
ICANN76 | Prep Week – Subsequent Procedures Operational Design Phase Status Update
Wednesday, March 1, 2023 - 16:30 to 17:30 CUN

JUSTIN HO: Hello and welcome to the subsequent procedures operational design phase status update session. My name is Justin Ho and I am a remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior. During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Participants may access interpretation via the Zoom toolbar. All are welcome to use the chat. Any message sent by a panelist or a standard attendee to another standard attendee will also be seen by the session's host, cohosts and other panelists. With that, I will hand the floor over to Nanig Mahranian.

NANIG MEHRANIAN: Thank you, Justin. Next slide, please. Thank you. Hello and welcome and thank you for joining the new gTLD subsequent procedures post-operational design phase ODP status update session. As Justin mentioned, my name is Nanig Mehranian and I'm the program manager for subsequent procedures or SubPro.

We are happy to share with you some updates as it relates to SubPro. Since the operational design assessment, the ODA, was delivered to the Board back in December. We will also provide an update on the anticipated next steps. As such, we hope you do find today's session to be informative. In terms of what we will be covering today, I will provide a brief recap on subsequent procedures as well as the operational

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design phase efforts. Karen Lentz will provide an overview of the operational design assessment—ODA—results. Various members of the team will go over the work ICANN Org is currently leading. Chris Bare will provide a preview of what to expect at ICANN 76. And lastly, there will be a Q&A session towards the end of this call. Next slide please. Thank you.

To provide a brief recap, in December of 2015, The Generic Name Supporting Organization—the GNSO Council—initiated a policy development process—PDP—and chartered the new gTLD subsequent procedures working group with the task to develop, where needed, new policy principles, recommendations and implementation guidance to clarify, amend or replace the existing elements from the 2012 round.

In early 2021, the subsequent procedures PDP working group issued their final report. The SubPro final report was the culmination of five years of work and contains around 300 affirmations, recommendations and implementation guidance that is collectively referred to as the final report outputs. In March of 2021, the GNSO Council transmitted its recommendations report to the ICANN Board following the Council's approval of the final recommendations. Next slide please.

Due to the level of complexity and the fact that these recommendations will have a significant Board-wide impact on implementation, the ICANN Board requested that Org put resources in place to conduct an ODP within a set timeframe. Additionally, the Board authorized funding of up to \$9 million dollars to fund the ODP.

The objective of the SubPro operational design phase was to perform an assessment of the operational impact on the implementation of the GNSO Council policy recommendations. This was done in order to help facilitate the Board's determination on whether the policy recommendations are in the best interest of the ICANN community or ICANN. The ODP also supported ICANN Org's consultation with the community to solicit feedback on the assumptions, facts and figures that underpin ICANN Org's ODP assessment. Next slide please.

As such, the SubPro operational design phase was launched January of 2022 and the SubPro team worked diligently over the course of the year to deliver the ODA to the Board on 12 December 2022. Org has been working to support the Board in its determination of the recommendations since.

We anticipate a Board decision on the majority of the recommendations at ICANN 76. Additionally, Org anticipates Board direction to initiate implementation on the approved recommendations shortly thereafter. The remainder of the recommendations, those that will remain pending after ICANN 76 are complex in nature and will require additional discussions. Therefore, you will note that we expect to have parallel implementation efforts on the approved recommendations, as well as Board consideration efforts on the pending recommendations. Nevertheless, the Board anticipates timely decision on the pending recommendations, that is within a set timetable so as not to delay other implementation work. Next slide, please. I will turn this over to Karen Lentz to provide an overview of the ODA results.

KAREN LENTZ:

Thank you very much, Nanig, Thank you, everyone, for joining. I think the last webinar we had was when we were sharing the operational design assessment that we delivered to the Board in December and also published in December. So next slide, I'll just sort of refresh everyone's memory quickly on what was in the ODA.

So as Nanig described, there were many types of recommendations and outputs in the final report. As we said in the ODA, we believed that the majority of them were implementable. However, there are a number of ways that these recommendations could be implemented.

The Board in particular was interested in having some information around the costs, and the risks and the timeline around implementation of these recommendations. And so the ODA included a couple of options that were models to help spur that discussion. I think, as we noted at the time, these were not presented in an effort to say that the Board must choose either one or two but to illustrate what the impact is of changing these different variables on the model. For example, we had option one which involved investing in a kind of long-term, large-scale system to be able to process applications in a highly automated way, which would have a higher upfront cost and would also have a longer lead time due to the need to develop that system. There was also a second option that had a smaller upfront investment in a system and anticipated more manual work and also incorporated the idea of trying to manage the uncertainty on volume with establishing a specific batch size for how much processing capacity that Org would be building to. Next slide, please.

And so as I noted, the Board had some discussion around these elements, including what changes in the risks and the costs and the timelines. If you change these different types of variables, for example, how much we invest upfront, versus over time, incrementally, what sorts of processing limits we might have, what type of system, what kind of services we could offer inhouse versus contracting a vendor to do and other items like that.

So the Board met in January to discuss a number of these items from the ODA. And as was shared in a blog by a Tripti Sinha, chair of the Board, the Board asked the Org to provide an alternative that would be variation of option two in terms of managing the costs, but would also take into account the time needed to resolve some of the areas that were still open, both in terms of recommendations where the Board is deferring a decision to have more discussion and also some areas identified where the community was still doing some work that would have an impact. So as I turn it back over to Nanig, the next section of this presentation will talk about what we've been doing since we published the ODA. Back to you now, Nanig.

NANIG MEHRANIAN:

Great, thank you, Karen. As Karen mentioned, we will provide an update on the work completed since the ODA was delivered as well as provide an update on the work ICANN Org is currently leading. Next slide please. So since completion of the ODA, Org conducted a number of webinars to debrief the community on the ODA, namely two community webinars on 14th December. Additionally, the GAC requested a briefing on the ODA and this took place 9th of January.

Org has been supporting the Board on next steps towards a Board decision during the January Board workshop. One full day was dedicated to SubPro. The team has also started pre-planning work on implementation, and we will go over the various components of this work in the next few slides. Lastly, the team has prepared two sessions for ICANN 76, one during prep week, that is today's session, this session, and another during ICANN 76, the main week, we will provide expectations for this a bit later on in this presentation. Next slide please.

With respect to implementation, pre-planning, the team has assessed the implementation phase time estimates somewhere between options one and two as was requested by the Board. We also started some preliminary work to outline objectives, goals by year. We are taking a deeper dive into Financials, the human resource requirements as well as the vendor management expectations in preparation for implementation.

From a project management perspective, the team has also begun development of a possible project structure to include phases of work, Project levels, etc. As well as set a list of preliminary project milestones. Lastly, the team has conducted a preliminary assessment to identify sequencing of the work and dependencies on the completion of work, both internal and external to the project. Next slide, please. I will now turn this over to Shani to provide an update on funding.

SHANI QUIDWAI:

Thank you, Nanig. Hi, everyone. My name is Shani Quidwai from the ICANN finance function. I'll provide a brief overview on the financials so

far, as well as next steps. All of the work that we've been discussing within the ODP was funded by a Board approval in December 2022 of a budget of up to \$9 million for the ODP. Through December, we've used \$7 million of those funds. And we are continuing to work on the project and do further research. We expect to exhaust all of those funds at the end of March, and so in order for the Org to continuing working on this project, a decision is needed. And at ICANN 76, we will be presenting to the Board a funding request for funding essentially to cover from April 2023 to October 2023.

The recommended funding source for this work would be the 2012 new gTLD application fees. This is the same funding source that we used for the ODP. And as far as the work relates to, these funds would be used to start the implementation work for the Board-approved recommendations. This would also provide us the support needed to do further research on some of the key topics, things like IT systems, pending policy recommendations, and program processes.

These funds would essentially get us to ICANN 78. And then at that time, we would have made progress on the overall plan and structure of the program and present another funding request to carry out the next phase of work. So this is the next steps. Thank you.

CHRIS BARE:

Can we go to the next slide, please? My name is Chris Bare and I'll walk you through the next couple slides. I wanted to talk a little bit about the way we intend to approach implementation. One thing to note in the ODA, if you look through there, we talked about having different

streams of activity that would go on during implementation. And given that we've said several times—and I think everyone's heard this many times—there's a lot of work to do. And in order to try to get it into a reasonable timeline, we're going to have to parallel the work to be able to do things basically in parallel.

And one way to do that that we're going to use is to break up the entirety of the work into smaller chunks, smaller pieces, and that's what we're representing here. Now, we don't have all the names of the projects here. But you could imagine, similar to the modules of the AGP in the last round, each of these would be a project that would then have final report topics and recommendations associated with it, they would have processes that we would need to build, systems that would go with it, all of that kind of encapsulated in each of these areas.

So the idea here was to show breaking that apart, which then allows us to work on an area before the entirety is done. But it also allows us to spread them out over time so that we wouldn't have a huge need for resources the entire time. Hopefully, we can have a smaller amount of resources that we can move around between projects as we went along.

The one thing you'll see across the top that goes all the way across are the program support functions, or we also call them program elements. And these are the things that need to exist in the program even once we launched. So you could think that the ability to hire people to do the operations in the future as an ongoing process or an ongoing service, we're going to need to be able to bring people in as well. The communications, the reporting functions, all of those types of things that keep the program running, those are tracked across the top there.

But the main idea here is to see that breakdown so that people can realize, yes, we are thinking about doing things in parallel as much as possible, but also breaking them down into small enough pieces that we can complete them and go on to the next section. Next slide, please.

The other thing you'll note that we talked about in the ODA and I'd just hinted at was those four work streams. So here's an example of what a project might be. And so like application submission and processing. This would be the activities around actually getting an account for the user, putting in your entity, answering the questions in the application, paying your application fee, all those types of things, those would be in this project.

And the policy implementation part, the first stream you see there, that is the part interacting with the IRT, clarifying any questions that might be out there, and actually producing that section of the AGB, that module of the AGB, let's say. And that, of course, is one of the first things that is going to happen. And you'll see references to that in this session.

But additionally, on top of that, we also have the program design. And in simple terms, that's the processes. But any of you who have done process design know that's not necessarily a simple thing to do. There'll be obviously, what the flow of the process is, but which department will be delivering it, what the authority levels that need to be able to make the decisions to process, we'll have escalation paths, will have to figure out SLAs for each department to perform their functions in order to be able to produce an entirety, an application evaluation process that is hopefully not too onerous on anyone, either internally or externally. And of course, there's the infrastructure development. And that's

heavily going to be the IT development of systems. But there could be other tools that we will need to develop that would help us do our work. So you can see that figuring out which processes make sense to put into a system, those would be the decisions that are made here.

And then in operationalization, that's really taking all the pieces that we've built, the processes, the tools themselves, and putting them all together into a cohesive plan of operation that will work. It will also be hiring any operational staff—remember, up to this point, this is all implementation staff. Hiring any operational staff to be able to run the program and getting them trained, and then doing some testing to make sure that it actually does work.

So all four of these steps have to happen for each of those projects. And you can see—don't use this as an exact overlap of time. But the idea being that we would actually be doing each of those streams, very many of them simultaneously throughout and kind of going back and forth across them. Right, thank you. Let's go on to the next slide, which I believe Lars is covering.

LARS HOFFMANN:

That's right. Thank you, Chris. Hi, everyone. I'm going to talk you through a little bit of the policy implementation work on this slide and the next and starting off with kind of something that obviously is mentioned in the ODA as well. The interdependencies. Chris just talked about the different implementation strands or streams, had the diagram up how they kind of overlap. And we kind of wanted to reinforce that point, maybe with a couple of examples here.

So you look at something like the application intake system, we pick that out as one example. That's part of the infrastructure design, how we're going to have a system and how exactly we're going to take in applications and what happens with that and what capabilities we need.

In order to design that and to build that, we will need to finalize policy language around some of the areas that are relevant to that. Similarly, we want to hire any vendors, for example, for string similarity evaluation objections, the list goes on, we kind of need to know before we do that what the finalized policy language is. What I mean by that is the finalized language in the applicant guidebook, the AGB—Karen put that into the chat helpfully. In order to then issue an RFP with exactly what we need these vendors to do, selection, contracting [inaudible].

These are not all steps where necessarily one has to be completely completed before the next one can start. However, there are dependencies and certain milestones will have to be hit in order for subsequent commutation procedures to take place. There's also other kinds of dependencies in addition to that which are—this is known for those who are even a little bit [inaudible] when it comes to SubPro, closed generics, applicant support and the IDN EPDP, the closed generics is a discussion that is going on in the community, which may or may not lead to policy development process afterwards. Applicant support, the GNSO Council has launched the GNSO guidance process to provide more guidance on some of the recommendations on this topic, and the IDN EPDP is also working. I believe the timeline at the moment foresees conclusion in April 2024 for their phase two, which if I can make

an editorial comment, probably works very well with the policy implementation.

However, still, these need to be completed in order to finalize the applicant guidebook. Similarly, the last point here about the recommendations, I get to that on the next slide as well, those who have read Tripti's blog would have seen that the Board plans to adopt a lot of recommendations in Cancun. That also means that some will not be adopted. And so those that will be essentially I think will be deemed pending so the Board to the best of my knowledge is not going to not explicitly adopt anything, but essentially consider them at a later stage. And what will happen before then is, I think, continued discussions between the Council and the Board on any concerns that the Board may have. And then subject to the outcome of those discussions, obviously, the Council may elect to amend any of these recommendations before the Board. Up to the Council and to the Board whether that will take place and how. But again, procedurally, presumably this will take some time to resolve. Next slide, please.

So that's a little bit of the work to kind of say, look, while the policy work, I get to this here in a moment, will start, policy implementation work will start after Cancun on those recommendations that the Board adopts, there's still a lot of work out there that needs to be completed before we can actually have all the information that will allow us to draft the complete updated applicant guidebook.

So some of these things, [inaudible] on the slide, Tripti shared a blog a couple of weeks ago about the outcome of the Board workshop saying that large slate of recommendations are expected to be approved in

Cancun. I don't think I'm spoiling too much by saying I think that thinking is still very much applicable.

And as a result, we have started with implementation planning. Well, we started a while ago, the ODA was part of the implementation planning for that matter. And we plan to kind of kick off the policy implementation work formally after Cancun, first step of that [inaudible] NCAP is another dependency. And we will issue a call for volunteers for the IRT after Cancun. Shortly after, I hasten to add, and in parallel, we're also working to have a work plan and some work methodology and preliminary timeline in place for the IRT when they start. And those of you active in the community know better than me probably how long it will take for the call for volunteers to first call, probably open for a couple of weeks. And then [doodling] a call, you do the math.

Preliminary goal, obviously, of the policy implementation is to have the applicant guidebook ready to draft an updated applicant guidebook, which then will go through the usual approval processes, including public comment and eventually Board approval. I'm going to stop here and pass it on to my colleague, Aaron Hickmann, from one Mann to the other, Mann with double N. Please take it away.

AARON HICKMANN:

Thank you, Lars. Next slide, please. Great, thank you. So the next few slides that I'll take you through are going to focus on the applicant support program and registry service provider pre-evaluation program. These two components are being highlighted because they'll be some

of the first components that will need to be developed, as these both would need to be available prior to the application submission period opening.

So first, let's drill a little bit into the applicant support program. This program began in 2012 and offered a fee reduction for qualifying applicants. Within ODA, it found that most of the final report outputs related to applicant support are implementable. However, we were unable to determine an appropriate way for recommendation recommendations 17.2 to be implemented. That recommendation recommended expanding applicant support to cover fees to third parties. So that's beyond the application fee, which was different from 2012.

As mentioned in the Board comment on the draft final report, expanding applicant support beyond just a fee reduction could raise some fiduciary concerns for the Board. It may still be possible to explore ways to implement the intent or spirit of that recommendation however, in consultation with the IRT, so that's a possibility as well.

Lars had mentioned earlier that the GNSO is conducting a guidance process for applicant support to provide some additional guidance. Just wanted to note that we do not believe that implementation will need to wait for that to finish, but rather can begin in parallel as Chris has alluded to, along with the GGP work, and then those outputs can be incorporated as applicable once that effort is finished. Next slide, please. Thank you.

So as I mentioned, this was in 2012, this applicant support program was just created and at the time, the funding was set at \$2 million US dollars for applicants support. In that round, we had three entities that applied for the support. However, only one qualified. So in the ODA, we used the \$2 million as a starting point. And that estimation within the document came up with a figure of about 10 to 15 applicants that could be supported at about an 80% fee reduction at that level of funding. And so this amount of \$2 million US only refers to the costs incurred by ICANN for processing those applications. It's funds that ICANN is not receiving essentially.

The estimate is 10 to 15, as I mentioned, and that's most appropriate here because it's not possible to know the type of application that will be submitted and received. So it's hard to say what the actual costs would be. So it's best to have a range. If the demand exceeds that range, then certainly the level of funding may be reconsidered. Also wanted to note here that that estimate does not include a funding amount for a bid credit or multiplier, should an ICANN auction of last resort be conducted. We need to conduct further research to determine the appropriate mechanism. And that research would be conducted during implementation. And then if there's anything that comes out of the GGP, there may need to be some additional funding for implementing those in that guidance as well. Okay, next slide, please.

Okay, now shifting gears to the registry service provider pre-evaluation. So the final report had included recommendations to create such a process. The outputs from the final report established a process by which a registry service provider can choose to go through a technical

evaluation prior to the application round actually starting. This approach offers some simplicity in the program. So it can actually potentially reduce costs in the future, although we will still need to build it the first time. So the way it's going to work is each RSP would be evaluated once for the service that it provides. And then once they are able to pass through the pre-evaluation program, they would become a pre-approved provider for the next round. And then applicants may optionally select one of the pre-approved providers if they're able to come to business terms and such, include them in their application, and then they would not be subject to further technical evaluation for their application. So in terms of the work that we'll need to do here, obviously, we have a basis to start from in the 2012 round. But the criteria and scoring will need to be updated. Technology has changed a little bit, for example, RDAP, which was not part of the last round.

We also want to make it clear that the RSP preapproval process is has a goal of being able to produce that list of final pre-approved RSPs at least six months prior to the application submission period opening. That should allow applicants and RSPs time to negotiate business terms and relationships and so forth so that they have time to get their applications together.

And then to sort of expand on that a little bit, the idea would be to start the RSP pre-approval process about 18 months before the application submission period opens and then complete six months prior. So it's about a 12-month program which allows people time to apply and get their pre-approval done. With that, I will turn it back over to Chris Bare to continue on.

CHRIS BARE:

Thank you, Aaron. Can we go to the next slide? Outreach and reporting. I forgot we even had this slide. Yes, we wanted to talk a little bit about how we intend to interact going forward. So one of the first things to note is that there is going to be an outreach campaign that our comms team and several other teams are working on to put together global awareness about the program in and of itself. You can see on here we talk about the education campaign, which is one of the things that was criticized the last time that we didn't have enough time or reach to be able to let people know about the program.

There's also targeted information about universal acceptance. I think many of you have heard about the UA Day that's coming up at the end of March. And then the international domain names in general. And as we all know, there were elements of the prioritization topic or the application queuing topic, I should say in the final report, that talked about giving priority to IDNs in certain numbers. So all of that emphasis on IDNs and UA will definitely be part of that.

The comms team will also be leveraging our social media activities and any kind of kind of public relations associated with that as well. So you'll see more of that coming up and spinning up over the course of time as well. What else to note on here?

We do note that the teams that are involved besides comms, obviously, we have the government engagement team and the global stakeholder engagement team, which you should all be aware of. If not, they do have connections with obviously several of our audiences out there and

should be able to hopefully get the message out to the people that need to know.

There's also going to be, given some criticisms we got last time about the applicant support program as well, there's going to be an outreach campaign around applicant support, and also around the registry service provider pre-evaluation program that Aaron just talked about, particularly because those are expected to launch 12 to 18 months before the actual application window does. So we'll need to make sure to get the message out for those so people can be prepared to apply as needed for that.

The other thing to note is as implementation moves forward, we intend to publish status reports similar to what we did with ODP. And as our ability to provide more robust reporting comes out, we'll add that to that. So it'll be iterative, it'll hopefully mature along the way. And we'll figure out what the cadence is once we start implementation, but we will be giving those out on a regular basis. Can we go to the next slide?

Okay. So next, what we expect to happen at ICANN 76. There are several sessions actually about SubPro during ICANN 76 that are being led by various constituencies. The ones we have here are ones related to the Org and the Board specifically. We've got the subsequent procedures issues and next steps, which is on Sunday, March 12, 9:00 AM local time in Cancun. And this is going to be structured as more of a panel discussion. We'll have a couple of the Board members there to help discuss some of what has been going on, the discussions that have been going on about the recommendations in the past couple of months. So you may have seen some questions that the Org raised during the OOP

that went back to the GNSO. You may have seen some issues or topics that were brought up as part of the comments on the final report back in 2021.

There will be discussions on how some of these issues are being approached. And we'll also maybe talk a little bit more about these dependencies or interdependencies that Lars talked about. We really do want to make it clear that a number of activities are reliant on the completion of other ones. And so as long as that idea is clear, and we were able to communicate that, I think that's a big win, for us to be able to adhere to the timeline, whatever timeline was given to us.

The other thing to note on here—and this also Lars talked about, we expect a resolution from the Board on a number of these recommendations during the ICANN 76 meeting. So the ICANN Board meeting is on here. And that's where we expect that to happen. So I would recommend listening in on that too, if you want to hear more about the resolution itself and what's in it.

With that, I believe we are done with our part of the presentation. Next slide is I believe the Q&A? No, we do have more here. Sorry. There are a few links here and you can download this presentation off of the website. So we have some links to the SubPro ODP page, which has all of the information that we supplied to the community over the past year during the ODP. And there's also a couple other links on here if you want to provide feedback. The globalsupport@icann.org email address, you can send queries and questions to them.

Okay. With that, now we're into questions. So what we'll do with questions, I'll go ahead and facilitate and we'll handle obviously people in the queue as well as if there are any questions that we want to answer from the Q&A pod. I see a hand up. I'll go first to Anne. Go ahead.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Many thanks, Chris. I'm a member of the IPC, I'm a nonvoting GNSO Councilor. My question regarding the portions of the SubPro final report that you anticipate will be approved in Cancun is whether that will be [inaudible] IRT because the staff is going to gear up to do work for implementing what the Board has approved, the normal process would be the implementation review team, as I understand it.

CHRIS BEAR: Your audio broke up there for a moment, but as I understood it, you're asking how any of those potential issues might be addressed either through the IRT or through another method. Is that what you're asking?

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: I'm asking the portions of the SubPro final report that the Board is expected to approve in Cancun, will there be the institution of an IRT to go along with that, as would normally be expected?

CHRIS BEAR: I see. Yeah, I believe it was in one of our slides that Lars was talking to about the activities that we expect to have happen once the Board actually gives the resolution. And we were talking about starting a call

for the IRT volunteers to occur soon after the Board resolution. All right.
Lars, go ahead.

LARS HOFFMANN:

Chris, you answered the question very well. An IRT will spin up—I think it's slide 17 or 18. And if you want to go back to take a quick look, so ICANN Org will start the implementation, and the IRT will be spun up to help assist ICANN Org with the details around the meaning and the intent of the recommendations. And we'll start working on updating the applicant guidebook. Thanks.

CHRIS BARE:

Thank you, Lars. Do we have anyone else in the queue to ask a question? If not, are there any of the questions in the Q&A pod that we can address? So I believe we had one initially from Jim Prendergast. How much more money will you be requesting from the Board to complete the ODA process and do we have a response to that? I see Xavier has his hand up.

XAVIER CALVEZ:

Hi, thank you, Chris. Thank you, Jim, for the question. So the Board is, as I think was explained earlier, the Board is going to be provided with a set of decisions within the whole package pertaining to SubPro. That will include a number of different things, among which, the suggestion to—as it approves a number of the recommendations, while others will remain pending, to proceed with starting the implementation of those recommendations that can be started based on that approval, but also

produce an overall project [plan] for the implementation that effectively uses the ODA that's been completed in the recent weeks as the basis to finalize a project plan. And along with that, an envelope of funding that allows to carry out work over the next few months for that implementation work for the recommendations approved for the project plan development and to continue the support of the Board's decision on the remaining recommendation.

So I'm not sharing at the moment the amount that's being put in front of the Board, because the Board has not yet voted on it and therefore it's not yet a reality in quotes. But if we have this conversation in about 10 days from now, it will be a lot easier to be able to have that conversation and then we can be sharing that information. But it's basically what we have put in front of the Board is the amount of expected costs over the next few months only, not the entirety of the implementation plan and the corresponding costs of the entirety of the implementation plan SubPro, only the expected and estimated costs for the next few months to carry us to a complete decision of the Board for all the recommendations, and on the final plan of implementation that will be submitted to the Board by them. So it's what we're calling a bridge funding in quotes between the end of the ODA which is just behind us now and the full implementation once all the recommendations have been adopted by the Board. So as the Board evaluates and adopts, if it does, over the next few days, then we can share that information and explain it further. I apologize that it's all happening live so we do not yet have the ability to share that information as of yet, simply because the Board has not yet weighed on it.

AARON HICKMANN:

Thank you, Xavier. We have another question in the Q&A pod from Jeff Neuman. It's actually I think a couple of questions. One follows up the other. Why would it be so difficult to pre-evaluate RSPs when ICANN has this process in place today when there is an assignment of an existing registry to a new provider? In other words, isn't the RSP pre-evaluation just an extension of what already is in place? And the follow-up question was, in other words—I think we already combined those two together. So with that, I think Aaron is going to be responding to that.

Yes, I'll field that. So just maybe a clarification. When a registry operator changes between different RSPs, or as it's known in the agreement as a material subcontracting arrangement, they actually don't necessarily go through the full technical evaluation. There is a registry system testing element that everyone has to go through. But the full technical evaluation will only occur if the RSP is unknown, not running other gTLDs upon it. So that is definitely a sort of different scenario.

The full technical evaluation is the paper evaluation that occurred during the 2012 round. And so we do certainly expect to use the 2012 round as the basis for the RSP pre-evaluation. And it's maybe helpful to know that there's a few key differences. One, I think it's recommendation 27.2 requires the questions to be changed to pass fail versus the point system that was used in 2012. And then also recommendation 27.14 requires that the technical evaluation be extended to consider sort of a capacity element, does the RSP have

sufficient capacity for the number of TLDs and registrations that are expected to be borne by that RSP?

So those are the few elements that obviously are a little different. And so that will need some work to move forward. If I said it was difficult, I apologize. That was not my intent, merely that there is some work to do there and that certainly RSP pre-evaluation has to be done prior to the application.

CHRIS BARE:

Thank you, Aaron. Let's take one more from the Q&A pod. And then we'll go back to the hands in the room. We have a Q&A pod question from Michael Palage. "ICANN can use the largely defined processes and costs from their existing material subcontracting arrangements, their MSAs. Change documentation when implementing this program." Aaron, I think you were gonna respond to that.

AARON HICKMANN:

I think I may have covered it, but I do see Mr. Palage's hand, so perhaps he'd like to follow up on that.

MICHAEL PALAGE:

Yes, thank you. And I think Rubens even further elaborated on my point. CIRA has gone, I believe, through a full evaluation for .kiwi, because they had not yet provided any backend services for gTLDs. So I guess the point that myself and others within the registry constituency are asking, Jeff included, it seems like ICANN has already done this. And this should be one of the lowest-hanging fruits that they could just kind of hit out

of the park. And I think in some of the stuff that was discussed with the Board, they were talking about having this done, or guidance by 78. Could you perhaps elaborate on what your current best thinking is on when you will be able to, if you will, launch and wrap this program up to begin accepting applications?

AARON HICKMANN: For the RSP pre-evaluation?

MICHAEL PALAGE: Yes.

AARON HICKMANN: We only really have the relative—as mentioned, there's going to be some additional work on specific planning and so forth. So I personally don't feel that this is a high-risk area. As you mentioned, there's a lot for us to use that we're currently doing and have done in the past. So I don't see this as like a place we're going to trip and fall down easily or anything like that. It's work that needs to be done. And obviously that work has to be done in conjunction with IRT, so it'll just take some time. But we're not saying that that's a huge risk or anything, merely that it's one of the earliest things we'll need to work on. And the goal is to provide it early enough so that folks have time to apply, time to get evaluated, and then enough time for applicants to engage with those pre-approved RSPs so that everyone can move forward with their applications.

CHRIS BARE: Thank you, Aaron. I see that Anne has her hand up. Would you like to ask a question?

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Yes, thank you. My ears perked up when I heard someone say that Org had determined at some point that there are many ways to implement the program that is the result of the policy work in SubPro. But I'm just noting, of course, that a lot of work was done in SubPro as well in relation to implementation guidance. And I think we all appreciate the deep dive that was taken in the ODA, but I think the question was also posed from Org to GNSO Council: what should we do if we want to change the implementation guidance? And I believe the response was, in the nature of explain why and what the reasons are for changing the implementation guidance, and that was the response from Council, I believe, and that you would come back to Council on implementation guidance. So it would be helpful if you would clarify, as you begin this work, that that is the approach that will be taken.

CHRIS BARE: Go ahead, Lars. I think you're responding to this.

LARS HOFFMANN: Just very quickly, Chris, thank you so much. And thank you, Anne, for the question. I have to go back to the exact question that you referred. It doesn't ring a bell that we asked about how to change implementation guidance. But I'll take a look at that. In any case, I think what we will do, once the IRT comes together, is to kind of review

processes and procedures and what kind of methodology we're going to use in order to implement the recommendation that the Board has approved. Having said that, I think that I don't speak out of term when I say that we consider—I hope that's clear in the ODA, it's certainly clear in the final report, that the implementation guidance is there to do just that, to guide the implementation of the policy recommendations led by ICANN org, and assisted by the IRT, and that we will adhere to the implementation guidance as closely as possible and feasible.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE: Thanks. I think the response from Council was in response to question set six.

LARS HOFFMANN: Okay, thanks. I will follow up on that. Thank you. But I don't think there's any desire to change implementation guidance, because it is just that, it is guidance. And with the IRT, we will find out the best way how to use that in the implementation of the recommendations. Thanks.

CHRIS BARE: Thank you, Lars. Jeff, I see you're able to get your hand up. Would you like to ask your question?

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah, thanks. I can't believe it took me that long. So thank you. Just asking a question on my own. Just to go back to the pre-evaluation, I

think what was meant by the questions is that there's already a system ICANN has to do a couple things. Number one is to answer the questions. Right? It has a portal. And then when there's an assignment, like I think Mike was the one who first may have said it, it asks you questions, and you basically have to answer all of the questions that were in the technical guidebook, whether it was business, financial, or whatever, if you're a new player. So the processes are already in place. And I know that there's also contracts in place for ICANN to call up evaluators, or they're on call or whatever. And I know there's a fee structure that's already set up for it. So if, for example, someone needs a background check, there's a certain already established and negotiated fee. If a new player needs a financial check, there's already an established fee set and a process to deal with that.

So I would hope that as much as possible, ICANN Org would rely on the existing systems, obviously scale it a little bit but not a huge amount. I don't think we're going to get hundreds of new registry service providers that apply. But maybe we will. So I think not to use the cliché, reinvent the wheel. And perhaps ICANN Org should consider separate IRTs for wholly separable parts of the program. I know the SubPro report had already contemplated a separate IRT for the applicant support. It also may have contemplated a separate one for the predictability model or a separate work stream or something. And I think I hope ICANN org wouldn't put everything into one IRT and kind of—it would be inefficient, I think, to do it that way. But I do believe with ICANN's processes already in place, already tested, you could have an RSP program up and running in like six months, really, to be honest. But

anyway, happy to help on an IRT when and if that comes, or if and when that comes. Thanks.

AARON HICKMANN:

Yep. Thank you, Jeff, for those comments, we'll definitely take that on Board. And certainly there's no intent to throw out things that are working. We're not going to reinvent the wheel just for the heck of it. So we have learned a lot over the years in servicing registry operators and doing some of those elements repeatedly. So we will be bringing that to bear as we move forward on that. Thank you.

CHRIS BARE:

All right. We're running short on time. I'll go to the next question in the Q&A pod, which is from Werner Staub. Regarding prioritization, did ICANN fully discard the much simpler, fairer, faster and cheaper logic of sorting by TLD string Unicode codepoint in descending order, or a similar principle? And if yes, why? Aaron, can you speak to that?

AARON HICKMANN:

Yep, I can speak to that. So Werner, thanks for the question. Recommendation 19.3 actually laid out very specific formula that needs to be used. And so that's what we followed and referenced in the ODA. So it does allow for some prioritization of IDN applications if they're over a certain number in terms of the blended applications that are received. So we do intend to follow that.

CHRIS BARE:

Thank you. We are at the bottom of the hour. So I believe our time is up. We will be taking the questions that we've received in the Q&A pod and drafting responses to them and posting those in a Q&A once we're able to process those, so I'm assuming the next week or so.

Aside from that, I thank you all for coming to this. And hopefully, you learned a little bit about what's going on right now and the work we're doing. I know there's a lot of questions about the how and the like, and we'll get into more of that as we actually get more deeply into the implementation and as we see what the wording of the resolution from the Board is, which will help to dictate the pace and the type of work we're doing. With that, I urge you all to join the March 12 SubPro session, and we'll hope to see you all there. Thank you very much.

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