

Proposals for Draft GAC Advice on New gTLD Strings (2026 Round)

Operational Approach for Consideration of Possible Proposals for Draft GAC Advice

Status: Draft for Discussion

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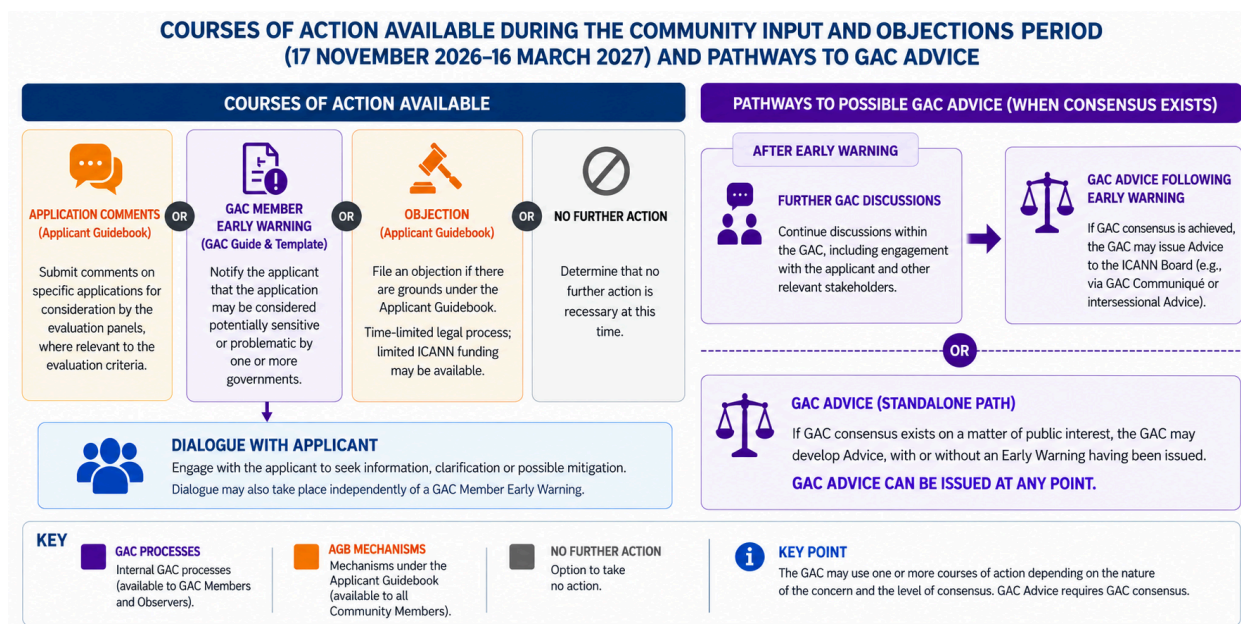
1. Purpose

This document complements the GAC Review of New gTLD Applications (2026 Round): Operational Readiness Framework by outlining a suggested operational approach where one or more GAC Members or Observers have identified outstanding public policy concerns relating to an application or string and consider that discussion of possible proposals for draft GAC Advice may be warranted.

The established process for the consideration and issuance of GAC Advice, as set out in the ICANN Bylaws and the GAC Operating Principles, remains unchanged.

The volume of applications proceeding in the 2026 Round may result in multiple applications or strings warranting discussion of possible proposals for draft GAC Advice. This document proposes a suggested operational approach to facilitate discussion among GAC Members and Observers who wish to participate, support the collaborative development and refinement of possible proposals for draft GAC Advice, and help prepare for subsequent consideration by the GAC

This document should be read alongside the **GAC Review of New gTLD Applications (2026 Round): Operational Readiness Framework**. Where a GAC Member or Observer wishes to pursue a GAC Member Early Warning, reference should be made to the **GAC Member Early Warnings – Comprehensive Guide** and **GAC Member Early Warning Template**.



2. Raising a Potential Advice Item

Objective

Provide a suggested operational approach for bringing an issue to the attention of GAC Members or Observers who wish to participate in further discussion, potentially developing proposals for draft GAC Advice.

Suggested Information

Where a GAC Member or Observer has identified outstanding public policy concerns relating to an application or string and considers that discussion with a view to possible proposals for draft GAC Advice may be warranted, it may be useful to provide:

- the relevant application(s) or string(s);
- a brief description of the public policy concern;
- supporting rationale or background information;
- any previous GAC Advice or Communiqué language that may be relevant;
- where applicable, any GAC Early Warning that has been issued in relation to the application or string, together with the supporting rationale;
- a summary of any relevant engagement with the applicant following the issuance of a GAC Early Warning, where applicable;
- any relationship to other available input mechanisms, where applicable; and
- draft options for possible GAC advice text, including the rationale.

The level of information provided remains entirely at the discretion of the relevant GAC Member or Observer.

3. Initial Informal Discussion

Objective

Facilitate informal discussion among GAC Members and Observers who wish to participate to explore whether an application or string may warrant possible proposals for draft GAC Advice, and, where appropriate, inform subsequent proposals to the GAC, including during Communiqué drafting sessions.

Where such discussion takes place before String Confirmation Day, Members and Observers should take into account that applicants may elect an eligible replacement string during the

Replacement Period (8–21 October 2026) and that the final list of applied-for strings will be published on 17 November 2026.

Suggested Activities

An initiative for an initial informal discussion of a potential proposal for draft GAC Advice item pertaining to new gTLD string(s) may be raised:

- during a GAC Application Discussion Session;
- via the GAC mailing list;
- during an intersessional GAC meeting;
- during an ICANN Public Meeting.

Where appropriate, the GAC Chair, in consultation with the GAC Vice Chairs, may determine that additional informal discussion would be useful.

Participation in these informal discussions is entirely voluntary. Discussions are intended to facilitate information sharing and to potentially lessen the workload of the Committee in preparing a draft proposal; they do not seek decisions or endorsements by the GAC.

4. Development of Possible Proposals for draft GAC Advice

Objective

Support collaborative discussion, development and refinement of possible proposals for draft GAC Advice among GAC Members and Observers who wish to pursue them.

Timing

String Confirmation Day will take place on 17 November 2026, marking the opening of the Community Input and Objections Period. The Applicant Guidebook encourages the GAC to submit GAC Consensus Advice within the 104 days following String Confirmation Day, through 16 March 2027, so that the ICANN Board can consider it during the evaluation process. However, the GAC retains the ability to submit Advice on a particular application or aspect of the New gTLD Program at any time.

Development of possible proposals for draft GAC Advice may take place *inter alia*:

- during an ICANN Public Meeting, including through the Communiqué drafting process, where appropriate;

- intersessionally, including through informal discussions among GAC Members and Observers as set out in Section 3 above;
- informally by individual GAC Members; or
- through a combination of the above.

Suggested Workflow

The workflow described below does not replace the existing process for developing GAC Advice. It suggests additional opportunities for GAC Members and Observers to exchange views and develop possible proposals for draft GAC Advice before formal consideration by the GAC, including where appropriate during the Communiqué drafting process.

Stage 1 - Initiating Drafting

Where one or more GAC Members or Observers wish to pursue a possible proposal for draft GAC Advice, drafting may commence before or during an ICANN Public Meeting, for example through one or more of the following:

- during an ICANN Public Meeting;
- following an Application Discussion Session; or
- following discussions on the GAC mailing list.

An initial draft proposal may be prepared by one or more interested GAC Members or Observers.

Stage 2 - Collaborative Drafting

Individual GAC Members and Observers who wish to pursue the proposal may work among themselves to:

- exchange views on the issue;
- refine the public policy concern;
- develop and revise possible proposals for draft Advice text;
- seek additional information from other GAC Members or Observers; and
- identify areas of agreement, disagreement or outstanding issues requiring further discussion.

Draft text may evolve over multiple iterations.

Stage 3 - Intersessional Discussion (where applicable)

Where drafting takes place intersessionally and a possible proposal has developed sufficiently to warrant broader GAC discussion, one or more dedicated discussions may be convened through existing GAC processes, with support from GAC Support.

These discussions may take place through:

- dedicated GAC drafting calls;
- GAC Application Discussion Sessions;
- the GAC mailing list; and/or
- other appropriate GAC discussion mechanisms.

The purpose of these discussions may include:

- review possible proposals for draft Advice text;
- discuss outstanding issues;
- refine the possible proposals for draft Advice; and
- assess whether further drafting would be useful.

5. Consideration by the GAC

Any proposal for draft GAC Advice developed through this process may, where appropriate, be brought forward for consideration by the GAC in accordance with the ICANN Bylaws and the GAC Operating Principles.

Where consensus is achieved, the GAC Advice may be communicated by the GAC Chair to the ICANN Board.

Where consensus is not achieved, no GAC Advice is issued.