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Do you have a question or concern for the ICANN Ombudsman?

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ICANN

ICANN80 GAC Discussion on New gTLD Program Next Round

10 June 2024

ICANN | **GAC**
Governmental Advisory Committee

80 | **POLICY FORUM**
ICANN

Agenda

1. Introduction & New gTLDs Topic Lead Team - Nigel Hickson (5 min.)

2. GAC Discussion on Applicant Support - Rosalind Kennybirch (50 min.)

   a. GAC discussion on Applicant Support

   b. ICANN org Update

   c. GAC Questions to ICANN Org

3. Implementation Review Team Update (20 min.)

   a. GAC update - Rida Tahir

   b. ICANN org update - Lars Hoffmann/Marika Konings

4. GAC Discussion/Questions (15 min.)

5. AOB

1. GAC New gTLDs Topic Lead Team

Nigel Hickson (UK), GAC Vice Chair & Topic Lead Coordinator

GAC New gTLDs Topic Lead Team

- As a next round of new gTLDS approaches, the preparation and policy work continues to increase, including:

  - *Policy Development Processes,*

  - *Implementation Review Team outputs,*

  - *Public comment proceedings,*

  - *Cross Community Small Teams,*

  - *Community Consultation processes,*

  - *Drafting Teams, etc.*

- To address this challenge, and in the midst of continuing committee turnover, the GAC leadership has recognized the importance of expanding the GAC team focusing on new gTLDs;

- A call for volunteers was opened and multiple volunteers were identified.

GAC New gTLDs Topic Lead Team

The team now comprises of a topic lead coordinator and volunteers as follows:

- Nigel Hickson (Coordinator of the team, and IRT alternate – UK)

- Rida Tahir (IRT representative – Canada)

- Rosalind Kennybirch (ASP – UK)

- Tracy Hackshaw (ASP – UPU – alternate)

- Ken-Ying Tseng (Chinese Taipei)

- Thiago Dal Toe (Colombia)

- Laureen Kapin (US)

Thank you!

GAC New gTLD Small Team

- GAC members interested in matters pertaining to new gTLDs are welcome to join the **GAC new gTLD Small Team**

- This effort derived from the GAC Focal Group on Subsequent Rounds of New gTLDs and evolved into a Small Team

- All GAC members are welcome to join

- This Small Team is led by the team of Topic Leads

- To communicate with the GAC Small Team, please use the following mailing list: gac-subpro@icann.org

- **If you wish to join the Small Team please inform GAC support**

2. GAC Discussion on Applicant Support Program

Rosalind Kennybirch (UK)

Recent Developments on ASP Matters

- The Applicant Support Program (ASP) was developed as part of ICANN's New gTLD Program:

    ✓ The ASP is intended to make applying for a new gTLD or operating a registry more accessible to applicants who would be otherwise unable due to financial and resource constraints.

    ✓ The GAC has repeatedly advocated for the ASP to focus on underserved regions, ensuring the ASP helps to foster global diversification of the new gTLD program.

    ✓ The ASP is for gTLD applicants seeking both financial and non-financial support (non-financial support could include help with preparing an application). The GAC has previously recognized in Communique Advice that lowering application fees alone is not sufficient to ensure the ASP meets its objectives - ongoing support is also needed to ensure successful applicants can get their new gTLDs up and running.

    ✓ This is a topic of high interest to governments, and GAC members issued advice to the Board on the ASP at ICANN79 and ICANN77.

Recent Developments on ASP Matters

- A sub-track of the Implementation Review Team (IRT) is responsible for developing the **Applicant Support Program Handbook**

- This sub-track released a draft ASP Handbook for public comment and the GAC submitted a collective response to this proceeding in April 2024.

- The ASP Handbook offers a step-by-step guide to applying for support and includes information on:

  - ✓ Application deadlines
  - ✓ Criteria
  - ✓ Processes
  - ✓ Evaluation

- GAC members on the ASP sub-track have advocated for the Handbook to emphasize the ASP's global focus.

Recent Developments on ASP Matters

- The handbook is part of ICANN's effort to implement the policy recommendations on Topic 17: Applicant Support of the [Final Report on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process](#) while taking into account the Board's pending consideration of guidance provided by the [GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) for Applicant Support](#).

- The GAC also requested a communications and outreach strategy and a financial plan for the ASP through its ICANN79 advice.

- The financial plan has not yet been published and the GAC is currently scrutinizing the outreach and engagement plan.

- The GAC has also collaborated across the ICANN community to scrutinize the development of the ASP, including by recently submitting a [joint letter](#) with the ALAC to the ICANN Board.

Applicant Support Program (ASP)

Updates on Funding Plan; Engagement and Outreach Plan

Kristy Buckley - ICANN org

Proposed Agenda

- ASP Funding Plan (15m)

  - Budget Estimate

  - ASP Budget Assumptions and Background

- ASP Outreach and Engagement Plan (15m)

- Q&A (15m)

ASP Funding Plan

Budget, Budget Assumptions, Scenarios, and Related Public Comments

GAC Briefing

10 June 2024

I C A N N | **G A C**
Governmental Advisory Committee

Background

ASP Funding Plan

Background

- Per [SubPro Final Report](#) Recommendation 17.12, ICANN org must develop a funding plan for the ASP.

- During ICANN79, the community raised concerns that ICANN org has not shared an ASP funding plan and that $2M for ASP in the [ODA](#) and [Implementation Plan](#) was inadequate.

ASP Budget Estimate

ASP Budget Estimate

Total ASP Program Cost Estimate	$10-16M USD

Program Element*	Total Costs	Notes
Fixed Costs	**$3.2M**	
Implementation	$3.2M	Fixed costs to develop program, perform communication and outreach, and create application system and website.
Variable Costs	**$6.8M - $13.8M**	
Costs associated with application processing, evaluation, expanded scope of support, as well as direct costs of support to qualified applicants. Variable in relation to total final costs of gTLD application and evaluation fees as well as the total volume of qualified supported applicants (up to a maximum of 45).		

*Figures are based on high range of up to 200 applications received and up to 45 qualified applications to a low range based on 100 applications received and up to 23 qualified applications.

ASP Budget Assumptions and Background

ASP Budget Assumptions

1. The ASP receives and processes up to 200 applications, or 10% of all gTLD applications.

2. For financial modeling purposes, the budget assumes ICANN will receive 1,860 fully paying gTLD applicants.

3. Applicant financial assistance is budgeted for 40-45 supported applicants at between 75-85% reduction of the gTLD base application fee and applicable gTLD evaluation fees (e.g., geographic names, financial evaluation, CPE).

   a. *See slides 10-12 for background on **assumption #3.***

Background on Budget Assumption 3

With regard to the number of ASP applicants that qualify for support, the assumption of 40-45 applicants is based upon a number of inputs:

- The GNSO Guidance Process for ASP articulated:
    - No fewer than 10 gTLD applications, or 0.5% of successfully delegated gTLDs, were from supported applicants.
    - Org should set a minimum meaningful level of fee reduction.
    - Funding for gTLD fee reductions should be spread equally across all qualified supported applicants.

- Following Public Comment on the draft ASP Handbook, the ASP-IRT Sub-track advised that 75% would be a minimum meaningful level of fee reduction.

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Background on Budget Assumption 3 (cont'd)

◉ The Operational Design Assessment and Implementation Plan indicated a [75-85%] reduction in the base gTLD application fee and gTLD evaluation fees for qualified supported applicants.

◉ This was in-line with 2012 fee reduction since the SubPro Final Report did not call for changes.

◉ The ASP-IRT Sub-track did not advise changing the 85% maximum amount of fee reduction.

◉ Based upon GGP and IRT inputs, the draft ASP Handbook indicates a 75-85% fee reduction, depending on the number of applicants that qualify for support.

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Background on Budget Assumption 3 (cont'd)

- The GGP set a minimum of 10 supported applicants successfully delegated.
  - 4x this amount accounts for the risk that some supported applicants may not pass the gTLD evaluation.

- The final percentage of fee reduction will depend on:
  - The base gTLD application fee and number of applicants that qualify for support, up to the maximum amount available.
  - *See next slide for support scenarios.*

Support Scenarios

The minimum level of support in the ASP Handbook was updated from 50% to 75%, per Public Comment on the draft ASP Handbook.

Table 1. Estimated number of applicants at different levels of support.

Level of Fee Reduction	75%	85%
Estimated Number of Supported Applicants	45	40

Estimates may be adjusted depending on base gTLD application fee.

Next Round Outreach and Engagement Plan

Agenda Item #2

Outreach and Engagement Plan

In its [Final Report](#) on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process (Final Report), the GNSO underscores the importance of **creating early awareness with as many potential applicants around the world as possible and ensuring that potential applicants know about the program with sufficient time to prepare and apply.**

The Outreach and Engagement plan recognizes that capacity development, communications, and engagement with a focus on global inclusivity are key to fostering diverse participation in the next round of new gTLD applications.

Outreach and Engagement Plan

The campaign encompasses five phases:

1. **Early Awareness** — A targeted awareness campaign (beginning March 2023) highlighting the importance of Universal Acceptance (UA) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) in creating a more inclusive Internet.

2. **Community-level Awareness** — A grassroots campaign (May - October 2024) to generate interest in the next round within the ICANN community and among industry participants.

3. **Strategic Engagement** — (October 2024 through December 2025) ICANN org will create awareness about the importance of the DNS and interest in new gTLDs *outside of the ICANN community.*

4. **Application Readiness** — Focus on preparing applicants to submit their gTLD applications.

5. **Post-Assessment** — Evaluate whether the campaign achieved its objectives to allow for course correction in the future.

Outreach and Engagement Plan

**The ICANN community is an important ally in identifying
and engaging with the audiences envisioned
in the Final Report.**

Materials and Resources

ICANN org will create a variety of materials and resources to support the program and potential applicants, including:

- Program website
- Case studies
- Webinars and training modules
- Engagement materials

ICANN org also will provide support during the application process.

Outreach and Engagement Goals

Overarching program goals (GNSO):

Foster diversity

Encourage competition

Enhance the utility of the DNS

In support of these goals, outreach and engagement seeks to:

1. Promote inclusive participation.
2. Facilitate engagement.
3. Highlight the value of gTLDs.
4. Collaborate.

Proposed Delivery and Approach

May 2024 — ICANN org will kick off a grassroots effort to begin generating a buzz about the next round and create awareness of the Applicant Support Program and Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program.

Leverage local, regional, and community relationships to build awareness among businesses and organizations that may have interest in operating a registry.

October 2024 — ICANN org will launch formal global campaign —18 months before the application submission period opens, continuing through April 2026.
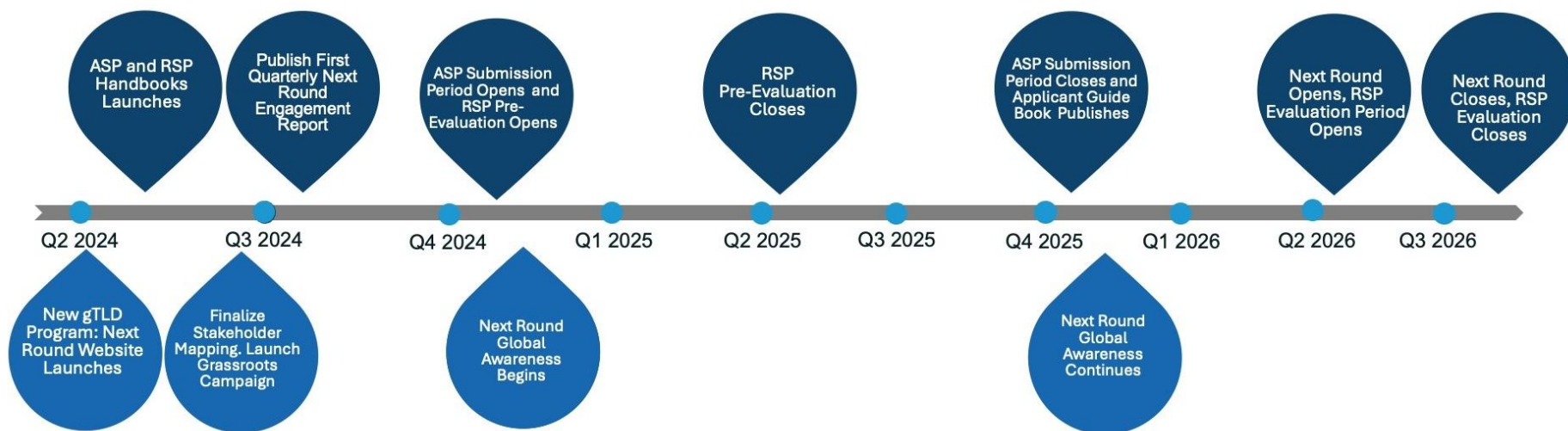
This phase encompasses broad engagement activities that include speaking events and webinars, as well as a targeted global public relations campaign.

Timeline for Key Events

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: NEXT ROUND

TIMELINE FOR KEY EVENTS
Supported by Communications and Engagement

ICANN

| Q2 2024 | Q3 2024 | Q4 2024 | Q1 2025 | Q2 2025 | Q3 2025 | Q4 2025 | Q1 2026 | Q2 2026 | Q3 2026 |

Above timeline markers:
- ASP and RSP Handbooks Launches
- Publish First Quarterly Next Round Engagement Report
- ASP Submission Period Opens and RSP Pre-Evaluation Opens
- RSP Pre-Evaluation Closes
- ASP Submission Period Closes and Applicant Guide Book Publishes
- Next Round Opens, RSP Evaluation Period Opens
- Next Round Closes, RSP Evaluation Closes

Below timeline markers:
- New gTLD Program: Next Round Website Launches
- Finalize Stakeholder Mapping. Launch Grassroots Campaign
- Next Round Global Awareness Begins
- Next Round Global Awareness Continues

Audiences

1. **Registrars,** especially in developing/underserved regions, that may be interested in operating a gTLD.

2. **Civil Society,** nongovernmental organizations, advocacy groups, philanthropists, and others focused on promoting inclusivity, diversity, and cultural preservation online through new gTLDs.

3. **Businesses and entrepreneurs**, especially those operating in regions with limited access to digital infrastructure; those looking to differentiate their product or service; and those looking to compete in the global marketplace using gTLDs.

4. **Local governments, Public Authorities and IGOs** that want to promote their local region or culture.

5. **Brands,** organizations that want to launch new products and services, enhance customer experience, innovate new technology and provide flexibility for future innovations.

Program Messaging

Tailored messaging to communicate the opportunities associated with the program with clarity and impact.

These messages will:
- Highlight the importance of new gTLDs in promoting digital inclusivity and their potential in preserving cultural diversity.
- Showcase how operating a .brand TLD can enhance and extend brand identity.
- Emphasize the control and security benefits of operating a .brand TLD, including brand defense and protection, and mitigation of cyber threats.
- Highlight the built-in safeguards to protect intellectual property rights in the DNS (e.g., the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy, Uniform Rapid Suspension, and Trademark Post-Delegation Dispute Resolution Procedure).

Communications KPIs

Thematic Area	KPIs
Overall Communications	● Media reach, social media and engagement metrics including the number of media pick-ups and geographic distribution ● Speaking opportunities outside of GSE capacity-building efforts. ● Metrics to measure success, including click-throughs, inquiries, registrations to get more information, etc.

Engagement KPIs

Thematic Area	KPIs
ASP	- Number of ASP applications received. - Diversity of applicants (both geographic distribution and TLD Types). - Number of engagements held with ASP target audiences. - Number of pro bono service providers, including assessment of qualitative factors such as their geographic location and areas of coverage, language representation, and selection of services provided.
RSP	- Number of RSP applications received. - Diversity of applicants (both regional and stakeholder categories). - Number of engagement activities with RSP target audiences.
Next Round	- Number of gTLD applications received. - Diversity of applicants (both regional and stakeholder categories). - Number of engagement activities with target audiences and high-level allies in ministries and governmental departments to be champions for IDNs, UA, and new gTLDs. - Queries received about the New gTLD Program: Next Round and other related programs such as the Applicant Support Program and the Registry Service Providers Evaluation Program

Questions / Comments

Thank You and Questions

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3. Implementation Review Team Update

Rida Tahir (Canada)

Implementation Review Team (IRT) - Recent Updates

- The IRT commenced its work in May 2023 and is expected to draft the next Applicant Guidebook (AGB) in preparation for the next round of new gTLDs.

- The GAC appointed a representative and an alternate to participate in the process, provide input to the IRT and report back to the broader committee on areas of importance to the GAC.

- GAC members appointed to the IRT are:
  - ✓ Canada (Representative)
  - ✓ UK (Alternate)

- ICANN org presented an updated Implementation Plan in October 2023 for the Implementation Review Team's input

Implementation Review Team (IRT) - Recent Updates

- The implementation plan currently assumes a 15-24 month timeline for drafting the Applicant Guidebook (AGB), with the support of the IRT.

- It is expected that the AGB will be published no later than December 2025.

- Since ICANN79, the IRT has met approximately 9 times as a full team, plus 4 sub-track meetings. It will meet in-person at ICANN80 three times.

- On 1 February 2024, the IRT posted a first public comment proceeding in a series of proceedings.

- In total, ten Public Comments were submitted by stakeholders from across the community on the proposed language for draft sections of the Next Round Applicant Guidebook (AGB).

- Submissions tended to find that the proposed language was consistent with the Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) Policy Development Process [gnso.icann.org] (Final Report) outputs.

Implementation Review Team (IRT) - Recent Updates

Since ICANN79, four new topics were discussed by the IRT:

- Communications (Topic 13 of the Final Report)
- Closed Generics (Topic 23 of the Final Report)
- IDNs (Topic 25 of the Final Report)
- Dispute Resolution Procedures After Delegation (Topic 33 of the Final Report)

Agenda

1. Policy Implementation Overview

2. Public Comment Proceedings

3. GAC Topics of Interest Highlights

4. What to Expect at ICANN80

Policy Implementation Overview

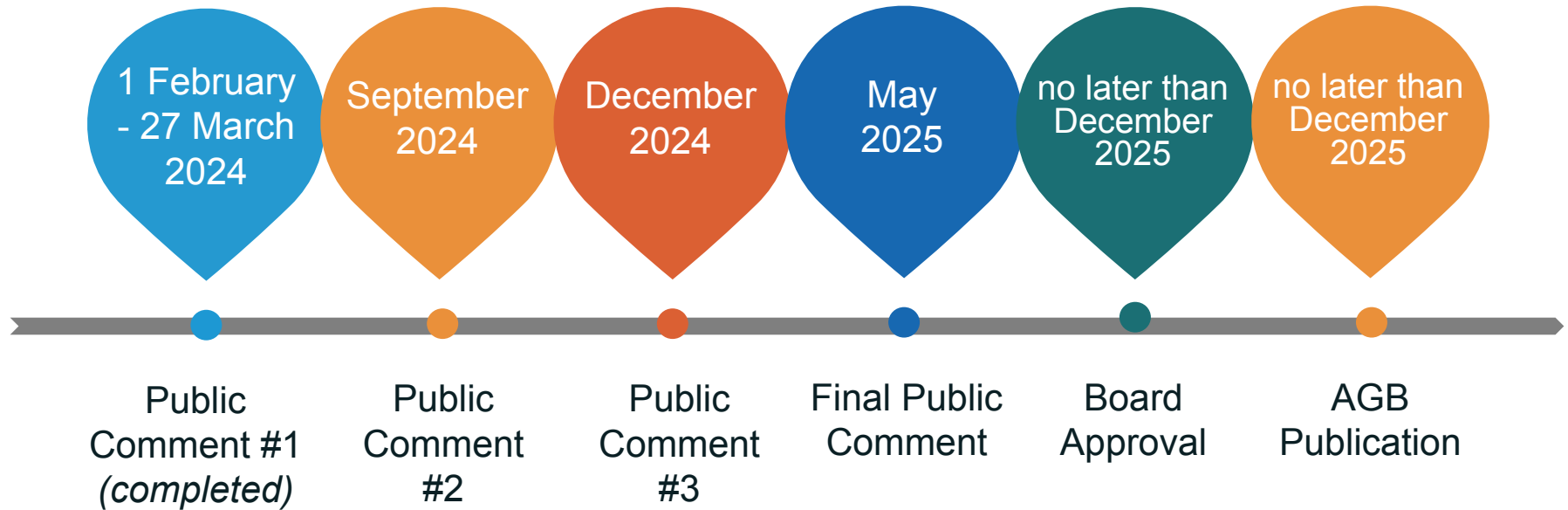Agenda Item #1

Workstream 1: Policy Implementation

- WS1 is tasked with drafting AGB in coordination with the [IRT](#), which assists the WS1 team in the drafting process by helping to ensure that the AGB language represents the wording and intent of the [Final Report](#).

- The goal for WS1 is to complete a full draft of the AGB by May 2025 with Board approval and publication of the final AGB envisaged for no later than December 2025.

- The timely publication of the AGB is a key dependency for ICANN to open the application window for the Next Round in April 2026.

- A new version of the New gTLD Program: Next Round Policy Implementation Plan will be published this week.
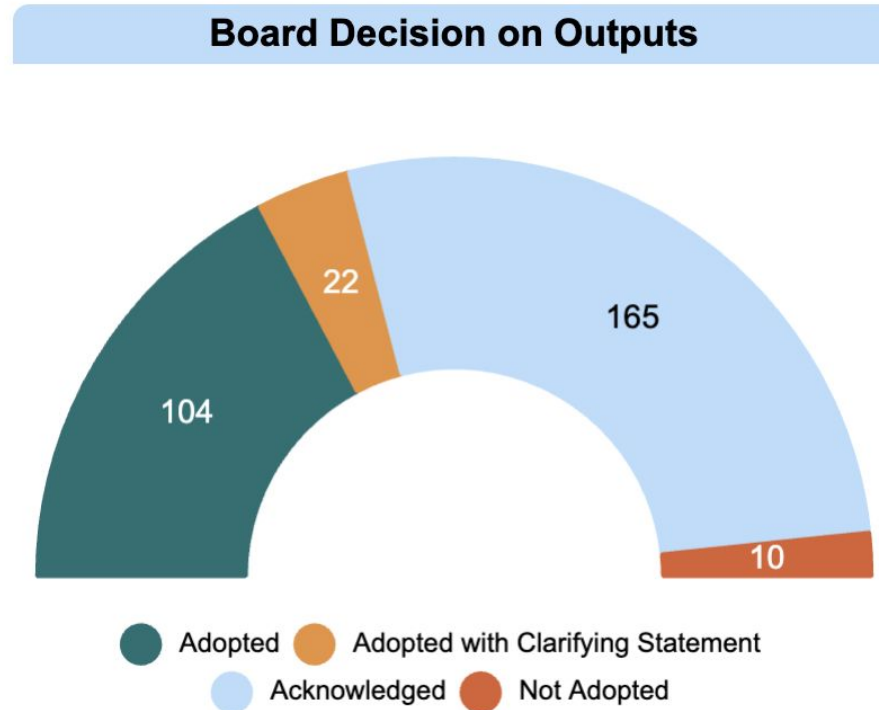
Dependencies

The timeline for drafting the AGB is dependent on the successful delivery of all dependencies listed:

- Board consideration of the following dependencies:
  - IDN EPDP Phase 1 and Phase 2 Final Reports,
  - NCAP Study 2,
  - Supplemental recommendations.
- Board action on outstanding Advice pertaining to the Next Round:
  - GAC: Auctions (ICANN77 Communique),
  - SAC124: SSAC Advice on Name Collision Analysis.
- Board to agree on framework for:
  - PICs/RVCs,
  - Contention resolution.
  - GNSO Council consideration of Recommendations 24.3 and 24.5.

Timeline for AGB

1 February - 27 March 2024	September 2024	December 2024	May 2025	no later than December 2025	no later than December 2025
Public Comment #1 *(completed)*	Public Comment #2	Public Comment #3	Final Public Comment	Board Approval	AGB Publication

Final Report Outputs: Status

Board Decision on Outputs

104 — Adopted
22 — Adopted with Clarifying Statement
165 — Acknowledged
10 — Not Adopted

Scorecards: March 2023 - September 2023 - October 2023

IRT Information

Project Information	IRT Information	Region	Affiliation
05/16/23	**98**		
1st IRT meeting	# Members		
05/31/25	**49**		
Expected AGB completion	# Full IRT meetings held		
390	**30%**		
Days since 1st IRT meeting	Full IRT attendance		
356	**3**		
Days to expected AGB completion	# Sub-Tracks		
	18		
Project Health	# Sub-Track meetings held		

Region chart values: 16, 29, 21, 8, 24

Region legend:
- Africa
- Asia/Australia/Pacific
- Europe
- Latin America/Caribbean
- North America

Affiliation chart values: 8, 7, 2, 11, 3, 3, 5, 2, 6, 7, 22, 22

Affiliation legend:
- At-Large
- ALAC
- ccNSO
- GAC
- RSSAC
- GNSO | BC
- GNSO | IPC
- GNSO | ISPCP
- GNSO | NCSG
- GNSO | RrSG
- GNSO | RySG
- Non-affiliated
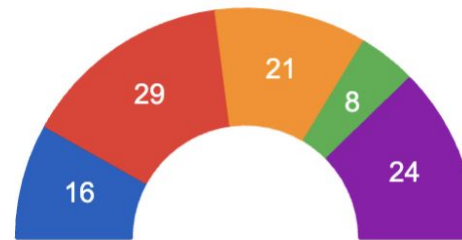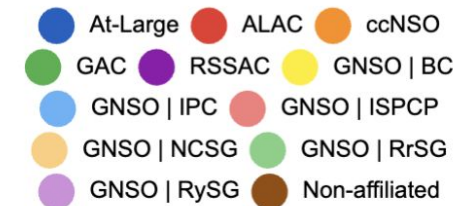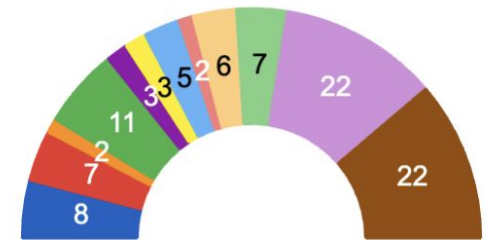
Public Comment Proceedings

Agenda Item #2

Public Comment #1 | 1 February - 27 March 2024

- Draft language:
    - Predictability Framework (Topic 2)
    - Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines (Topic 8)
    - Conflicts of Interest Process for Vendors and Subcontractors (Topic 8)
    - Applicant Freedom of Expression (Topic 10)
    - Universal Acceptance (Topic 11)
    - Reserved and Blocked Names (Topic 21)
    - Geographic Names (Work Track 5)
- 10 comments received.
- Summary report published.
- Org is currently discussing the updates to the language with the IRT.

Public Comment #2 | September 2024

Topic	IRT Discussions
30. GAC Consensus Advice and GAC Early Warning 28. Role of Application Comment 23. Closed Generics 24. String Similarity Evaluations Root Zone Label Generation Rules 20. Application Change Requests 33. Dispute Resolution Procedures After Delegation	✓
3. Applications Assessed in Rounds 19. Application Queuing 31. Objections 25. IDNs	ongoing
18. Terms and Conditions 15. Application Fees 27. Applicant Reviews	June 2024

All dates are TBC.

Public Comment #3 | December 2024

Topic	IRT Discussions
5. Applications Submission Limits 16. Applications Submission Period 22. Registrant Protections 32. Limited Challenge/Appeal Mechanism	July 2024
4. Different TLD Types 35. Auctions	August 2024
29. Name Collisions 7. Metrics and Monitoring DNS Stability	September 2024
34. Community Applications 9. Registry Voluntary Commitments / Public Interest Commitments	October 2024

N.B: The draft of the new Base Registry Agreement will go out for Public Comment separately in Q1 2025 and then with the entire AGB in May 2025. It is expected that discussions with the IRT on the topic will begin in Q4 2024.

Other Public Comment Proceedings

- **Review of the Draft Applicant Support Program (ASP) Handbook** (12 Feb-2 Apr)

- **String Similarity Review Guidelines** (7 Feb-10 Apr)

- **Review of the Draft Registry Service Provider (RSP) Handbook** (13 Mar-22 Apr)

- **Review of the Registry System Testing 2.0 Test Specifications and API** (26 Mar-6 May)

GAC Topics of Interest Highlights

Agenda Item #3

GAC Topics of Interest Highlights

- **Geographic Names**: Proposed language finalized.

- **Reserved and Blocked Names**: Proposed language finalized.

- **GAC Advice and Early Warning**: Language ready for Public Comment.

- **Private resolution of contentions sets:** Blog published; NERA report published.

What to Expect at ICANN80

Agenda Item #4

ICANN80 Sessions

Date	Time UTC	Time CAT	Session	Topics	Room	Links
10-Jun-24	07:00-08:15	09:00-10:15	SubPro IRT (1 of 3)	15. Application Fees 2. Predictability	MH 2 (GNSO)	Agenda Schedule
12-Jun-24	07:00-08:15	09:00-10:15	SubPro IRT (2 of 3)	ASP Bid Credit/Multiplier Background Screening	AD 12 (GNSO 2)	Agenda Schedule
13-Jun-24	07:00-08:15	09:00-10:15	SubPro IRT (3 of 3)		MH 2 (GNSO)	Agenda Schedule

Engage with ICANN

Thank You and Questions

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GAC Discussion/Questions

Nigel Hickson, UK