
ICANN82 | CF – GAC Capacity Development Session (2 of 3)
Saturday, March 08, 2025 – 10:30 to 12:00 PST

GULTEN TEPE

Hello and welcome to the ICANN82 GAC Capacity Development Session on gTLD Next Round Champions Toolkit Session on Saturday 8th of March at 18:30 UTC. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

During this session, questions or comments submitted in the chat will be read aloud if put in the proper form. Please remember to state your name and the language you will speak in case you will be speaking a language other than English. Please speak clearly and at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation and make sure to mute all other devices when you are speaking. You may access all available features for this session in the Zoom toolbar. With that, I will leave the floor over to GAC Underserved Regions Working Group Co-Chairs, Tracy and Karel.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Thank you, Gulten, and welcome back everyone to our Capacity Development Session. I'm Tracy Hackshaw, who will be taking this session forward. Thanks, Karel, for the initial session. As you can

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see, we're assembling our team to take you forward with our Part 2 of Capacity Development.

What we're doing today is a follow-up from the webinar which you would have held. Hopefully, all of you participated in it a couple weeks ago, about two weeks ago, I think, where we actually ran through the Champions Toolkit and what's happening in the Applicant Support Program, what's happening in the overall gTLD program. So, what we're going to do today is take it one step further. It's going to be a recap of the webinar. And we're going to then do a practical activity related to the Champions Toolkit.

So, we're going to get hands-on and get down and dirty into it, doing it in breakouts as well. So, we're going to do a walkthrough of it with the plenary. Then we're going to take you into groups, language groups as usual. So, get your minds ready for your language groups. So, we'll likely have English, French, Spanish and Arabic and Chinese. I'm not sure if there are many other groups in the room as yet, but at least those. And I want to remind everyone to use your headsets if you are not speaking native English, because that will be helpful to get your mind ready for the breakouts as well. And of course, if you're paying attention, we will know that you're paying attention and not just listening.

So without further ado, this is a favorite phrase of ours, I'll hand you over to the ICANN org team, the team in charge of this entire program. Bob and Chris will introduce themselves and whoever else is in the room from ICANN org. And they're the ones going to lead you through everything today, not us. We'll be there looking

at the back, see how things are going. I want you to fully interact with us today. We're going to ask you some questions. Please respond. Please use the tools that are being made available, because that's where we're going to get the feedback and interaction from you. Those who are in the webinar, you'll realize we used some polls. So, you're going to see some of that interactivity today. So over to Chris, I believe, or Bob. I'm not sure who's going first.

CHRIS MONDINI

Thank you very much, Tracy. I'm Chris Mondini. I've worked with the stakeholder engagement team with ICANN for over a decade now, and I'm currently based in Brussels. I have responsibility for engagement in the Europe region, the greater Europe region, and recently also a coordinating role along with Bob Ochieng on the campaign for the Applicant Support Program and the New gTLD Program.

And many of my counterparts and team members, teammates, are here in the room, and I'm just going to try to introduce them. I see here's Baher. Stand up, Baher. Baher is from the Middle East region. He's also going to lead our Arabic breakout later. Further in the back in the lovely pullover is Rodrigo de la Parra, the LAC region, and will be back at the back there leading a Spanish language session to answer all of your questions.

I think that we have Jian-Chuan. Jian-Chuan is our lead of China engagement, and in that corner, if anybody would like to participate in Chinese language question and answer, Jian-Chuan

will be there manning that. And over here, we had set up France/Africa francophone. And I thought I saw him, but he's moved, Dandjinou. But if Pierre doesn't make it there, I can meet the French speakers over there. And then we have English set up here in the corner.

Now, who else? We have Adam Peake. Adam Peake works on the engagement team as well and is one of our English speakers. And who else is here from the stakeholder engagement team that I can introduce?

Okay, so that's just to prepare you for what comes at the end and the interactivity. I'm glad that we have a good-sized group here, and I hope you'll approach this as an interactive and informal way to get to know more about how we collaborate and what tools are available to raise awareness of these programs. But really, the mastermind behind the whole session is sitting here with me on the stage, Bob Ochieng, who led the webinar that many of you attended. And this will be a way to reinforce and, again, answer more questions. And thank you, Bob, handing it to you.

BOB OCHIENG

Thank you very much, Chris, for that round of introductions. And this is really a continuation of this engagement and capacity building that we started, I would say, for one year now, because we have been talking to the GAC variously in webinars, obviously in ICANN meetings. And we intend to continue this through to the opening of the round and beyond, hopefully. So for today, and I know we have limited time to do a number of things, we want to

start by just a warm-up. We call this particular session a barometer. How well do you know the Next Round?

So at this point, I just want to administer very briefly three questions that I'll ask my tech team to display. I want to believe we are logged in on Zoom. If not, please log in. Please log in on Zoom as far as possible, because we do have a poll question that I would like us to respond to and you can only do it on Zoom to try and just give us a sense of to what extent are we familiar, I should say. And it will help us to also know where to emphasize and where to at least move or gloss over. So, if you can take a moment to please log on Zoom and respond to the three questions that we have as a poll.

So, I'll give us a minute or so to do that. I'd like to see at least 50 responses from what I'm seeing in the room, if possible. If you have a challenge with the link, you can let us know and we can help you get there.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Maybe, Bob, you can read the question out so that kind of prompts people to look at it.

BOB OCHIENG

Yeah, it will be one question at a time. There will be a total of three. Okay, so what we'll do is we'll take one question, after your responses, we probably discuss it very fast, then move to the next.

So maybe we start again with the questions. Hopefully people are logged in.

Okay. So the first question there is, applicants are required to reveal the TLD string they intend to apply for in their ASP applications? Applicants are required to reveal the TLD string they intend to apply for in their TLD applications? So, are they required to do that? Yes or no. I'm seeing an exact 50% responses so far.

So okay, I can't tell how many responded. But I want to just take this question, then we move to the next. So, 50% of the respondents, I wish I could tell how many responded, are saying yes, in the process of applying for applicant support. And for those who might not understand what that is, obviously that is why we are here today and tomorrow to really help you understand that. So, you say 50% say yes, you will be required to reveal the string you intend to apply for. And 50% are saying no.

So, the fact is that when applying for applicant support, there is no requirement to reveal. In fact, we are not supposed to know what you intend to apply for at this stage, because applications for the actual TLDs are not yet open. So, it is not a requirement, and it should not be, you shouldn't reveal to anyone what you intend to apply for. So, the answer is no. And that means that 50% of the respondents, not sure of us in the room, probably need to better understand the Applicant Support Program.

Let's see the next question. So, the next question reads, how much will it cost to apply for a new TLD? How much will it cost to apply for a new TLD? The other language that you could use there is what

will be the expected evaluation fees for a new TLD. So, there are four options there, three of them in figures, and the last one is none of the above. So, if you could get in 20 seconds, what responses you have for that. So, the choices is the first one is \$185,000, \$92,000, \$227,000, and the last one is none of the above.

Okay. So, your feedback is as follows. Again, I can't see what you responded to, so what your answer is is completely anonymous from my end. So, 8% of the responses are saying \$185,000, 5% are saying \$92,000, and 84% are saying \$227,000, and none of the above is 3%. And I have to say that this seems to be very well understood by the majority of the respondents, because the expected fee, once finally approved, would be \$227,000. But we need to put into context the other numbers.

So, \$185,000 was the fee in 2012, in the last round, in case you are not aware about that. And \$92,000 is the RSP evaluation fees. So, it's not a number out of the blues, it is another fee. It's only that it is for the RSP program. That's the maximum you can pay for in the RSP program. And the other said none of the above. I guess this one seems like the room is pretty much appraised about what the fees will be.

And the last one. So, this is a yes or no. Can a ccTLD operator apply to be a registry service provider, or essentially a back-end service provider for the Next Round? It's a yes or no. What do you think? Okay, if you can get the results for that. Okay. So, 75% say yes and 25% say no. So, that we don't get a discussion now. So, the reality is yes, a ccTLD operator can apply. If they would want to provide

back-end services or to be an RSP in the Next Round, they can apply to the RSP program to be evaluated. And if they're successful, there's nothing that stops them from being an RSP in the Next Round. Again, I think we did well there at three quarters right. So, I think we are making progress.

So thank you for participating in those questions. I believe it at least helped us try and gain how aware the room is about the program. And before we also proceed again, we have been making a number of, I think Chris calls them asks. But I think what he actually told me he means is that when the final result or output or report is out there on how we performed on the engagement front, in terms of the Next Round, Chris says that that report will not just be a report about the org.

Ideally, it should not just be a report about how the org performed. It is a partnership report. It is a holistic report about how we partnered with the community to actually bring this information to those that can apply, to those potential applicants, be they ASP potential applicants or Next Round potential applicants. So, in other words, it is a partnership and we continue to invite you to join us in those engagements.

We do make reports to the IRT on a monthly basis. And these are the next upcoming updates for the month of March. We'll be here in Seattle in this meeting on Thursday at 15 hours local time. And the April update will be on 16th April at 12:00 UTC. We would really want to encourage the GAC and of course the rest of the ICANN SO/AC to be part of those engagement updates to hear your

feedback, the feedback from our RVPs on the ground, but also to enhance what else we can do to reach even greater audiences. So please join us in those engagement updates.

Next slide. So, this is really a very high-level overview in the assumption that, of course, there are some of you who might not be very familiar on the details about the Next Round, what it is all about. gTLDs provide multiple opportunities. As you saw in the last session from the GEOs group, you could be businesses, you could be communities, you can be geographies. So, we are talking about the GEOs group on the geography side or governments to really present yourselves in the digital space, on the namespace and provide different capabilities, be they monetization opportunities, be they localization opportunities. You can also secure or have greater security about your name.

So, whether you are from the business community or you are a business entity or you are a government, a gTLD gives you that opportunity to carry your name on the digital space and gives you autonomy over that particular name in terms of who can use it and how you can use it and how you can secure it. So, it's a lot of opportunities and the details of this, obviously, is a lot of discussion. If you were to drill down now for every category, but this is just a high-level depiction.

The next slide is also about timelines, which we keep reminding ourselves about. We have parts of the program that are already in flight. For example, applicant support, which was opened on 19 November 2024 and is running as we speak, expected to end in 19

November. Those will be 12 months. We have the Applicant Guidebook, which is currently out for public comment and eventually is intended to be published in December after the entire process is completed.

The Applicant Guidebook is essentially the rulebook for the program. So, for example, the questions that were being asked earlier in the morning in terms of how to object, how to get letters of support who signs those letters. If it is multiple jurisdictions, do you get letters from all of them or from one of them? This is the place that carries all these rules.

There is also the RSP Evaluation Program, which is for back-end service providers, which is closing on 20 May. It's been open since November 2024 as well. And there are a number of applications already that have been received for those respective applications. So, my colleague, Kristy, will be speaking about ASP tomorrow and we invite you to come with questions for that. She'll be giving you a debrief on ASP in detail tomorrow. Eventually, all factors remaining constant, the round is anticipated to open in Q2 of 2026 next year.

Next slide. So, in terms of engagement efforts, which the GAC has been very keen about to really ensure that a number of things happen fast, that we are doing the expected engagement from an applicant support perspective that is intended for the underserved or less developed regions. So, in 2024, that was predominantly our engagement focus areas. So, the RVPs in their respective regions were almost exclusively targeting ASP potential applicants. And

you know that there are four categories broadly of ASP target audiences, IGOs, not-for-profits, indigenous communities, and small medium enterprises. So, for the better part of 2024 calendar year, this was almost exclusively our focus of engagement.

And in the next slide about how we fared on in that area was a total of around 201 there about engagement, events, meetings, participations across the world, which you will see is predominantly from our statistics, the underserved regions, Africa, the LAC region, Asia region, were actually the majority or predominantly where our engagements targeted around this one and one there about events. So, we want to continue to target those groups. But we are shifting gears in 2025 because now we are talking more about the Next Round and not necessarily just applicant support target audiences only.

And next. So, with that, we get to that part that we really wanted to also focus on today, which is the Champions Toolkit. And I think just to motivate this particular section of the Champions Toolkit, first of all, remember we say that this will be a collaboration. Like the staff has responsibility to really deliver on the engagement agenda for the Next Round. But obviously we cannot do it by ourselves alone, or it will only not be the staff efforts.

In addition to that, and from feedback from the community, especially the GAC, you wanted us to provide content that could facilitate your engagements, or that you could also use in your respective meetings or engagements and share with your networks. I want to say that a lot of effort and resources has gone

into producing that. And we've made this material available to anyone who would like to use this.

But we also noted that we haven't actually observed a lot of uptick on it and potentially maybe because it's not very clear where this content is and where to access it. And that is why we want to make efforts to try and take you through this material so that you can make use of it by yourselves. So please, we want you to make use of the toolkit for the Next Round. And the next slide is sort of a rundown in terms of what we have in this toolkit.

CHRIS MONDINI

Bob, it's Chris. I just wanted to also interject for the Champions Toolkit is we're very pleased that these are available in the ICANN languages already. So, when we're in the breakout session, for those of you that would like to see these materials listed here on the slide, we have them in Arabic and Spanish and French and Chinese.

And if you're in a region that uses the ICANN languages, we're also very pleased that we're working toward ways to produce materials and outreach materials beyond the ICANN languages, which we'll hear about later. But for the existing materials that are there now, if you use an ICANN language and you're eager to reach out to your communities or your colleagues across government or others, the language variety is an important aspect and we'll show you how to access those materials in the breakout.

BOB OCHIENG

Great. So, what you'll find in the toolkit is what you see on the slide. And I just wanted to very quickly highlight that for you and then ask you to actually break out in different groups, potentially using languages that is comfortable for you in the room and try and access this material. Of course, we have another set of questions that we'll also want you to do during that break time.

But if I could share my screen and I hope I can do that so that I show very quickly what is in that material and then ask us to break out. So, the Next Round has got a dedicated website, which is newgtldprogram.icann.org, which all of us know by now. But I think, obviously, that is not enough, knowing that we have this dedicated website. And by the way, there's a lot of content and material in this website. When you log in here, you will see three broad thematic areas of the program. Applicant support, which you have heard about quite a bit. The Regional Service Provider Program and the Applicant Guidebook.

But our focus today is on the materials that we have produced to really help us in disengagement activities. So, there's this tab on resources that has got a lot of material here. Part of what we have here has been as a direct request from the GAC. For example, the GAC asked for reports or wanted to follow our engagement updates on a monthly basis with IRT. And they need that information to be easily accessible if you want to go back and review. Now that information is here under reports.

So, if you went there, you will see a listing of every IRT update that we've been making since September last year. On a monthly basis,

you'll see the decks for that particular month, the audio recording. This particular information is also on the IRT Wiki, but the GAC asked that this information be fleshed out and listed for ease of access. And so, we want to confirm that this information is available here. You can follow this report since we started making them in September.

The other particular material that is here is use cases, which is really showcasing a number of TLDs that are currently operational. And one thing you will notice that the TLDs list a category. So, some of them are community TLDs. Some of them are Geo TLDs. And it is essentially a showcase on how these different TLDs have been used by current registry operators and what can that inspire for new applicants which you are talking to or you are meeting or that are in your networks.

The crust of the material is this Champions Toolkit, which we've been talking about. And this is where we have engagement material or content, depending on whether you're a comms person or an engineer like me. So, you'll find material here in different categories. You have Next Round specific material. You have applicant support specific material. And I hope you do note that there are presentations in PDF and in PowerPoint versions. You have FAQs for respective sections. You have social media guides. You have use cases.

And again, when you go down further, if you really need input from us and you want us to, for example, join a meeting closer to you, you can actually ask for a speaker because we have a speaker

request form there. If you feel that, we will definitely respond to you. We have an engagement feedback form. So, if you went to an event, for example, and you have observations or questions and you want us to take note of that, you can easily fill that and send that for us. We'll take note of this.

Now this material is in all these languages, the usual ICANN languages that are here. And this might not be obvious. So, if you chose, say for example, I believe the first one is Arabic, then you have the same material in those languages. So, we want to ask you to try this. I'm not sure how many of us speak Arabic in the room or Chinese, for example. Probably you should download this material and confirm to us if it is written in proper Chinese or in proper French. We might not know. This is why we really want you to interact with this content and give us your feedback as part of this breakout session. So, that will be for you to navigate and come back and tell us a little bit more of what you might have seen or learned from that session when you come back.

If I can get the slides back on. Yeah, so it's an invitation to collaborate. But before I do that, I think just give me the breakout slide. Yes. So, at this point, we will break out and I think to help guide us, so the exercise is to explore the Champions Toolkit and the resources that we have on the Next Round website. We have the link here, of course. We want you to look at them in those different languages.

So, we have 10 minutes for you to do that. Please download at least these two particular presentations, the one on the Next Round and

the one on Applicant Support in these different languages. We'd like to confirm with you that they are useful. And in part two of this breakout, we have a number of discussion questions that we have been seeking from you, especially bullet 4, for example, on how can the GAC or government support our outreach for connections to funding institutions? I think, Chris, you might want to make an emphasis on this or context to that particular bullet point.

CHRIS MONDINI

Yes. And thanks very much, Bob. And really, we intend the rest of the session to be in smaller group conversation, problem solving, as Bob indicated, being comfortable with the materials. We would also like to hear from you, because now that you've been hearing about the different ways to use the gTLD, or even given the presentation we had this morning from the Geo group, if you have given some thoughts as to where and who in your countries and regions might have an interest, we on the ICANN org engagement team would really be delighted to hear about that, to work with you on how to follow up or even get introductions.

On the last point on the slide, I do want to emphasize that we have been acting upon the advice that we've received from the GAC in multiple sessions recently, that where there are funding institutions, be they private investors or development banks or national development aid agencies, we've been approaching them as well. And already we've made contact with the World Bank, with the African Development Bank, with the Asian Development Bank, with private equity funds. And it's early days of explaining to them

how a gTLD and even an internationalized domain name can be a tool for digital inclusion or digital transformation in a country.

I was delighted to attend very recently an event of the Commonwealth and spoke with the UK's foreign development organization as well. Similarly, these other development banks I've mentioned, just within the last month, my colleagues and I have approached them and explained to them that for public sector authorities, governments, municipalities, as we heard, who want to deliver services, digital services to their citizens, or want to foster a more robust local digital economy, the gTLDs are an option. And we've heard that, of course, that it's an expensive option. And so, connecting or helping to get introductions that you may be able to facilitate with funding organizations or investors or others that we should approach to make some of those connections in your countries and regions, we'd be very grateful.

We're really in a campaign mode now, as we have been throughout last year, and it's gathering steam. But the support that you provide and the connections you can provide and the ideas that you can provide, hopefully they've been spurred by some of these presentations. And we would love to hear leads' advice or contacts you'd like to pass along. Thank you.

TRACY HACKSHAW

So, Chris, this is Tracy. Before we do the breakouts, you had said you might have given us some updates on how the program has moved along in terms of applications.

CHRIS MONDINI

Yes. We have been tracking the applications that have been coming in. And happily, our collaboration is bearing some fruit. We have reported in our most recent IRT monthly update on outreach and engagement that we have about 32 applications at some point of initiation for the Applicant Support Program. The majority of those are still from regions outside of North America and Europe. And in fact, I think it's--

Yeah, and we will cover this in more detail in the session that Kristy Buckley will also be present for, which is at this time tomorrow. So, in terms of geographical distribution and the number of applications coming in, there has been a steady pipeline. So, thank you for reminding me to mention that.

Also, you may be familiar with this Registry Service Provider Program. We had a question in the quiz about ccTLDs who operate registries, but other registries also are submitting applications to be approved back-end registry providers and provide the important technical back-end services. We will have the latest numbers also again tomorrow at this time in this room, but it's well over 40 applications have been initiated. And again, every single ICANN region is represented among those initiated programs. So, it's a nice opportunity to let everybody know that there is momentum. These efforts and this collaboration is resulting in applications coming in. And we continue to benefit from any advice and conversations we have with you.

BOB OCHIENG

All right. So, we have groups that are within the room. And I think we have flipcharts across the languages, and Julia will be helping me with that.

CHRIS MONDINI

So, I can identify some of the languages. So back there where you see Laurent and Robert, Rob, that's where Rodrigo will be leading a LAC/Spanish language conversation. So, anybody who prefers Espanol or a LAC focus is very welcome to join there. I see Baher making his way toward Arabic land. If anybody would like to strategize in Arabic or discuss the Middle East region.

In this corner there, Jian-Chuan of China is raising his hand. And if any Chinese speakers would like to go through the materials and answer these questions or just have a focus on China and Asia-Pacific region, those are three there. I can do French over here if Pierre is not here. So, people preferring en français will be in this corner. And then we need an English conversation. And we'll have an online conversation.

BOB OCHIENG

Yeah, I'll remain with the online team here. So, if you are remote, the questions remain on screen to guide everyone. And I'll take the remote. And at the end of the 30 minutes, we anticipate that there will be feedback from each group on especially the thematic

questions. Whatever you shall have discussed at that point, you can also just make very brief notes and report to plenary.

SUSHIL PAL

Chris, can I? I have a question. I think we did do one outreach with ICANN for the gTLD rounds.

CHRIS MONDINI

Excuse me, can you just identify yourself, please? Identify who you are.

SUSHIL PAL

I'm Sushil. I'm the GAC rep from India. We did one outreach with ICANN on the gTLD. One major feedback from the applicants was that these resources are not available in a language like Hindi or Bengali, which are mostly spoken languages out there. And they form a huge chunk of the population. And so, the request was if by using these IT tools, if this Champion's Toolkit can be provided in those languages, it would be very helpful.

TRACY HACKSHAW

You missed the webinar, didn't you?

SUSHIL PAL

Sorry?

TRACY HACKSHAW

You missed the webinar. We covered that topic. So, Chris will explain that.

CHRIS MONDINI

First of all, I do want to thank India for more than once convening audiences and helping to promote awareness to get the news of the program out there. On the Thursday IRT session here, we'll be repeating information about a new program that has launched. And we published a blog about it last week as well. And it's called Next Round in Your Language. And this is a platform which uses a wiki-based volunteer group in Bengali or in Hindi to take AI translated drafts and finalize them for these language groups. And the languages you mentioned are already included in that.

SUSHIL PAL

Those are for the Application Guidebook, right?

CHRIS MONDINI

So, these are for outreach materials, but not for the rules or the Applicant Guidebook. There's a challenge because the Applicant Guidebook really is sort of the legal framework for the application process. So, at some point, even interested applicants at some point will need to have some facility to be making English language applications. The application is also in English.

But the outreach materials for such like the Champions Toolkit will be coming, and it's a demand-led. So, if others, we know already Thailand, Germany, we've seen demand and uptake on the

platform from those places. And having spoken with my colleague, our colleague, Samiran Gupta, he's a big advocate for the languages that you mentioned as well. So at least in the outreach and awareness materials, we can help with that. But the rule book and the application process will end up being English.

TRACY HACKSHAW

All right. So, just to remind everybody, if we can either take your laptops to the groups or download the materials in the language of your choosing now. So, that's part one. And we can begin the breakouts now. So, if the time is running out, I want to make sure we do this speedily. So, either you stay here and download the things now and then move to your group or go across to the group area and download it there. But the point is you need to download the materials in your language because you're going to be working through the materials in the group. So let me make that very clear.

So, walk with your laptops or your phones, whatever have you, and re-identify the group areas. So just to remind everyone, behind me, with my hand, it's French. And Chris is going to head across there and help the French-speaking contingents that we have. To the right of the room from this side, we have at least one English group that will be there. So, we can assemble at the front of the room by that clip chart.

There's going to be, where Baher is, a Middle East/Arabic-speaking group. To his right, is that correct? Next to him, the other direction, is going to be the Chinese-speaking group. And next to that group, close to the interpreters, would be the Spanish-speaking group.

So, download your materials and head across to the groups. You can take some of the chairs with you if you wish. If you want to sit, but you can stand. Let's start moving so we can get the work going. The ideal scenario is that no one should be at their desks here. So, if we see people at their desks here, that means something is wrong.

All right. So, as I said, people are still at their desks, so that means I think they're not listening. So, let's get moving. Just a reminder, French, English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese. Pick the language of your choosing. It's unfortunate we don't have every single language, but I think we've done the best we can with being as diverse as we can. And again, the questions are going to be on the screen for you to discuss. But you do need to download the materials because they're going to help you. The ICANN org folks are going to help explain them, walk you through them, and answer any questions you may have about them in ideal language of your choosing.

French behind. French this side. No, let's not break the French. There are French speakers. French speakers. French speakers. I think I'm seeing French speakers sitting down. Can you come across? And folks like Nigel and so on are supposed to be helping as the IRT topic leads. Yes, French is coming. I know there are French speakers. I know they're here. We're not seeing them. French. So, Chris, there's a French group coming, emerging. Is Chris here? Right here. Chris, French is waiting for you, Chris.

Where did Chris go? Chris Mondini, French is waiting for you. There we go.

A colleague from India, you're not joining the discussion? India GAC? I guess not. You're not joining the discussion? No?

JULIA CHARVOLEN

Hi, Ana. This is Julia speaking. Can you hear me?

ANA MALDONADO

Yes. Hi, Julia.

JULIA CHARVOLEN

Hello, Ana. Okay. Bob is across the room. I can see him. So, he'll be managing remote participants. I don't know whether any other remote participants from the GAC are joining. But I guess, Bob, maybe we can start with Ana, if you'd like to.

BOB OCHIENG

Yeah, sure. Ana, if you can hear me okay?

ANA MALDONADO

Yes, I can hear you okay. Do you hear me fine?

BOB OCHIENG

Yes, I can hear you very well. So, I think as we wait for any other person remote to join us. So, the session at this point, I'm not sure if you are able-- So, we have this in two parts, just as you see on the

screen here. And I'm not sure which language is your normal, easy language that you work with.

ANA MALDONADO

Yes. My mother tongue is Spanish. I'm the Spanish GAC representative.

BOB OCHIENG

Okay, okay, great. So, that is interesting because one of the things that we have done is to, as I was saying, is to develop content or engagement material in a number of languages and we have put them in a place that we are calling the Champions Toolkit. And this is because the GAC and the community have been asking for material in languages that they can also use in their local networks or in their local outreach if they are participating in events locally. But we want to ensure that you can access this material and actually have a look at the kind of material that we have developed and really see whether there are gaps that we can try and add. So, this is the exercise at the moment. So, are you able to follow the link and just at least access the Champions Toolkit material in Spanish?

ANA MALDONADO

Yes, I have accessed the website and then I selected Spanish and then I have downloaded the presentations for the Next Round and the Applicant Support Program. And it's great because I was just exploring the one for the Next Round. And I think it's very clear, very complete. I think the language in Spanish is fine. So, I think it

will be definitely very useful for us and for the Spanish community because I think it simplifies quite a lot the job because many terms in English.

I mean, we know English fairly well, but still some people in Spain will have a kind of challenge if they want to really understand the round and the needs. And for many of our stakeholders, I think they will acknowledge the translation and the effort you are doing in putting all the materials in order in the same place. I think it's great. It's very useful because always in ICANN ecosystem is always a lot of information all around. And I think for this new round, it will be definitely very useful to have. So, thank you so much.

BOB OCHIENG

Okay, sorry. Sorry for that.

ANA MALDONADO

No worries.

BOB OCHIENG

And so I see Wendy who says that she can only participate by listening. So, Wendy, I hope you can hear us. And Azim, do you want to introduce yourself?

ANA MALDONADO

Excuse me? I think my sound has stopped.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Can we get the slide with the questions, please? Okey-doke.

BOB OCHIENG

Ana, you can't hear us?

ANA MALDONADO

No, yes, but there was a while that I think the connection was a bit unstable.

BOB OCHIENG

Okay, I hear you well. I was making a comment. I was just checking if Azim can hear us well. And Wendy, I see they're also remote. Just checking if they can hear us okay. Azim, you have a question whether this toolkit is only in the six UN languages, I think if I hear your question right. Yes, so at the moment, the toolkit material is on the six languages as you see demonstrated here. If you see the screen there. So, you have Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, and I think Russian.

TRACY HACKSHAW

I will read the questions in the meantime. Question 1, what is your sense of interest from potential applicants in your respective countries? What is your sense of interest from potential applicants in your respective countries? Second question, what questions are you getting internally or externally? What questions are you getting internally or externally?

Third question, what information or resources might be helpful for GAC members to have or to pass along to prospective applicants? What information or resources might be helpful for GAC members to have or to pass along to prospective applicants? And finally, how can the GAC slash government support outreach/connections to funding? And here we go. The questions are back. Thank you very much.

BOB OCHIENG

Okay. So, I don't know if Azim and Wendy can hear us, but I think we can proceed. Ana, so I guess at least you hear me well?

ANA MALDONADO

Yes.

BOB OCHIENG

Okay, great. So, the second part of the discussion is really-- And we have Rodrigo over here. I am sure you do interact, at least at the regional level. I know he's based out of Mexico, but he's our Global Stakeholder Engagement VP for the LAC region. I'm not sure you have interacted with him at all.

ANA MALDONADO

I have met him in other meetings. I was there in Istanbul. I think he was there. And also, definitely in this multi-stakeholder meeting that we had last year in Brazil, in Sao Paulo. He knows me.

BOB OCHIENG

Wonderful, wonderful. I think my room is interfering with the presentations over here. We are trying to have multiple rooms here. How do I do this? So, for the second part of the questions, I don't know if you have any feedback that you'd want to-- Because essentially what we are trying to do is try to respond to the question around what else or how much can we further deepen this engagement? So, especially from the GAC perspective, your perspective around what we can do more, what questions, for example, you have received or that you do have.

And the other thing is we are trying to reach out to funding institutions. And you know that these funding institutions sometimes respond better to governments, for example. Rather than say if ICANN work to approach a funding institution vis-a-vis if a government representative or a government reached out to a funding institution to let them know about a program like this. How can the GAC, in your view, also help us in some way? You could make a comment on any of them and we will consider that together with the other comments.

ANA MALDONADO

Thank you, Bob. In Spain, I mean, so far we haven't received any expression of interest for registering any gTLD. We only had recently two cases because there were some stakeholders interested in registering ccTLD. So, in both cases, it was not possible for them to delegate or they were not subject for delegation, these two cases. But in the case of the gTLDs, we

haven't received so far any expression of interest within Spain. Although we don't know if in the upcoming year there will be.

I mean, the program is quite attractive. I think we should do more outreach of the program. Because I think many potential companies and foundations and associations would be interested in the delegation of a new gTLD. But the outreach component, I think, is lacking in Spain. So I think GAC members or governmental authorities should promote this program, should make the appropriate outreach of the program. And then that would definitely help to attract potential businesses also. Because I think most of the people in Spain don't know about this program and the possibilities that it offers for businesses, for foundations, for all that.

And regarding the question in relation to funding institutions, we don't have so far, as far as I know, within the ministry, any relation to funding institutions regarding for these things. So, I don't have any answer for that, to my knowledge. So, that's more or less the overview of the situation in Spain regarding the New Round. Of course, we will be helping as much as possible if there is any case. I mean, we would be happy if ICANN could clarify to us really what would be the procedure. I mean, once we have a potential applicant, what would be the procedure for us to follow.

So, that would be really what, at least in my point of view, will help Spain and GAC members of the Spanish delegation to members of the ministry that has to deal with these issues, how to proceed. Because always we had, as I told you, some cases for ccTLDs, but

me personally, I didn't know the procedure. So, I had to ask some GAC colleagues and ICANN colleagues that I knew from the meetings I have attended in person. And then, once you ask them, you are okay.

But the problem for the New Round is, for me, the procedures. Once that they get the expression of interest from a potential applicant, what I should do, who I need to contact and how we should proceed. That, I think, please clarify to us. That would be very nice.

BOB OCHIENG

Would you be willing, because-- So, we have an engagement team that covers Europe, led by Chris Mondini, which you might have met as well. And I think he's just telling me that they'd be very happy to organize an engagement meeting with you in Spain together with his team. Andrea, which you might have met as well. I think Andrea is based out of Portugal. But they would be very keen to actually organize a workshop in Spain and leverage your network to come and give you a detailed debrief about the program. I feel like this would be something that can go a long way for the case.

ANA MALDONADO

That would be really great. So, if they could, in the future months, come to Madrid and give us a workshop, that would be very nice. The thing is that, as I told Chris and Andrea, me, I'm changing position soon. I don't know exactly when, but I'm changing

position soon. And that's why I haven't been allowed to go to the meeting in person as I wanted. So, I'm changing, I don't know, I hope, because now they don't let me go right now. And I'm waiting for some time.

BOB OCHIENG Were you at the Mobile World? Because Chris was just there like two, three days ago.

ANA MALDONADO Two, three days ago? In Spain? No, I was not aware of that. I'm sorry.

BOB OCHIENG He was in Mobile World.

ANA MALDONADO Ah, in Barcelona.

BOB OCHIENG Yes.

ANA MALDONADO Because I was not in the Mobile World conference. We usually don't go. I'm expecting to go. I hope next year I can go, because with my future position in this unit, they usually go. Because I will be in

Digital Matters, but more for Radio Frequency Matters. I moved to Spectrum.

BOB OCHIENG

You're now a radio person.

ANA MALDONADO

Yes, it's a promotion for me. So, I decided to move. But still, let's stay in touch. And if you need anything, please contact me, because I will keep in touch with the unit I'm in now. So, if they want to organize a workshop or something, please let me know. Then I can give you the proper contacts to organize it for the Next Round. So, for that, I will be pleased.

BOB OCHIENG

Thank you very much, Ana. This has been great. We ended up being a one-on-one, which is interesting. We wish you well in your soon-coming posting. We will stay in touch. Obviously, we want to follow up on a workshop or something, an engagement meeting in Spain, to really try and respond to your feedback for the community in Spain and create this awareness. Thank you very much for that. Thank you so much. I know our breakout is almost done. I'm sure you are staying on for the rest of the sessions as we listen to the feedback from the different groups.

ANA MALDONADO

Yes, sure. Thank you so much, Bob. See you.

BOB OCHIENG

Thank you very much.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Two more minutes. So, just wrap up, please, and appoint your rapporteurs to report out. Two more minutes. Thank you. Okay, folks, I think we need to wrap up now. That's right. Thank you. So, make sure you've appointed your rapporteur to report out. So, I see the Chinese-speaking group and the Spanish-speaking group are enjoying themselves. So, we're wrapping up now. So, please identify the rapporteur to lead and to report out.

All right. So, we're coming back. So, maybe I could ask for those who are leading the groups, maybe you could join us on stage or join Chris on stage at least. So, whoever's reporting on the English group. So, the English group, can you join Bob on stage?

KRISTY BUCKLEY

I'm over here, Tracy. This is Kristy.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Kristy, because she's doing English. All right. Chinese group, do you want to join Bob on stage? And Arabic and Spanish, who's still, well, Spanish is still having the discussion. Thiago. All right. So, I guess we'll start with Chris. Yeah. Chris, go ahead. And maybe, Chris, you can speak in French and let's use our headsets.

CHRIS MONDINI

Well, there were only two French speakers in the room. So I can do this in French, but with the permission of my group, I'll do it in English. So, is it okay? Okay. So, I had Luca and Mana [ph] from Switzerland, La Suisse, and Senegal, respectively, regulators. And we had a very productive discussion.

On the first question, they said it's early days, so they don't have a strong sense of what the demand might be. But they thought the geographic gTLDs would be the ones that would be most likely to be of interest. And they were hopeful that there would be interest. They cited that still the questions are around the challenges, as we've heard primarily about the expense, the fees, and the complexity of doing an application.

So, they said in terms of the resources that would be helpful, one would be a simplification or summaries of such complex documents as the Applicant Guidebook. Even just an orientation guide of which chapter covers which topic and a high-level description of the approach would help them to be able to talk about the program.

And we did talk about efforts. We talked about, within the Applicant Support Program, for those who qualify, that there will be pro-bono in-kind advice. But even for those who are not applying for Applicant Support Program, we talked about efforts to get consultants and experts in the community to at least, free of charge, have conversations with any town or company or person that might be thinking of making an application.

And then they did agree with our approach on approaching organizations, for example, like the African Development Bank or other funding organizations, and said that we should pitch it as an IT project because they fund IT projects and part of a digital development strategy. So, we will follow up, but I think we might hear similar guidance from some of the others who participated. So, thank you to my group.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Thank you very much, Chris. Let's give a round of applause. Excellent. So, maybe we can have the Chinese-speaking group to come up and report. Feel free to speak, of course, in Chinese. Let's use our headsets.

JIAN-CHUAN ZHANG

In Chinese?

TRACY HACKSHAW

If you wish, absolutely.

JIAN-CHUAN ZHANG

I will prefer to use English, so the participants in this room can listen to that. I think my Chinese colleagues also understand English. So, we have six members speaking Chinese in my group. The key term and key concept I hear many times is cost expenses. So, many people say they do have interest to apply for the Next

Round, but the current price is too high for many potential applicants.

Brand TLD is number one. They hear from the potential interest. Second one may be Geo TLD. Geo TLD is a very special thing for many Chinese cities because Chinese has such a long history. So, many cities in history, they had another name, but currently they have a new name. So, maybe which one they need to apply for is an issue because they need to go over through the internal process to make a decision which name they shall apply for.

And also, some people mentioned RSP. They say some RSP are primarily for the public interest customer, some for brand customer. So, maybe they want to say we can categorize different RSP for different customers, then they will have different prices for these different categories. That's one thing I heard from. It's also about price because many RSP say if they got a very high cost, they will just transfer the cost to the applicant. So, that increases the application fee further.

And finally, I think what information resources from ICANN for the Next Round, I think the first thing is that they need more successful stories from the last round. They say the current use cases is okay, but not inspirational enough to say when I read these use cases, I really feel excited to apply for the Next Round. We need a more successful story to demonstrate the success to inspire the new applicant. So, that's all from me. Thank you.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Round of applause, please, for the Chinese-speaking group. Thank you very much. Did the Arabic-speaking group, what was the report out? Are they ready to report out? Arabic-speaking group? Yes.

BAHER ESMAT

All right. So, I'll do it in English. So, we had a small group of Arabic-speaking GAC members. And we went through the questions. The general sense is there is a limited interest in the program, at least in countries where those who participate in discussion come from. And while they agree that the ASP or the Applicant Support Program offers an excellent opportunity for both financial and non-financial support, they couldn't think of applicants or entities that might be interested and also might qualify for the program.

The other point that was raised regarding the lack of any success story for a TLD from the region from the last round, which also makes the effort of raising awareness more challenging because we can't refer to a regional TLD or local TLD that comes from the region as an ASCII or IDN format. And the other thing that was mentioned was brands could be the sort of type of audience that we should try to target for the Next Round, local brands coming from the region. So, I think that's it. But if I missed anything, anyone from the group can chime in. Thank you.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Thank you very much, Baher. So, round of applause. Thank you. Spanish-speaking group. Spanish-speaking group. Who's going to

report? A lot of pointing. Jorge. Jorge comes from Switzerland, of all places.

JORGE CANCIO

All right. Okay. So, this is the Spanish-speaking Swiss guy. Yeah, and I've been volunteered to report here. So, we had a very good conversation, I think, with different people from Latin America and, of course, myself as well. And I think one of the issues we discussed was how to spread word about the new program, about this toolkit, about the ASP, there's some work going on already. So, some of the participants in the group have shared it with industry and commerce chambers associations to really have more companies, more private partners being aware of what is happening. Also, the role of civil society was raised as important.

And then we also discussed about what can be or what could be a driver for applying for such top-level domains in the new round. And one of the issues that was discussed that, of course, there are the traditional top-level domain business models where the TLD itself has to be self-financing and there are some challenges to that.

On the other side, we also discussed the possibility of using the top-level domains as a sort of digital public infrastructures that could be perhaps spearheaded by national or public authorities, but based on public-private partnerships. For instance, to boost tourism or to boost some regions or some subnational or even national identities.

I think we mentioned there as well that it's important to reach out, to also look for possibilities of funding amongst other through regional or even worldwide funding possibilities, be it World Bank or other institutions. But I don't know if Tiago or others may want to complete because I didn't really take too many notes. Thank you.

TRACY HACKSHAW

All right. Thank you, Switzerland, for speaking on behalf of the Spanish-speaking Latin American group. Thank you very much. And last but by no means least, the large group of English speakers. So, it looks like Kristy is doing the reporting. Kristy?

KRISTY BUCKLEY

I am, Tracy. Thank you. We couldn't rope anyone into trying to read my chicken scratch over here. So, thank you all for participating in that. So, the first question, I'll just go through some of the highlights of what we heard. Again, haven't seen a ton of interest in terms of potential applicants in respective countries, but they are seeing some business communities active. I asked of the group that was standing over in this area, just a show of hands, how many of you have heard some interest? And I think I counted about eight or so hands, so not an overwhelming amount.

On the second question, what questions are folks getting internally or externally? We heard a lot about interest in geo names, so a good follow-on from this morning's capacity development session. Also, dot brands. Though, interestingly, a number of folks mentioned

that the interest in that seems to be more protective and defensive as opposed to more proactive of how do we promote our geo name or our brand. It's more how do we protect anyone else from getting it. So, that was an interesting twist to hear. And also having some more information around that. So, we talked a little bit about on the third question getting more information about the objection process, for example, or the role of GAC advice.

There were also some questions in relation to the third question about what if an applicant withdraws due to contention set? Do they get a refund? If so, how much of a refund do they receive? There were a number of questions and concerns about the costs, even with the Applicant Support Program, the costs for applying and then long-term running a gTLD are still quite high for many countries. So, those were some of the observations that people were sharing.

In terms of additional information, we identified that having more information about the second string. So, one of the features of the Next Round is that you have an opportunity to do a first choice and second choice in your string. And this is to help ideally reduce the amount of contention sets that we see. But it is also introducing more complexity. So, providing more information to GAC members and the broader community about how that would work may be helpful to prospective applicants as well. More information about refunds, also information about the role of GAC advice and what it means in this process in relation to the Next Round.

We also had some questions about how frequently the frequently asked questions were being updated and added to. So, that's something that we can provide some more information on. And also, folks wanted some more information about the return on investment for potential investors. And that's not something that ICANN org might have information on, but I'm sure folks in the industry might have it. So, it might be something that we can help find with industry partners.

On the last question, how could the GAC or government support outreach to funding institutions? We heard that leveraging the RALOs, so the regional At-Large organizations, could help with greater impact. So, the RALOs are in the best position to advise on the local funding institutions and also to help with synergy. So, identifying potential contention sets in the region before they actually apply so that they can maybe consolidate those and have the best chance at winning that gTLD.

And we also heard that development agencies, it would be helpful to bring those use cases. So, we do have use cases if you open up your internet search and Google or search for ICANN use cases, you'll come up with those, but they're also on the website under resources. A number of folks highlighted the benefit of those and the value of those and encouraged us to continue to develop them. Is there anything that I missed that folks wanted to add from the English group? Okay, thank you.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Thank you very much. So, at the end of our session, I just wanted to take a note that we are not seeing many of our African colleagues from the Francophone region here. So, I want to make sure that that's something that is noted, and maybe we need to do something special for that group going forward to ensure that this effort is not lost going forward. So, that's tossing it back to Chris and Bob to see if that can happen. I understand there's a question in front, is that what you're pointing out?

CHRIS MONDINI

I just wanted to give credit to Senegal, who is represented in our group. We have many more in the Francophonie.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Of course. And they normally come to the GAC meetings and the fact they're not here is a little worrying. Okay, we'll follow up. Thank you. All right, are there any final questions? We're out of time, but are there any final questions or reactions that somebody wants to share before we go? Seeing none. Anything from remote, Bob? Anything on the remote side?

BOB OCHIENG

So from remote, we had a good discussion with the GAC rep from Spain, Ana. I think essentially what has been already echoed by some of the other groups around really intensifying and deepening engagements. I think she reckons that, interestingly, a number of

stakeholder groups at the national level still don't know, are not aware about very many elements of the program.

Our recommendation is an engagement in Spain with our engagement team to at least convene over there. And just have a deep dive with the stakeholders in Spain directly, which obviously Chris and his team, Andrea, will take up for Europe. So, we are already working on that to make that happen. So, that was the only discussion we had remote.

And I guess maybe just an overall comment from me, from I think the questions I hear, is it feels like it makes sense that we will need to distill some of the hot, if I could call them hot, topical areas in the AGB to bring back and just try and give a highlight at a very high level what the AGB say in coalitions, objections. It seems like there are areas that people would like a bit more clarity.

Obviously, you will read the details in the AGB, but it would make sense to have very high-level outlines of what the AGB says about this particular question, because obviously they are covered in much, much detail in the AGB. Chris, I'm not sure you have any final remarks. Otherwise, Tracy, back to you.

TRACY HACKSHAW

All right. Thank you very much. I'd like to thank you all for participating and being so interactive and engaging. This is just the first of our what I would call deep dive capacity development activities into the Next Round. So, you'll be seeing more of these

coming forward, webinars, and in future ICANN meetings where we deep dive into what the GAC's role in the program will be.

So hopefully you'll see more about what you're expected to know, what you're expected to do going forward, including things like early warnings and those kinds of interesting and exciting topics. So look forward for that coming up. And with that, if there's no further interventions, I think we can wrap the session up. Thank you very much. Thanks, everyone. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]