New gTLD Program](#) (22 January 2024)
- [GNSO Guidance Process \(GGP\) for Applicant Support Guidance Recommendation Final Report](#) (8 December 2023)
- [Implementation Framework for Content-Related Registry Commitments in the New gTLD Program: Next Round](#) (5 December 2023)
- [ICANN78 GAC Hamburg Communiqué](#) (30 October 2023)
- [October 2023 Board Scorecard: Subsequent Procedures \(SubPro PDP\)](#) (26 October 2023)
- [September 2023 Board Scorecard: Subsequent Procedures](#) - 10 September 2023
- [Board Scorecard on ICANN77 GAC Advice](#) (10 September 2023)
- [Board Scorecard on ICANN77 GAC Issues of Importance](#) (21 September 2023)
- [Scorecard: Subsequent Procedures \(SubPro PDP\)](#) - 16 March 2023
- [ICANN77 GAC Communiqué](#) - 20 June 2023
- [New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Operational Design Assessment](#) - 12 December 2022
- [GAC Consensus Collective Comment](#) (1 June 2021) on GNSO New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Final Outputs for ICANN Board Consideration.
- [Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP WG](#) - 1 February 2021

Further Information

- GAC Policy Background Document on Subsequent Rounds of New gTLDs:
<https://gac.icann.org/briefing-materials/public/gac-policy-background-new-gtlds-subsequent-rounds.pdf>

Document Administration

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