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FORUM



GAC Capacity Development Session 1/2

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

gTLD

GAC Workbook Overview: New gTLD Application Community Input Timeline and Actions

ICANN85, Mumbai



NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

Recognizing the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and its Members and Observers have a **unique role and opportunities in relation to new gTLD applications for the 2026 Round** (and subsequent rounds) coupled with ICANN's role to support community and applicant readiness, a workbook has been created to provide **foundational understanding of Community Input timelines and actions** relevant to the GAC and its Members and Observers.

The objective is for ICANN to provide a structured approach and contextual information which **create a baseline for the GAC to develop relevant processes and procedures** on GAC Member or Observer actions on new gTLD applications.

[GAC Workbook: New gTLD Application Community Input Timeline and Actions.](#)

Agenda

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Application Timeline

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Overview: Publicly Available Information

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Overview: Different gTLD Application Types

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Overview: Actions GAC Members and Observers Can Take on New gTLD Applications

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Reference: Resources Available to Support the GAC, Community Members, and Applicants

2026-2027 Projected Application Timeline: GAC Member and Observer Focus



2026 Round Opens:
TAMS is open for application submissions.
30 APRIL 2026



Reveal Day: List of all applications that have passed the administrative check is published.
OCTOBER 2026*



String Confirmation Day: Updated list of applications published.
NOVEMBER 2026*



Prioritization Draw: A priority number is assigned to each application.
DECEMBER 2026*



String Evaluation Reports
JUNE 2027*

APR AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB JUN

30 APR - 12 AUG 2026 (104 days)
Application Submission Period: Applicants submit applications via TAMS.

OCT - NOV 2026* (14 days)
String Replacement Period: Applicants may replace their original string with their replacement string.

NOV 2026 - FEB 2027* (104 days)
Community Input and Objections Period: Individual GAC members and observers may submit application comments, issue GAC Member Early Warnings, and, if they have standing, lodge objections.

JUN 2027* (30 days)
String Confusion Objections: Filed when a string is confusingly similar visually, aurally, or in meaning to another string.

GAC Consensus Advice can be issued at any time throughout the application process.

**Projected timeline based on 2,000 applications received. Estimations will be updated once the number of applications is publicly shared. A number of factors may have an impact on the timeline.*

Publicly Available Information

Understanding the entity, financial, operational, and application information that will be publicly available and when.

ENTITY INFORMATION

- Legal business name, doing business as name, legal entity form, jurisdiction
- Existing registry operator, ICANN accredited registrar, or an Affiliate of either
- Stock symbol, business phone, email address, physical address
- Direct Parent Company and Ultimate Parent Company
- Names of directors, officers, partners, material shareholders, individuals with executive responsibility, and person or entity with ultimate control
- Additional information or supporting materials provided by the applying entity

FINANCIAL / OPERATIONAL

Financial evaluation has four profiles. Each profile has evaluation criteria specifically selected to determine if an applicant has, and is expected to have, the financial resources to fund the registry's start-up and long-term operation.

Public information includes:

- Standard Profile and Top 25 Profile: self-certification
- Government Profile and Registry Operator Profiles: self certification and operational planning

Operational information published includes self certification of Security and Policy planning, and DNS Abuse measures.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

- All applications include applied for string name, scripts variants, string type
- Community gTLDs, Geographic Name gTLDs, Reserved Names, and .Brand TLDs require additional questions and documentation to support those types of applications
- Safeguard Public Interest Commitments (PICs) and Registry Voluntary Commitments

See [Appendix 1](#) in the 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook for a full list of application questions.

Different gTLD Application Types

Understanding the different application types to help inform the GAC's internal processes. [Key Topic Overview: TLD Application Types](#)

General

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

- Applications for specialized gTLDs have specific requirements based on the application, string, or applicant type.

Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Variant Strings

Help support linguistic and script diversity on the global Internet.

- IDN gTLDs include one or more non-ASCII characters.
- Variant strings may be considered the “same” as another gTLD string based on specific script rules.
- An applicant can apply for a new primary IDN along with one or more of its allocatable variant strings.
- An applicant can apply for variant strings of an existing gTLD only if it is the same legal entity as the registry operator for the existing gTLD.

Different gTLD Application Types

Understanding the different application types to help inform the GAC's internal processes. [Key Topic Overview: TLD Application Types](#)

Geographic Names

- For gTLDs that represent specific geographic places such as cities or regions.
- These applications must meet specific criteria and require additional documentation including government support or endorsement to proceed through the evaluation process.

Reserved Names

- For strings - or names - that have been set aside on ICANN's Reserved Name list (e.g., names of intergovernmental organizations).
- Only eligible entities may apply for these strings by meeting specific qualifications.

Brand TLDs

- Intended for trademark holders that wish to apply for domains that match registered marks.
- These top-level domains are typically designed for exclusive use by the brand owner and their trademark licensees and are subject to Brand Eligibility Evaluation for trademark-based applications.

Community gTLDs

- For gTLDs intended to serve clearly delineated communities that share identities, interests, or have other common denominators.
- These applications must follow criteria for the Registry Commitments Evaluation (RCE) and have the option to participate in the Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) process to resolve contention.

GAC Member and Observers Actions

Understanding the actions GAC Members and Observers individually or collectively can take on new gTLD applications.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
<p><u>Application Comments</u></p> <p>Submitted by anyone, including GAC Members and Observers</p>	<p>Bring issues to the attention of ICANN, applicants and evaluators.</p> <p>Concerned parties can use the Application Comment Forum to communicate concerns to applicants or can communicate directly to applicants using the contact information posted in the application.</p>	<p>Comments may be submitted at any time following String Confirmation Day but will be considered by evaluators in the following time periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 104 days following String Confirmation Day • For 30 days following a .Brand String Change Request or certain Application Change Requests 	<p>No direct impact on applications but may be considered by evaluators</p>
<p><u>Singular/Plural Notifications</u></p> <p>Submitted by anyone, including GAC Members and Observers</p>	<p>Identify if an applied-for string is the singular or plural form of another applied-for string, a delegated TLD, a string being processed from a previous new gTLD round, or a Blocked Name</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 30 days immediately following String Confirmation Day 	<p>Triggers Singular/Plural Evaluation, may prevent application from proceeding or place it in a contention set</p>

GAC Member and Observers Actions

Understanding the actions GAC Members and Observers individually or collectively can take on new gTLD applications.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
<p><u>Objections</u></p> <p>Filed by parties with standing; GAC Members and Observers may have standing</p>	<p>Object to application on grounds of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. String Confusion; 2. Legal Rights; 3. Limited Public Interest 4. Community 	<p>Objections may be submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 104 days, for all objection grounds, following the announcement on String Confirmation Day. • For 30 days, for String Confusion only, following the publication of updated contention sets after String Evaluation is completed. • For 30 days, for all objection grounds, in case of .Brand String Change, starting the day the String Evaluation Reports are published, and only if the string evaluation is successful. 	<p>Independent Dispute Resolution Panel determines whether the application can proceed, can only proceed with modifications, or cannot proceed at all; the Panel Determination can be appealed</p>

GAC Member and Observers Actions

Understanding the actions GAC Members and Observers individually or collectively can take on new gTLD applications.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOME
<p>GAC Member Early Warnings</p> <p>Filed by individual GAC Members and Observers</p>	<p>Early indication that an application is potentially problematic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must include a written explanation describing why the Early Warning was submitted and how the applicant may address the GAC member's concerns. • GAC members should provide contact details for communication with the applicant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 104 days following String Confirmation Day 	<p>No direct impact on application but signal that it could become subject of GAC Consensus Advice</p>
<p>GAC Consensus Advice</p> <p>Provided by consensus of the GAC to the ICANN Board</p>	<p>Provides advice to ICANN Board, including related to applications which are seen as sensitive or may violate national law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must clearly state that it is GAC Consensus Advice, include a clearly articulated rationale, be limited to the scope set out in the applicable Bylaws provisions, and elaborate on any "interaction between ICANN's policies and various laws and international agreements or where they may affect public policy issues." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged during the 104 days following String Confirmation Day, allowing the Board to consider it during the evaluation process • Ongoing throughout the application process 	<p>The ICANN Board will consider the GAC Consensus Advice on applications in accordance with the Bylaws.</p>

Resource Materials

TOPIC	RESOURCES
New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The authoritative version of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook, in PDFThe web version, in HTML.
Application Information, Application Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appendix 1: Application Questions in TAMSKey Topic Overview: TLD Application TypesApplication Types FAQs
Community Input, Objections and Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GAC Workbook: Community Input Timelines and ActionsKey Topic Overview: GAC Member Early Warnings and GAC Consensus AdviceKey Topic Overview: Community Input, Objections, and AppealsKey Topic Overview: Objections and AppealsICANN84 GAC Session: Community Input, Objections, and Appeals recording
2026 Round General Information and Learning Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New gTLD Program: 2026 Round website2026 Round Webinars and Presentations2026 Round Resources page
Use Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use cases tell the story of a TLD, including its considerations and business impact. They are intended for use as educational resources.
New gTLD SubPro Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) Policy Development Process Final Report

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