



Pre-ICANN85 GAC Capacity Development Session Webinar

Why are new gTLDs important to governments?

17 February 2026

Agenda

1. **Welcome** and Introduction (Nicolas Caballero, GAC Chair)
2. **Part 1 - Government perspectives and relevance of New gTLDs**
(Nicolas Caballero, GAC Chair)
 - Questions and Answers
3. **Part 2 – New gTLD Program overview**
(Marika Konings, Lars Hoffmann, Elisa Busetto, ICANN Org New gTLD Program Next Round Team)
 - Questions and Answers
4. **Closing remarks** (GAC Chair)

Part 1 - Gvt Perspectives and Relevance of New gTLDs

Part 1 - Government perspectives and relevance of New gTLDs (Nico Caballero, GAC Chair)

1. GAC Chair's [Paraguay] experience from 2012 Round,
2. GAC Chair to introduce government Perspectives on New gTLD Program Next Round, such as:
 - Why new gTLDs matter for governments
 - Why this topic is relevant at ministerial and senior policy levels
 - Using Practical examples drawn from past GAC engagement (e.g. public policy concerns, rights protection, DNS abuse, IGOs)

+ *Q&A Time*

Introduction to the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round

For ICANN's Government Advisory Committee

February 2026



Welcome Message


Marika Konings

Vice President, New gTLD Program Lead



Readiness Content Disclaimer

The authoritative source for all information about New gTLD Program: 2026 Round rules, evaluations, restrictions, processes, and systems is the English version of the [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#). All New gTLD Program: 2026 Round readiness and training content is supplementary to the Applicant Guidebook, and has been developed to provide a high-level summary of key topic areas of interest to prospective applicants and the broader ICANN community. In case of discrepancy, the Applicant Guidebook prevails.



Agenda

01

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round

Introduction to generic top-level domains (gTLDs), and the opportunity to apply for new gTLDs in the 2026 Round.

02

gTLD Application Stages and Processes

Introduction to the 'Applicant Journey' stages, processes, and milestone events.

03

Resources and Support

Resources and support available to interested parties and potential applicants.

Webinar Objectives

By the end of the webinar, participants should be able to:

- Understand ICANN's role in the DNS industry
- Understand the purpose of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round
- Identify 2026 Round application stages and milestone events
- Access and use key applicant support resources



01


2026 Round Overview

✓ Introduction to generic top-level domains (gTLDs) and the opportunity to apply for one in the 2026 Round.

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Introduction

The 2026 Round is the result of a multi-year policy development effort incorporating broad stakeholder input, and documented in the 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook

What is the 2026 Round?

- An ICANN community-driven initiative that enables the continued **expansion of the Domain Name System (DNS)**. 
- Creates opportunities for eligible parties to **apply for generic top-level domains (gTLDs)**.

What is the purpose of the 2026 Round?

- To foster **diversity, encourage competition, and enhance the usefulness** of the DNS.

**NEW gTLD
PROGRAM:
2026 ROUND**



Domain Name System – makes using the Internet easier by allowing a familiar string of letters - the domain name - to be used instead of the arcane IP address.

What Are generic top-level domains (gTLDs)?

Top-level
domain

www.icann.org

Generic
top-level
domains

.futbol

.paris

.عرب

.コム

Arabic

Japanese

i A **string** of characters after the last dot in a domain name

i gTLDs which use one or more non-**ASCII** characters (“Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)”) **i**

i **String**– combination of characters that comprise a top-level domain

i **ASCII**– American Standard Code of Information Interchange

Top-Level Domain Uses and Benefits

Uses

- ▶ Serve **diverse communities**.
- ▶ Provide communities and organizations opportunity to **create their own space online**.
- ▶ **Build trust** in and awareness of a brand.
- ▶ Manage and **secure your online** presence.

Benefits



2026 Round FAQs



Who is eligible to apply?

- **Legal entities** including businesses, organizations, and institutions as well as governmental, nongovernmental, and intergovernmental entities.



When are applications submitted?

- Applications can be submitted during a 15-week period beginning on **30 April 2026**.
- Application processing and evaluation is expected to continue through 2030.



How much does it cost to apply?

- The gTLD evaluation fee is **USD 227,000** + conditional fees, where applicable.

2026 Round FAQs



How does one apply?

- Completed applications are submitted via the TLD Application Management System (**TAMS**).



How can applicants learn more?

- Visit the [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round website](#)
- Review the [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#)
- Utilize resources in the **Applicant Readiness Pathway (coming soon)**


2026 Round Application Types

Applicants will have different requirements and processing steps depending on the type of application or string they apply for.

Application Type Determines:

gTLD Application Questions

- Prioritization order for processing
- Conditional evaluations & fees
- Contention Resolution options
- Contract requirements

 **Financial Profile** (ex: Government vs. Top 30 Exchange listed) also impacts application questions

General Applications

.link

A general gTLD application does not fall into one of the specialized categories and is subject to a standard set of defined requirements.

Specialized Application Types

.Brand

.nike

Community

.eco

Geographic Name

.paris

Reserved Name

.redcross

Variant

شبكة (gTLD)
شبكة (variant)

Internationalized Domain Name (IDN)

.例子 (.example)

Zoom Poll



Zoom Poll

Launch poll after this slide

In 2012, what percent of the 1241 delegated gTLDs were internationalized domain names or IDNs?

- a) Less than 10%
- b) 11-20%
- c) 21-30%
- d) 31-40%
- e) Greater than 40%

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

ASP and RSP Evaluation Program Overviews

Applicant Support Program (ASP)

Applying for a gTLD is expensive and may be out of reach for many. The Applicant Support Program makes applying for a new gTLD more accessible by providing financial and non-financial support to qualified applicants.

To qualify for support, candidates must demonstrate financial need, financial viability, and be one of these types of entities:



Nonprofit,
Nongovernmental,
and charitable
organizations



Intergovernmental
organizations



Indigenous/tribal
peoples'
organizations



Micro and small
businesses that are
social enterprises or
that operate in a
less-developed
economy

The Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation Program



The RSP Evaluation Program is intended to:

- Improve efficiency of gTLD evaluation
- Ensure RSPs have proper technical qualifications for running a gTLD back-end.
- *Enable RSPs to be evaluated just once, no matter how many gTLD applicants they choose to support*

Key Dates:

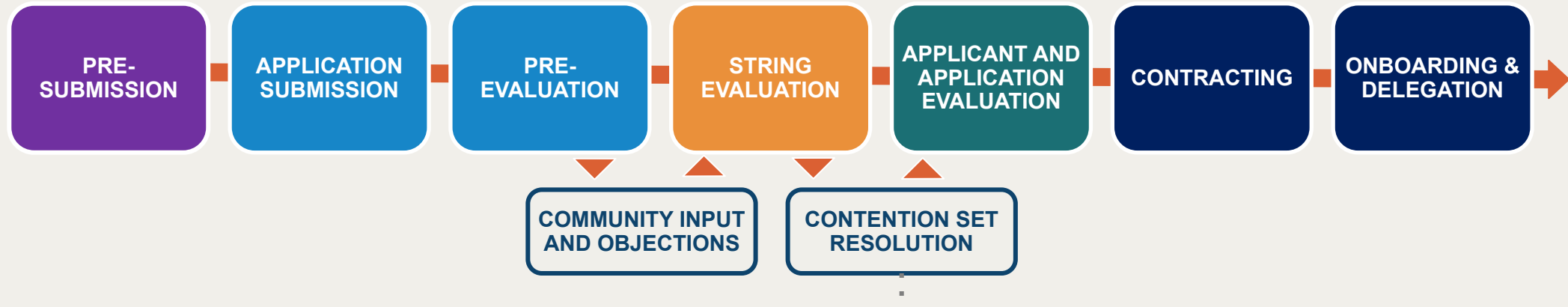
- Nov 2025 – May 2025: application window for pre-evaluation (closed)
- January 2026: list of pre-evaluated RSPs published (coming soon)
- April 2026: Second RSP evaluation window to open for 15 weeks

02

Overview of gTLD Application Stages and Processes

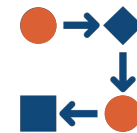
✓ Introduction to ‘Applicant Journey’ through stages, evaluations, and milestone events in the application process from start to finish.

The gTLD Applicant Journey

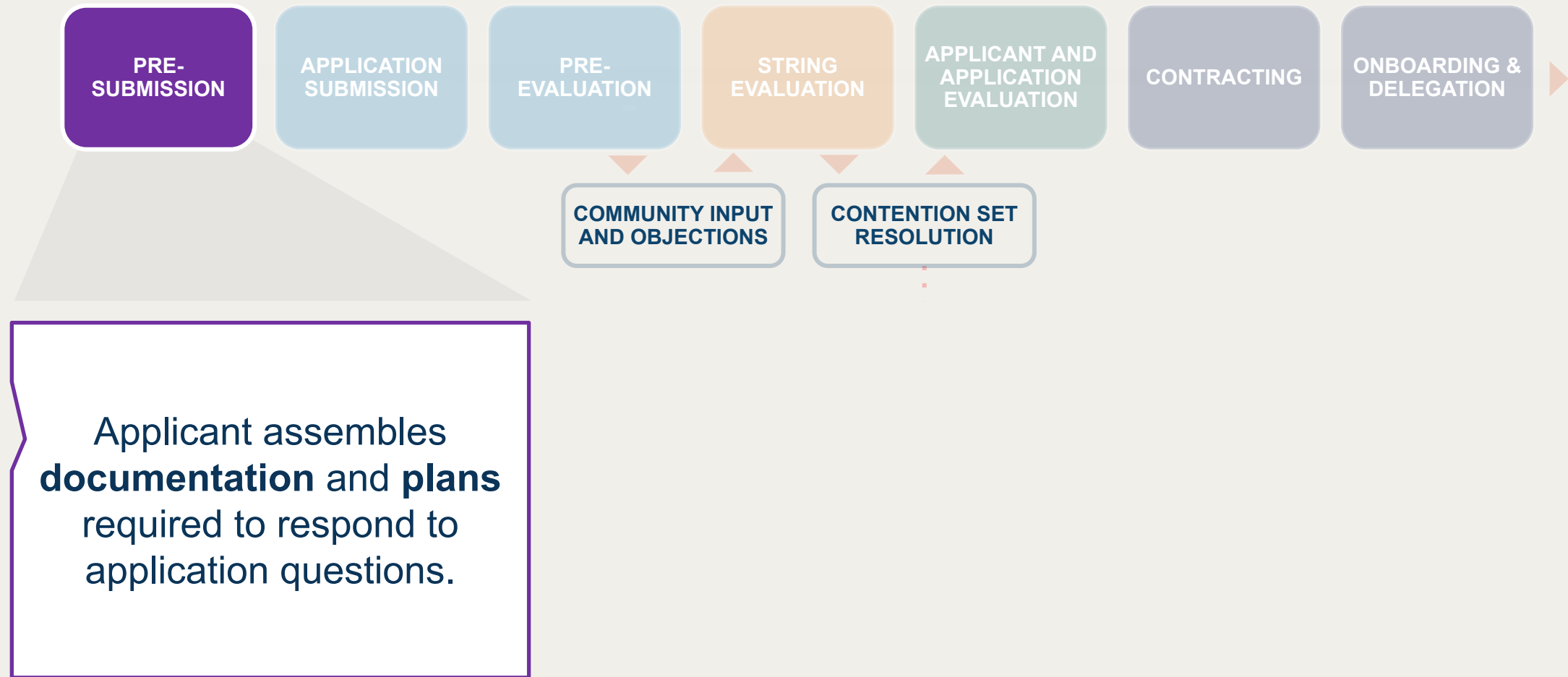


WHY SUCH A ROBUST APPLICATION PROCESS?

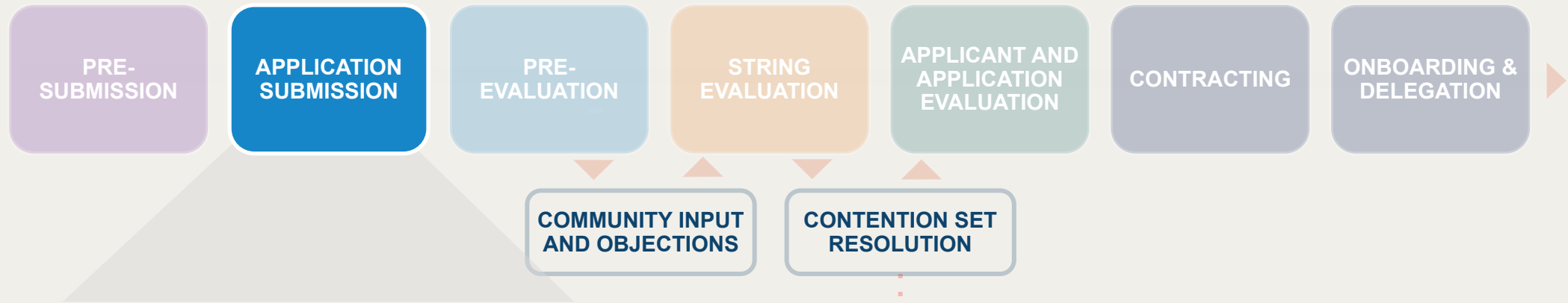
To ensure the Internet remains secure, stable, and resilient as the DNS expands, while fostering innovation, competition, and consumer trust.



Pre-Submission

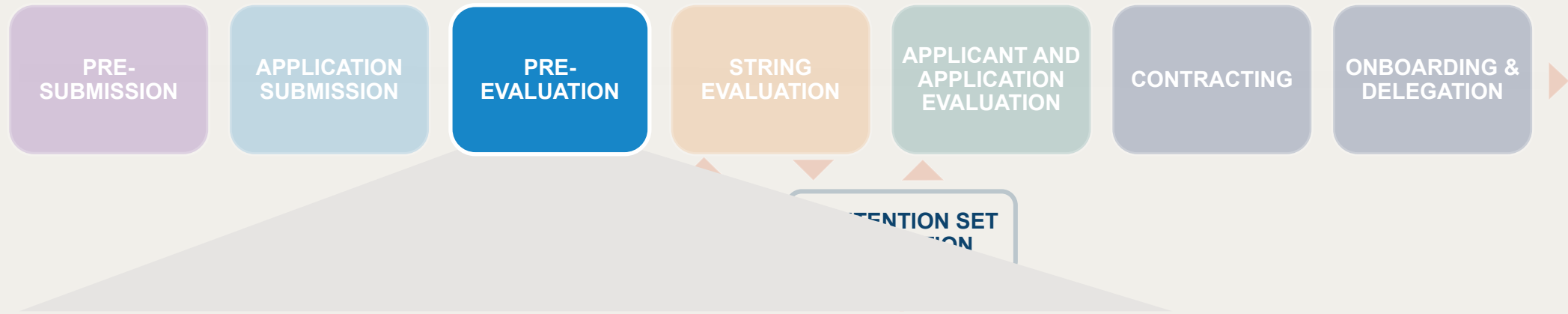


Application Submission

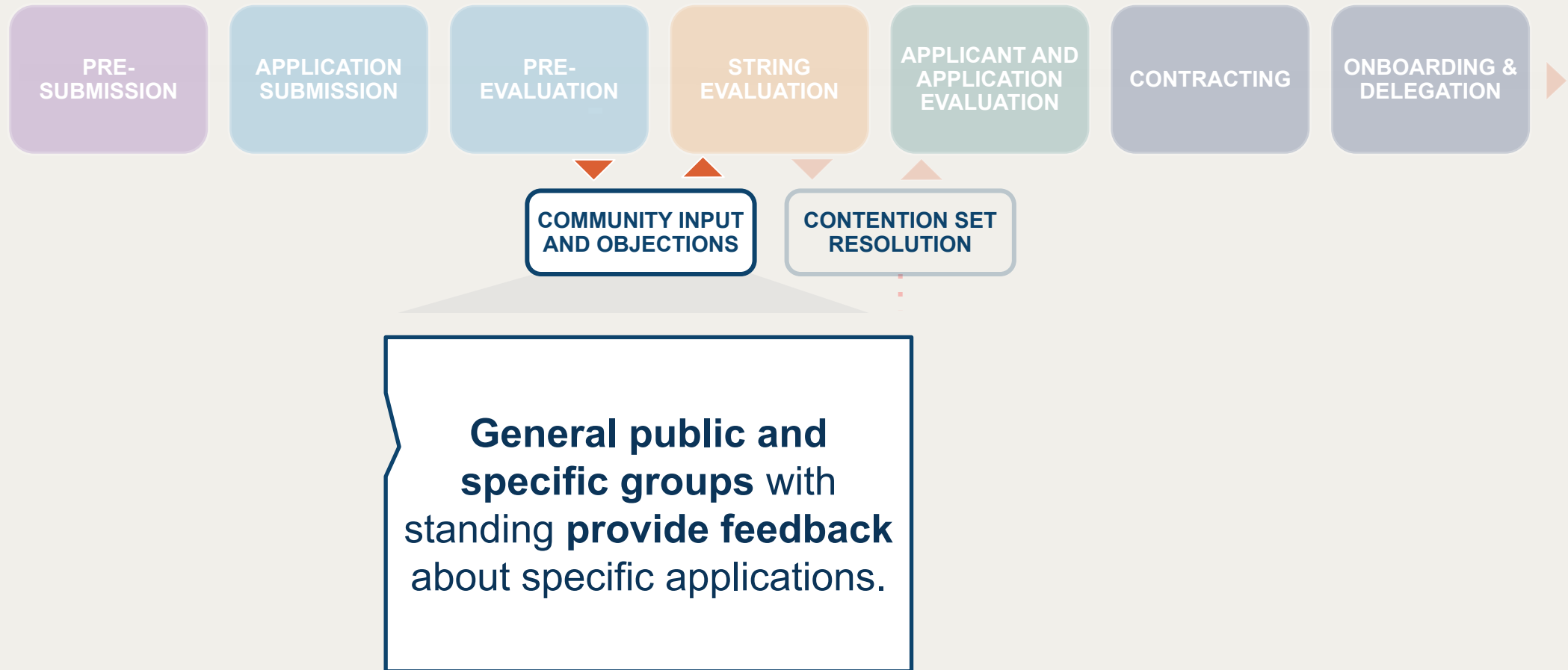


Applicant submits responses to **organization, financial and application** questions and **pays gTLD evaluation fee**.

Pre-Evaluation



Community Input, Objections & Appeals

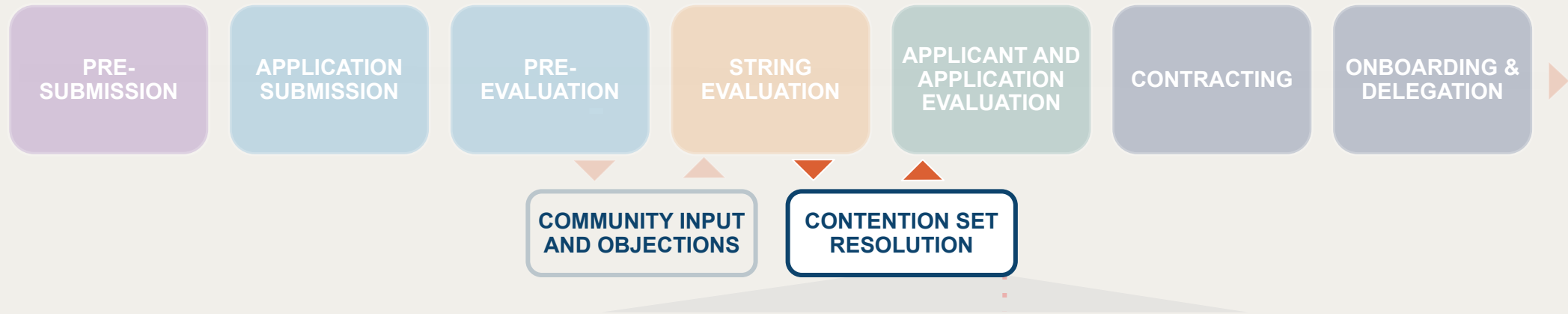


String Evaluation



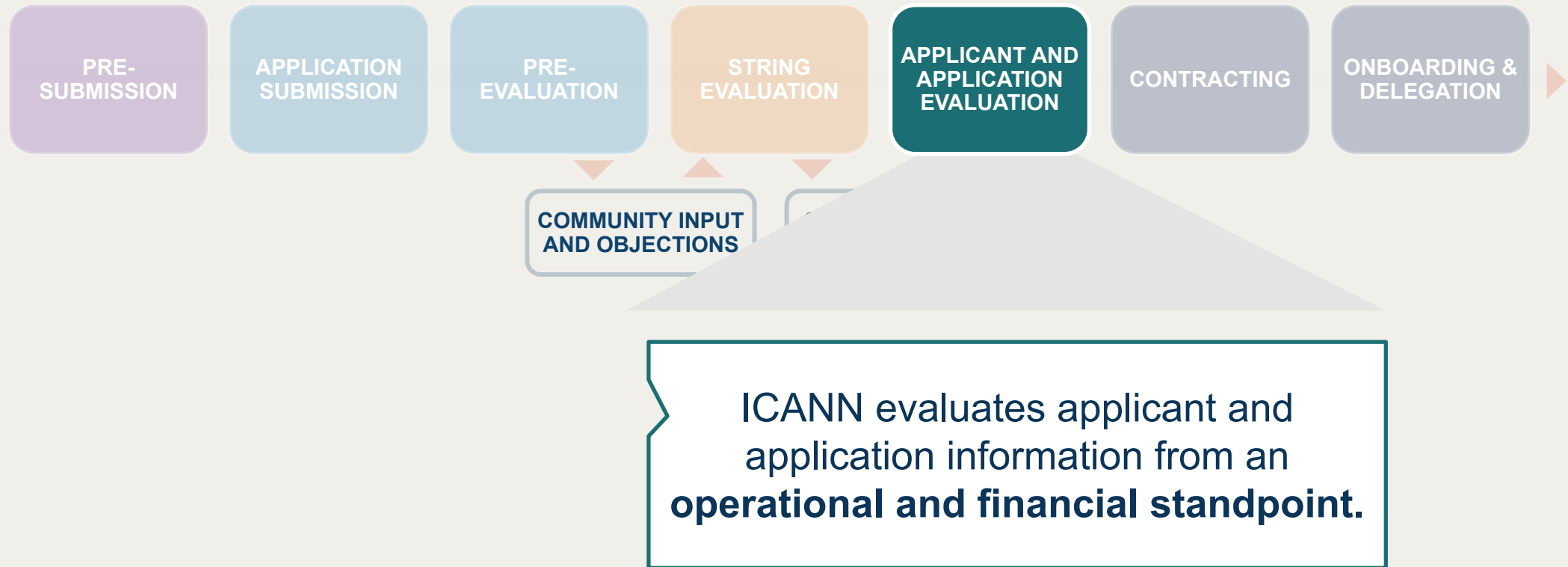
ICANN evaluates the applied-for string and their allocatable variant strings to ensure they are **technically sound, safe, and compliant** with policy.

Contention Set Resolution

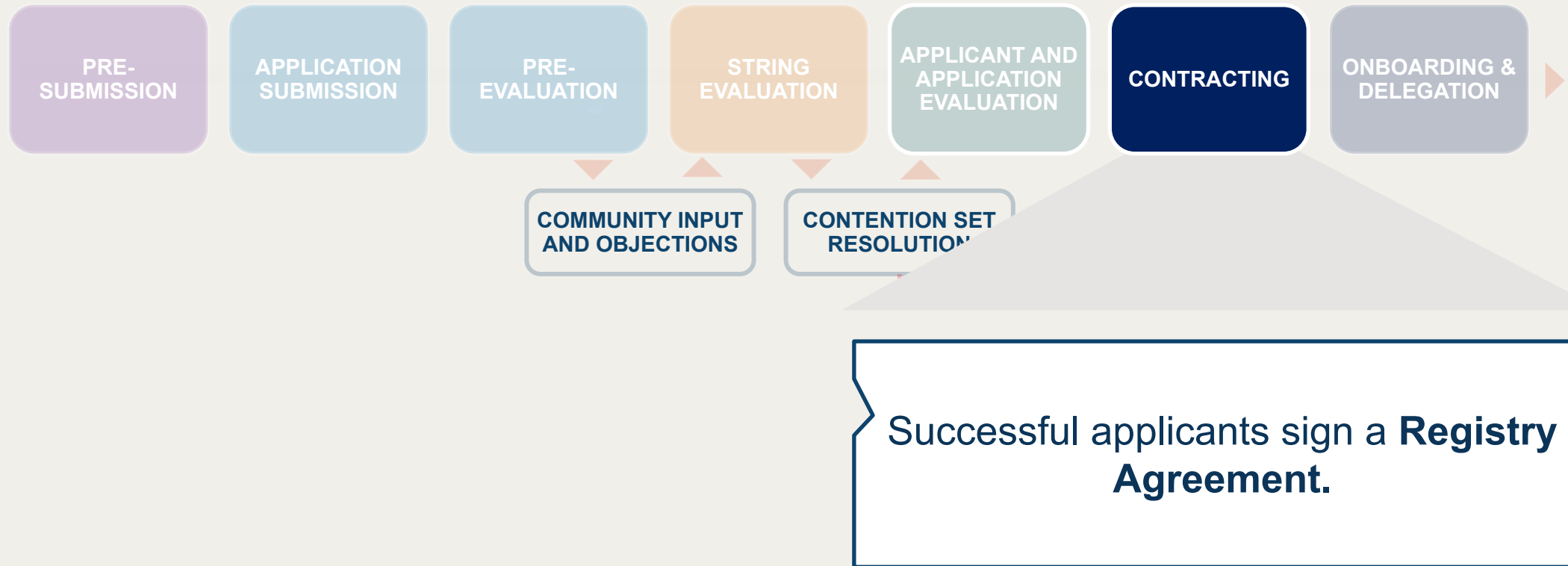


ICANN facilitates resolution of **contention** between applications for strings which are **identical** or a **variant** of another applied-for string or **similar visually, aurally, or in meaning**.

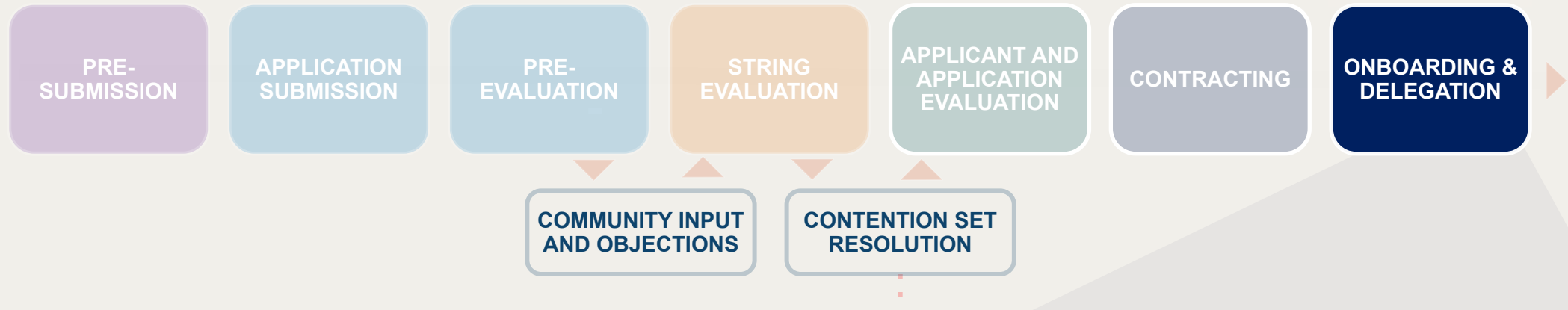
Applicant and Application Evaluation



Contracting



Onboarding and Delegation



New contracted parties complete onboarding to ICANN systems and processes and technical testing before the **gTLD is operational.**

Zoom Poll



Zoom Poll

Launch poll after this slide

Let's do another fun poll to see if you are following.

At which stage of the journey will the public and applicants become aware of which new gTLD strings have been applied for?

- a. Pre-Submission
- b. Application Submission
- c. Pre-Evaluation
- d. Contention Set Resolution
- e. Contracting

03

Resources and Next Steps

✓ Resources and support available to interested parties and potential applicants.

Key Applicant Resources

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook

The authoritative document outlining the rules and procedures of the 2026 Round.

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Website

Source of 2026 Round news, announcements, information, and resources such as Key Topic Overviews, FAQs, system guides, micro videos and more.

ICANN Learn

eLearning courses to build knowledge of ICANN and the DNS Industry.

Applicant Readiness Pathway

Curated learning resources organized by phases and learning outcomes (coming soon)

New gTLD Program Webinars

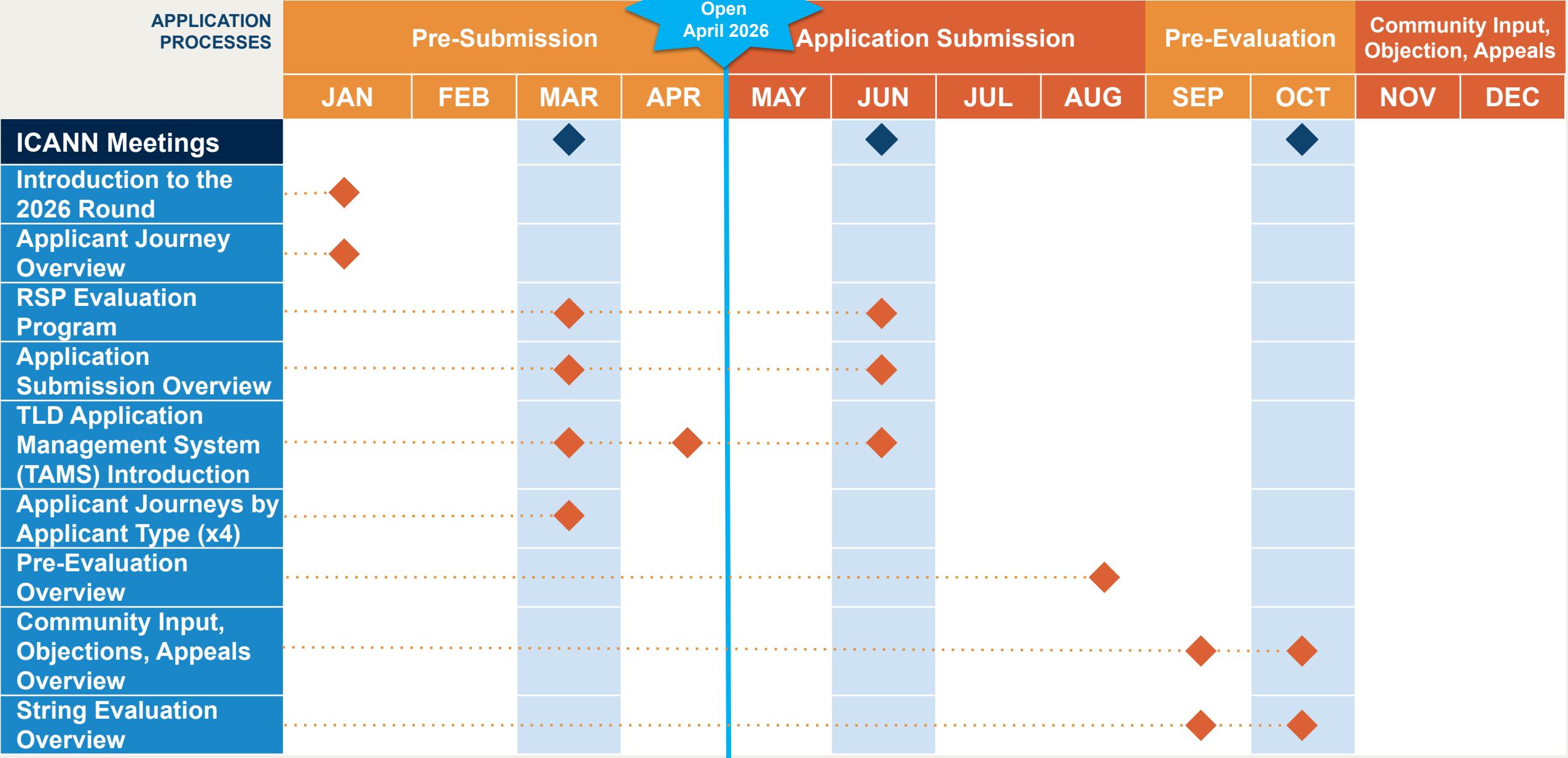
Register for future webinars, or access recordings of past events.

ICANN Global Support

Dedicated ICANN team available to answer inquiries and provide support throughout the application process.
globalsupport@icann.org

GAC Resources

Workbook to provide foundational understanding of Community Input and Objections processes relevant to the GAC and its Members and Observers.



Question and Answer

Themes:

- Context / background
- Processes, procedures, roles, and responsibilities
- Support and resources



Submit further questions to: globalsupport@icann.org

Webinar Evaluation Survey

We kindly request you to take a few minutes to complete this brief feedback form.



<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/ce65b384dbb0493f999ccb9f6f8183f1>

A large graphic on the right side of the slide consisting of two overlapping speech bubbles. The front bubble is dark blue and contains the word 'Survey' in white. The back bubble is purple and is partially obscured by the blue one.

Survey

gTLD

Thank you for your participation.

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