ICANN87 Bali | AGM – GAC Discussion on New gTLDs Next Round (2 of 2)
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JULIA CHARVOLEN

Recording in progress. Welcome to the ICANN87 GAC discussion on next round on Sunday, 18 October, at 09:00 local time. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. During the session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted in the proper form in the Zoom chat. Interpretation for this session will include all six UN languages and Portuguese. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in the Zoom room. Please remember to state your name for the record and the language you will be speaking, in case speaking a language other than English, and please speak at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. I will now leave the floor over to Marco Hogewoning, GAC Vice Chair. Thank you. Over to you.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Thank you, Julia. Good morning, everybody. In case you wonder, did Nico change? Well, our esteemed chair is busy with some other board meetings, so he asked us to take care of you. So I'll be guiding you through this session together with Jorge and Tracy. More next round and more discussions, probably. We're here to look at the

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Applicant Support Program. So happy also to be joined with some familiar faces from ICANN org that will talk us through some of the ASP program, what happened. I'm sure we have some statistics. Then Tracy and Thiago, two of the gTLD topic leads, will talk you through what our view is and what are the next steps. So again, to reiterate my part here, I'm also one of the new gTLD leads together with Tracy, Thiago, Ken-Ying, and Rida. If there's any point you want to talk to us about next round, if you have any topics you would like to address, any questions, please do come and find us. If not this meeting, we can, of course, also look at what we can program in Lisbon or do intersessionally. With that, welcome to the stage, Kristy Buckley. I think I'm going to give it to you then.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

Many thanks, Marco, and good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining this session. I am Kristy Buckley, and I serve as the owner of the Applicant Support Program, as well as the deputy lead for the New gTLD Program. I'm joined here on stage by my colleagues, Marika Konings, the lead of the New gTLD Program, and Jared Erwin, the co-lead for the gTLD application processing. Today, I'll be providing a status update on the Applicant Support Program, or ASP. Next slide, please.

So this outlines the presentation agenda for today. We'll provide results of the Applicant Support Program, as well as some insights on the supported applicants that are participating in the 2026 round so far, as well as updates on the continuous monitoring and

evaluation efforts, and ongoing support for applicants. And I believe we'll leave some time for questions, and then the GAC topic co-leads will go into their questions and discussion as well. Next slide, please. If we have it. Oh, I just can't see it. Okay.

So as the GAC will recall, Applicant Support Program, or ASP, is a subprogram of the New gTLD Program. The ASP opened for applications in November of 2024 for 13 months until December of 2025. This section of the presentation focuses on the results of the Applicant Support Program, or ASP. So the ASP received 78 applications, and of those, 56 qualified for support. The remaining submitted applications were either not eligible, withdrawn by the applicant, or terminated because the applicant was unresponsive or the application remained incomplete when the application system closed. With regard to the terminated applications that you see here, I just want to note that ICANN made multiple attempts through different communication channels to reach applicants with outstanding actions, but did not receive any responses to those. Next slide, please.

So this slide is maybe a more user-friendly version of the table that we have on the website. It shows a breakdown of the regional participation in the Applicant Support Program from the 56 applicants that qualified for support. The final numbers tell us where applicants came from, but they don't necessarily explain why participation differed among the regions. As the GAC is aware, ICANN's Global Stakeholder Engagement team conducted extensive outreach, often in collaboration with GAC and other

ICANN community members. So we really appreciated all the efforts that you and your colleagues put into raising awareness about this program. We know that understanding the factors that influence applicants' awareness, their application initiation, whether or not they submitted, and whether or not they qualified, that's all part of the continuous monitoring and evaluation work that's underway, and I'll present a bit more on that shortly. Next slide, please.

Beyond the Applicant Support Program numbers, now that the ASP application processing phase is complete, our primary focus has shifted to the supported applicants that ultimately did apply for a gTLD, and making sure that we're offering capacity development resources to support them through that applicant journey. Next slide, please.

So as you may recall, I just mentioned we had 56 qualify for support, and of those, 51 submitted a gTLD application. This was a 91% participation rate in the New gTLD Program from those applicants that qualified for support. These two tables that you see show the breakdown of those 51 supported gTLD applicants by region and then by entity type. Within each table, you'll see the three columns. First, how many qualified for support, how many ultimately applied for a gTLD, and then the third shows the difference between those two. So for example, in Asia Pacific, 30 qualified for support, 28 applied for a gTLD, and that means that two qualified and did not apply. The next section covers our efforts to engage all ASP and supported applicants in our continuous

monitoring and evaluation efforts so that we can better understand the factors that informed applicants' decisions not to proceed. Next slide, please.

As the team presented yesterday, you can view applications submitted by supported applicants in the Application and Publication Statistics website, known as APS, and not to be confused with ASP. We like to make acronyms confusingly similar sometimes. So you can go to that website and filter by the application label to applicant support, as you see here on the screen. We've also included the link to the APS, where you can look at applications there. Next slide, please.

So this slide shows the initial participation insights from the Reveal Day data that was just published. So as I mentioned, 91% of applicants that qualified ultimately went on to submit an application. We do know that for five applicants that qualified, it didn't necessarily result in submitting a gTLD application, and we want to better understand what's behind that. When we look at the ASP results and the Reveal Day data, we see the changes in participation by region or entity type, but we don't yet know the reasons behind those changes until we hear feedback from applicants via evaluation surveys that are being administered currently. What we also know is with regard to initial contention, so this means applicants that applied for the same gTLD, 32 supported applicants are in contention. Eleven of those have an eligible replacement string, which means that the string that they can choose to move forward and get out of contention if they so

choose in this period of the string replacement period we're in now. We're going to continue tracking those applicants and provide applicant readiness as well as capacity development materials and resources. Those are geared towards upcoming milestones, the options that supported applicants may have available, and the requirements to do so. What we're still learning is why some applicants chose not to proceed, what factors the supported applicants are facing as they progress in the evaluation process. So for example, if they're in contention without a replacement string, ensuring that they have information about the bid credit available for participating in an auction. Lastly, we want to look at the findings from the surveys to inform our ongoing capacity development efforts. Next slide, please.

As I mentioned previously, this section covers continuous monitoring and evaluation. And because we love acronyms at ICANN, we call it ASP CME. Next slide, please. So what's the policy basis for this? We have the GNSO guidance process that was tasked with defining metrics of success for ASP. The GGP recommended the evaluation explore the entire applicant journey, so not just the end results and not just how many qualified or how many submitted. So that whole journey includes evaluating the outreach and communications efforts, the utility of information and resources provided, such as pro bono service providers, looking at applicant education and their understanding, as well as their experience submitting an application, and the degree to which supported applicants ultimately participated and then ultimately

got to delegation. Lastly, the GGP wants us to look at how many are still in business three years after delegation. The next slide shows the primary indicator that the GGP offered for determining success for ASP. So as you can see here, they did recommend a longer-term view for assessing the success of the program. Not just how many applied, not just how many qualified or how many ultimately applied for a gTLD, but how many were successfully delegated. The GGP here set a floor of 10, or 0.5%. So at this stage, while we can't know the result until the gTLD applicants start to get to delegation, in the meantime, we do have some results from continuous monitoring surveys to share from that first applicant survey on the next slide.

So based on the GGP recs, our approach to evaluating—I think this slide works. Okay. The next slide shows the evaluation results. This is just going into the framework for evaluation. So our approach to evaluation includes an external researcher that developed an evaluation framework that includes applicant surveys for different stages of the applicant journey. And per those GGP recs, it covers outreach and communication efforts, the applicant's experience from the application process and system, the financial and non-financial support available, and lastly, understanding their experience as they progress through the New gTLD Program. To collect this data, we're primarily using online surveys to applicants as well as pro bono service providers. We also did hold focus groups. However, only one applicant participated in that. So if you know any supported applicants, please encourage them to

participate in the surveys that we're administering so we can get that data. And then if we go on to the next slide, I can share the results of that first survey.

So our first survey was focused on the awareness, outreach, communications, and engagement efforts. This is, again, per the GNSO guidance process recommendation that ICANN assess this. This slide summarizes the key findings from that. So on a five-point scale, five being high across 35 respondents, the utility of the ASP website was rated 4.5. The information provided to help explain eligibility for ASP and how to apply was rated 4.2, and 51% reported no engagement barriers. Of course, we do want to dig into that last one a bit to understand any engagement barriers that they may have anticipated. The immediate next steps are to issue a survey to understand supported applicants' experience in applying for a gTLD and using the resources available. We want to understand why some that qualified ultimately didn't proceed, and use this information to track progression and inform ongoing capacity development resources that we're developing going forward. Next slide, please.

This next section focuses on ongoing support available for supported applicants. Next slide. So in addition to the 75% discount on the base gTLD evaluation fee, they will receive the same 75% discount on other eligible conditional evaluation fees, as you see here on the left. If a supported applicant is in contention and proceeds to an auction, they can receive a bid credit of up to 35%. This means that for the purposes of determining the auction

winner, a supported applicant's bid is increased by 35% without increasing the amount they would actually pay.

INTERPRETER Slow down.

KRISTY BUCKLEY Okay, thank you. I'll slow down, sorry. So for example, a supported applicant bidding $100, 000 would have an effective bid of $135, 000, but would only pay the $100, 000 if they were successful in the auction. As you see here on the right, after delegation, supported applicants that become ROs, registry operators, have a phased reduction in the base registry agreement fees. Next slide, please.

So we note here that supported applicants remain subject to the applicable evaluation, objection, contention resolution, and other requirements of the New gTLD Program. Other applicant costs may still arise, including costs associated with objections and appeals, and the capacity development efforts will help applicants anticipate these requirements and identify available resources. One of the things that I wanted to call out on this slide is another activity that we're exploring as part of capacity development, which is the opportunity for supported applicants to participate in ICANN88. So we have just sent an expression of interest to supported applicants to nominate one stakeholder that's interested in participating in the next ICANN meeting. One of our capacity development objectives is to help supported applicants

become more familiar with the ICANN community and to build connections with the people and organizations that can be valuable as they progress through the New gTLD Program and potentially become registry operators. We're hoping that participation in the ICANN meeting can provide an opportunity to learn more about ICANN's multistakeholder model, provide an opportunity to engage with relevant community stakeholder groups, and to connect with experienced members of the DNS industry. As I mentioned, we're currently assessing the level of interest to inform next steps in planning, in developing the curriculum for supported applicants at ICANN88. Next slide, please.

So just to quickly recap. Sorry, the next slide just does a couple of key takeaways. And I do want to open it up for questions and discussion. But before I forget, I did want to highlight that we do have a New gTLD Program booth, which is at level one on the way to the entrance to the Westin Hotel. And if you stop by there and you ask us a question, you'll be eligible to get one of these nifty water bottles. So please stop by and say hello. We'd love to see you and hear what questions you have. And with that, I think I'll turn it over to Tracy and Marco to facilitate any questions and discussion. Thank you so much.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you, Kristy. Are there any questions related to the content just presented? Otherwise, I would like to pass it on to Tracy to lead

us into the discussion. I see none. So thank you. Your information was very clear, Kristy. Tracy, you want to take us through?

TRACY HACKSHAW Thank you very much, Marco. Tracy Hackshaw here for the UPU. So before we begin—

MARCO HOGEWONING I have Thiago on the queue. Thiago, do you want to share something?

THIAGO DAL-TOE Okay. Thank you. Thiago Dal-Toe, Colombia, for the record. Kristy, I wanted to ask you two things. Number one, have you guys been able to determine why some of the regions have had very low participation in the ASP program? And number two, is there any indication why there is a need to, I guess, support participation from ASP participants in ICANN meetings? Are they not here already? Are they not part of the community? Thank you.

KRISTY BUCKLEY Thanks for that, Thiago. With regards to your first question, I know that even looking at the application statistics for which regions and which applicants were applying to the Applicant Support Program while it was open, there was a lot of discussion about the regional participation and how to increase that. I know there were concerted efforts in your region, Latin America in particular, and

the Caribbean, to raise awareness and gain interest. That was a collaboration between our communications team, our Global Stakeholder Engagement team, and members and leaders within the GAC, and governments as well. In terms of the reasons behind that, it's probably worth some research in market and industry in those regions and whether there are any challenges or barriers to that or just there's different areas of interest, perhaps. At this point, it's a little bit difficult to speculate on. I would look to our Global Stakeholder Engagement colleagues that are in the region to share any insights, and also, of course, our GAC members that are in the region that may have any insights on why that might be and if there are any changes that we may want to consider to future rounds of the program, not just ASP, but the New gTLD Program, to make that more of interest or accessible to others.

On your second question, so we're opening it up for supported applicants to participate in ICANN88. Of course, ICANN meetings are open. They're public. Anyone can join. But this would provide travel support to supported applicants to be able to come, and also a curriculum for them to follow. So maybe some of you are familiar with the ICANN Fellowship Program. So fellows come to the meeting, they're supported travelers, and they have a detailed curriculum that they follow for the week. So we'd be looking at creating something similar, but for supported applicants. They would probably follow aspects of the fellowship program, but then there would be more tailored sessions and resources focused on the New gTLD Program and preparing them to hopefully become

ICANN community members. Does that answer your questions? Okay, thanks.

MARCO HOGEWONING: Thank you, Kristy. Meanwhile, another question, I guess. I have two now. Okay. Giacomo, you're first in the queue. Giacomo, WBU.

GIACOMO MAZZONE: Yes, thank you for the floor. My question is, having seen the overall results of this round, we see that there is a lot still to do in order to create some new applicants. And probably, I have the impression, and I think that this is shared also by Kristy, that the time in order to grow up applicants is not enough. Probably we need to think to a long-term project. Will you do any recommendation to us at the end of this process in order how to improve for the future? Because the overall results, the diversity of the applications are not there this time. So we need to do something different for the next.

KRISTY BUCKLEY: Thank you for that, Giacomo. So the results of the continuous monitoring and evaluation efforts for the Applicant Support Program, we're certainly happy to share those. We're certainly happy to hear GAC member insights on what would be potential changes or improvements, especially for raising awareness and interest in the program. And one of the things that we're already doing now that we've just completed the ASP application processing is just starting to document lessons learned or any

insights from that that may inform future iterations of the program. In terms of the broader gTLD program, maybe Marika wants to speak to any potential changes and again, maybe opportunities for collaboration, both within the ICANN community and potentially beyond that. As you mentioned, that longer-term runway that people may need to really build their capacity to effectively participate in the program. Yeah. Marika.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks, Kristy. This is Marika, and if I may add, of course, I think we always want to look at how can we do better, more, bring in more diversity. But I think it's also important to look at, of course, geographic diversity is not the only measure of diversity. Of course, an important one, and definitely want to look at how can we improve in that area. But I also want to recognize, if we look at ASP, in 2012, we had three applicants, of which only one qualified. Now that number is 50 times more. I think we also need to recognize that's already a major achievement. Can we do more? Can we do better? Obviously, and that's also what I said yesterday. This is not a one-off. This is not just this time we're doing ASP and only this time we're doing a round. This is a continuous effort that we're all together working on. And of course, as we do that, we'll look at what are the areas where we can do more, what should we do different. And I think that's why we're really looking as well at the partnership with the GAC, because of course, you're all in your countries. You probably have a much better view of what is preventing applicants or entities from applying. And as I discussed

yesterday, it's not only awareness that will convince someone to apply. There are many other factors that come into play. So think the dialogue and conversation on what role does ICANN play in that, what role do you play in that, what role do other organizations play in that? Because I think we're all aiming for the same goal and objective here.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you. Christine?

CHRISTINE ARIDA Thank you, Christine Arida from Egypt, for the record. So just a question, and maybe this is something that I missed in the discussion. The applications that came from the participants to the ASP that came from underserved regions, is there a way to make sure that they are actually, especially those that did make it to the new round successfully, that they do actually serve and represent those communities of underserved, or is this not something that was taken into discussion?

KRISTY BUCKLEY Thank you for the question. So to qualify for support, there are a number of criteria, including financial need, financial viability, and being one of five eligible entity types. Those eligible entity types, you're going to test my memory here, are nonprofit or charitable organizations, small businesses from developing economies, Indigenous organizations, that includes Indigenous small

businesses as well as... What am I missing here? I think that's all of them. So to qualify from a small business from a developing economy, we did look at not just where the applicant is incorporated, but in fact that over 50% of their owners or shareholders reside in that place. This will be part of ongoing eligibility checks. So before supported applicants are eligible to receive the next financial benefit, whether that's a discount on a conditional evaluation fee or the bid credit to participate in an ICANN auction or the reduced registry agreement fees, we will check the eligibility of those supported applicants to make sure that the conditions under which they qualified for support remain. So I hope that answers your question. Okay, thanks.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you, Kristy. Giacomo, your old hand. I'm going to use a bit of my discretion as a chairperson. Erin, one of the ASP applicants in the room. So as a courtesy, and you're part of this discussion as well, so please go ahead.

ERIN Thank you very much. So Erin for. Meow, for the record. I'm just going to quote myself in chat. As an ASP applicant who is here, I'd like to pick up on Thiago's second question and also personally comment, or comment rather. We would have liked a more explicit invitation to ICANN86, to ICANN87. It is very good to hear that ICANN88 has that goal, and also, or at least rather, a clear indication that this is our community to engage with, which we did

	miss a bit in advance before coming here. I would also like to add to that, that we are very open to engage with both ICANN Board and all other interested parties as well as the GAC for future progress in these kind of situations. Thank you.
KRISTY BUCKLEY	Thanks for the comment.
MARCO HOGEWONING	Thank you. Giacomo, just to double-check, old hand, new hand?
GIACOMO MAZZONE	Old hand. I put a comment in the chat.
MARCO HOGEWONING	Okay, thank you. In which case, I guess, Tracy, back to you.
TRACY HACKSHAW	Thank you, and there's going to be another opportunity for questions after these few slides. So again, Tracy Hackshaw, UPU, along with my colleague, Thiago. We prepared a few slides to lead the discussion that has already begun. But before I begin, I want to just thank ICANN org, the Board, and all GAC colleagues who contributed to this ASP process and ensuring its success. As you said, it's 51 applications, which is significantly more than three. So that's good. But we do have some observations that we could probably make going forward. So I see we have lost the

presentation. So I'm not sure what's happening because I can't see it.

KRISTY BUCKLEY They're behind you.

TRACY HACKSHAW Okay, yeah, so I have to—

KRISTY BUCKLEY Eyes in the back of your head.

TRACY HACKSHAW All right. So in terms of the GAC engagement, you would recall that we prepared several elements of advice. And for those who are familiar with the process, you'll recall that we had discussions with the Board on the GAC advice that was prepared on ASP in particular. As a matter of fact, thanks, we would have seen a situation where there was the Board actually invoking the bylaw process for some aspects of that advice, and we had some compromise decisions. So it's quite comprehensive, as you can see from ICANN77, 10 meetings ago to now, the GAC's involvement in this process. You would agree that we have taken a lot of interest, and we are now at a stage where we'd like to proceed with the review. Next slide, please.

So just to reiterate some of the points that Kristy made, but probably from a GAC filter. So not wanting to be negative, but just

look at the other side of this. We do note that there are, as Kristy said, 15 terminated applications as incomplete. We probably want to look at what's happening with those terminations, as she said that they're trying to get some understanding through surveys as to why those were incomplete. But again, that is a substantial number of the submitted applications that did not make it through. And again, following that, in Reveal Day, we found out that five did not complete the actual application process for the gTLD, for the string or strings. So again, a deep dive into what's happening there will be interesting. And of course, there's a possibility that we raise that maybe there's an issue with the fee reduction. As you recall, we talked about 75% being maybe not optimal and going to at least the 85%, and that may have been a critical hurdle for countries with limited resources. Next slide.

And again, I know geographic is only one indicator, but it is a very important indicator for the GAC, and we are the GAC here. So we do would like to make that observation that in terms of the ASP and overall in North America and Europe, we see they have captured about 30% of all of the ASP grants, and that sort of correlates to even more an interesting figure that it is about 85% of all the gTLD applications coming from North America and Europe. So this round may not have achieved the diversification issue that we attempted to look at from the outset. When we look at Africa, we see there were seven approved and three terminated. And in terms of the overall total, I think the figure is only 16, which is less than 1% globally went through or been applied for. And we come back to

the LAC region where only one approved ASP application and 11 in total for the next round itself, which is again, less than 1%. Next slide, please.

So in terms of looking at the outreach, capacity building, and technical assistance, and for colleagues who are aware about this, you know the GAC was very sort of insistent on this, improving this, and looking at this more targeted work in these areas and getting some additional work, and we're happy that ICANN listened to us. But again, we're trying to see how useful or how effective and effective were the tools that were there, and we saw some survey results coming out. The 51% number is something that we need to look at in particular, because that's, on the one hand, half, but on the other hand, it's also half. So that means that about 50% of the folks, there were barriers to their participating. We don't know what that was yet. And despite our constant feedback, including advice regarding this particular issue, we see there was no operational mechanism to establish connections with, or matchmaking between underserved applicants with development finance institutions, which we believe might have assisted with this, with microfinancing, et cetera, to cover that 25% differential. So we think that's something to take a look at going forward. And we also need to take a look at how effectively the RSP pre-evaluation program paired with the ASP candidates to prevent the possibility of technical and contractual drop-offs, which we don't know as yet if that was in fact the reason for the five or so applicants who haven't proceeded forward. Next slide.

And now looking ahead, we would like to, as Kristy again said, the surveys that are being done or have been done, it'll be really useful to take a look at those results in a comprehensive way, especially the five or so non-applicants that were already approved. But as I said before, the 15 terminated, and then originally the 99 or so that didn't actually continue with the process at the outset. So how do we understand how we could make it even more successful? And that's the way I'd like to phrase it. And in particular, again, with the capacity development that she spoke about, but how do we safeguard the existing 51 submitted applications? We saw already there are several in contention set. It's about 21, I think, if you subtract the 11 that have replacement strings. So about 20 of those are going to be in a contention set going forward, and how do we find a way to actively support them with pro bono legal support, technical support, et cetera, going forward in the string contention and objections period? We believe that we should have some reforms that are institutionalized for future rounds, and in particular, have a look at the outreach and the LAC and Africa regional strategic plans and to realign the outreach with those plans. Establish and concretize the DFI financial matchmaking and the tiered fee waivers. Again, we spoke about that in great detail, even to the extent of the Board going ahead with looking at the 85%, but not proceeding with it eventually, and having this all done prior to the application windows opening. So we need to have this really set and put together and not be in flux, so that there's some predictability with how applicants can proceed, both with the perceived fee or what the fee actually will be, and the support that

can come in from outside the traditional financial environment in the development finance. Next slide.

So for the discussion, again, that we want to continue with. So there's some questions we are posing to the GAC. So question one, so how can the GAC assist ICANN org with ensuring the capture of empirical exit data from all or most of the approved and incomplete ASP applicants that failed to proceed? What immediate non-financial and technical safeguards are needed to help the 51 supported applications survive objections, contention, and contracting? And how should outreach, pro bono coaching, and DFI financial matchmaking be structured to address the severe underrepresentation of applications from LAC, only one, and Africa, seven, going forward? So I think I wanted to kick off the discussion, which has already begun, with these questions and see what the GAC has to say on this. My colleague Thiago, I think, might want to add some points here. So Thiago.

THIAGO DAL-TOE Thank you, Tracy. Thiago Dal-Toe, Colombia, for the record. One of the first things here that we mentioned when we were preparing this with Tracy was to actually show all of the hard work that we here at the GAC have done in order to support the ASP and expand the participation. I do want to call on specific colleagues that have participated from Argentina, Gabriela, and from the UK, being Rose or Nigel, that helped out in a lot of the efforts, obviously with the leadership of Tracy. But I also want to thank ICANN org for having

heard and worked with us in the implementation of this program. In terms of the low participation of some of the regions, especially with the LAC region, it came as a surprise, for example, that the only application actually comes from Colombia. And rather, I would like to claim responsibility for it or having helped, but I'm afraid I cannot because I do not know who the applicant is. But I do call on the applicants that have applied for the ASP to reach out to their GAC representatives and see how we can help them in some of the points that Tracy has put in, being on pro bono coaching, outreach, and financial opportunities. So I do want to hear our GAC colleagues, and especially the new participants, that they can see the work that we have done. And I'm very proud actually of the work that we've done in preparing and supporting this program. And I do want to hear our colleagues on what are some of the ideas that they have for a new program. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you, Tracy, Thiago. The floor is yours. Any comments, thoughts, questions to the answers here? Other questions? Suggestions how to take this forward? We have these applicants now. Need to guide them through, get them landed, get them contracted. I'm happy to hear from you. Jorge, you are never shy to this. Okay, I see a queue building now. Sorry. CTU, Nigel.

NIGEL CASSIMIRE Thank you very much, Marco, and good morning to everyone. Nigel Cassimire from the CTU speaking. I think Tracy posed some

reasonable questions there. I don't know that we're in a position to make too many conclusions at present. I think I personally would like to see some of the data from the proposed surveys of persons who didn't complete their applications, and the ones who didn't even get their applications in after having been approved as well. Having said all that, though, I do see some improvement from last time. But it's clear, as I think it was Giacomo said earlier, that we do have a long way to go to get some better results from the underserved communities. We see, for example, that the initially estimated maximum discount was up to 85%, but based, I guess, on the good results in terms of the outreach, the 4.5s and the 4.2s and so on that Kristy mentioned, maybe that helped to get the number of applicants up above 50, the eventual applicants up above 50. But the qualified applicants was higher than that, and the number that it reached caused the maximum discount to move down from 85% to 75%. So that would have impacted maybe some of the people who planned to apply. Because if you plan to apply and you're looking for funding on an assumption of 85% and it turns out to be 75%, it might have impacted your ability to complete the application. But all of this is the type of data we would want to collect based on the surveys that are proposed, and I think we would want to see that. So again, there's been a little progress, but clearly there is a long way for us to go still. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you, Nigel. Unless anybody wants to respond, then my queue right now was, Kristy, I see you on the queue. You want to respond to Nigel, or...?

KRISTY BUCKLEY Sure. Just briefly, I've heard a couple of references to wanting to see the survey results, and we are more than happy to share those with you. One of the dependencies we have, however, is supported applicants actually filling out the surveys. So we can send them, we can send reminders and requests, but we would very much look for GAC member support if you do know any supported applicants or folks that applied to the Applicant Support Program but ultimately didn't qualify or ultimately didn't proceed with an application to encourage them to participate in the surveys. We do have it in the ASP handbook and the terms and conditions. It says a condition of participating in this program is that you're agreeing also to participate in the research, but of course, there's only so much we can do there. So very much appreciate any support from the GAC we can get in terms of helping encourage folks to participate in those so that we can then share the survey results and use that for further insights in the program. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you, Kristy. Then WBU, Giacomo, you're next.

GIACOMO MAZZONE

Thank you again for the floor. I think that what has been presented by Tracy is very useful as a reflection for the future. I think that the experience of this time gives us the—and I can add a personal detail. I tried to convince many potential bidders to apply, and only one out of 10 that I tried to convince applied at the end. And so I know why and where most of this potential application aborted. I think that we need to have a proactive approach. Based on the results of this time, we need to identify which are the potential bidders that exist, especially in the underrepresented regions, and try to go to talk with them and convince them to prepare an application for the future and to support them, having a proactive approach. You cannot approach them just a few months before when the launch of the next round will be announced and try to convince them, because then the magnitude of the problem that they have to solve, especially where there is not enough infrastructure, there is not a landscape that helps them, is so big that many of them will be discouraged. So we need to pass from our current approach to a proactive selecting, scouting, and nurturing potential bidders for the future.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Yes. Thank you very much. I know time is running out, so I do want to see if there are more questions coming in. But to respond to both Giacomo and Nigel and maybe even others who have spoken before, maybe one of the things that we could start talking about is requesting some sort of review. We know there's some GAC communication on that previously, like a formal review of the

program, and not in a policy way, but maybe a strict review. I know that the Review of Reviews situation might allow this to happen, and maybe I'm looking to Manal, who might want to weigh in on this, whether this qualifies in some way for one of the reviews that might be considered. I know it was discussed in the Review of Reviews that the round itself might be reviewed, but maybe the ASP itself could be one of those areas, if not another way of reviewing the program. But maybe this is something we could look at because instead of trying to pick at things all over the place, it may be time for a structured review, not structural, a structured review of it rapidly, as opposed to having it wait until another policy round kicks in. And I'm going to call upon Manal maybe to weigh in if they have any thoughts on that, given the Review of Reviews process. Is this possible, you think, at this time?

MANAL ISMAIL I think it's hard to decide now. It needs to go through the group itself. But thank you for flagging, Tracy. We'll take it into consideration. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Yeah. Thank you, Manal. Meanwhile, got a bit of queue building. Giacomo, just double-check, old hand or new hand? I guess it's an old hand, so I'll yield to Peru, Cielo.

CORAL DE CIELO CANO GALLARDO: Thank you, Chair. Thank you to the colleagues for the work and perspective shared today. Peru would like to be more involved in the Applicant Support Program. The facts that were shown in the presentation just before, and the survey, will help us to understand why rather than assume outreach alone is the answer. In that matter, Peru would welcome working with ICANN and the GAC to reach potential applicants early, explain eligibility with likely costs, and connect them with the pro bono technical and legal help and possible financing. We would also like to help identify barriers in our region so that support for future rounds is clear before the application window opens. In that matter, I will contact the previous participants, Thiago principally, that have more experience in the group. I would put my more efforts to do in this program in Peru. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING: Thank you, Peru. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland.

JORGE CANCIO: Thank you, Marco. So Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record. I was wondering whether in this review or the work we do to assess the rate of success of the ASP, which of course is much better than in the 2012 round, which was a complete disaster, so it was more or less good to improve on a complete disaster, we would also look not only to the barriers, which is very important, but we would look into the structural reasons that create a demand for such a string. So what are the business cases or the business cases in the widest

sense, also for communities, for geo-TLDs, for public authorities to want to wish for a TLD? And so we avoid looking at the situation only as a problem of barriers, but what are really then the reasons that would push you to have a TLD? And then, based on that, we could tailor the measures perhaps even better to see what is the delta we have to overcome so that that demand can be met. So I hope I'm making my case clear. But if we understand that there is already a dormant demand and there are just barriers, we are maybe missing what the real cases are, and the real cases might be different in underserved regions than in Global North countries. So thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you. I have India on the queue, and if that's all, then I suggest we listen to India, and then I'm going to closely wrap up as we're three minutes before the end of the session. India, Santosh, you have the floor.

SUSHIL PAL Sorry, I'm Sushil from India. My question is not with regard to the ASP program. Is that okay? Okay. Thank you. I think the ASP program has already happened, and there's a time that we'll be confirming the strings and all very soon. And there are many other applicant strings which have been applied, which have potential ramifications for the public services. I think this point was raised yesterday as well. Given the potential impact it may have on most of the government, we think that we should have a separate

session on this. I hope we'll be discussing this on Tuesday. If that is the case, then we'll hold the comment for that discussion for sure.

MARCO HOGEWONING Yes. Thank you. That is the plan. We still have another hour scheduled on Tuesday in which we can further discuss the current status of applicants and strings. Manal, Egypt, very quickly.

MANAL ISMAIL Yeah, just in one word, again, back to Tracy's question on the applicant support review, I think the on-demand remains to be an option. So this could be one option as well. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you. That's good to hear then. I think any final comments from you, Tracy? Then I once again would like to thank Kristy and, of course, Marika and everybody else, and also your whole team. I mean, throughout the whole ASP, we've been working a lot together. Still great to see 51 applications. There's always more to be desired, but I think it's a wonderful job, so thank you for ICANN org. With that, I'm quickly going to look. Of course, we now have a coffee break, and we will be back at 10:30 AM for, strangely enough, not new gTLDs. We're going to be talking about the WHOIS and data registration issues. Another very important topic for the GAC. Enjoy your coffee. Be back here at 10:30 AM. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]