
ICANN77 | Prep Week – New gTLD Program Next Round Update
Wednesday, May 31 2023 – 12:30 to 13:30 DCA

JIA-JUH KIMOTO: Hello and welcome to the New gTLD Program: Next Round Session. My name is Jia-Juh Kimoto, and I am the Remote Participation Manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior.

Interpretation for this session will include English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and Portuguese. Click on the interpretation icon in Zoom and select the language you'll listen to during the session. Questions will be taken at the end of the session during the Q&A portion of the call. With that, I will hand it over to SVP Global Domains and Strategy, Theresa Swinehart.

THERESA SWINEHART: Hi everybody, and welcome to this webinar. We're really excited to be able to have this. As we've shared, this is for the New gTLD Program: The Next Round Update. The team's going to be covering several areas for the webinar itself, the program overview and recap, the overview of the ICANN76 Board Resolutions in a summary of the recommendations to provide the context and background, the work that's been done since ICANN76.

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These include several Work Stream areas, policy implementation referred to as Work Stream 1. This includes the IRT overview, the methodology, and the work plan, and the IRT dependencies. Then we'll cover the program development Work Streams 2 through 4. These include Work Stream 2, referred to as the Program Design Work Stream 3 infrastructure and development and Work Stream 4 operationalization.

Then we'll go over to what to expect at ICANN77 and the available program resources. Q&A session. And with that a quick intro to the team that's presenting which will be Karen, Bob, Lars, and Chris. And with that, let me hand it over to Karen to take you through the program.

KAREN LENTZ:

Thank you, Theresa. And can we go to the next slide, Samantha? So that's the agenda that Theresa reviewed with the team. So I will talk a little bit about the New gTLD program as background for anyone who needs catching up. So next slide. So the New gTLD program is part of ICANN's work that has to do with allocation of names at the top level of the Internet's domain name system.

As part of the ICANN multi-stakeholder model, there was a lot of work done on this over the years in the multi-stakeholder model, and consensus emerged that there should be a process for adding new generic top-level domains to the DNS, and that there should be certain requirements and conditions around that. So based on that work, in 2012, ICANN opened around of new gTLD applications, that resulted in

many new gTLDs being added to the name space, which are active today.

KAREN LENTZ:

Following that, there were a number of reviews by the community as to the impact that that round had on different areas, whether technical or consumer experience or intellectual property in other areas. Then there was some additional policy work in the community to look at what to keep or change or add as we continued with the program and had additional rounds for applications for new gTLDs. That work was referred to as Subsequent Procedures or SubPro and resulted in a final report that we are now in the process of implementing. Next slide.

So sorry that this seems to be a little bit missing. I guess it's animated. So since the final report, our Board of directors asked some questions around what it would mean operationally if we were to implement all of the recommendations in the final report as written. And so that was delivered to the Board last year in 2022, was also posted on our website. And then following that in March, the Board considered the final report and the operational design work and instructed us as the organization to begin implementing a number of the recommendations that were approved.

They also asked the Org for a couple of things to be delivered in June. One was the Implementation Review Team methodology, work plan, and timeline. And Implementation Review Team is typically used to help the Org implement policy recommendations by providing

clarifications on interpretation and helping with some of the implementation details.

So we have that on track, which you'll hear about in this session, as well as some of the implementation planning work for all of the areas of the project that aren't around the policy work and applicant guidebook drafting with the IRT, but rather are about things like systems and training and staffing and things that are needed to operationalize the recommendations. So you'll hear about both of those in this session.

And one other thing that I'll add that we've been doing since the last ICANN meeting is to continue to add to the team. So I'm going to turn it over next to Bob Ochieng, who has formerly been doing stakeholder engagement work for ICANN in the Africa region, has joined our team to provide some additional capacity to the next round work. For those who will be at ICANN77, you'll get a chance to meet him. So I'm going to turn it over to you next, Bob.

BOB OCHIENG:

Thank you very much, Karen. So I'll now take this chance to recap the set of resolutions on the final report, as Karen has mentioned that actually, sorry, in the implementation phase that we are now in. So if I get the next slide. So during the Cancun meeting of ICANN76, the Board took a set of resolutions, specifically resolution 4 through to 15 of 16 March, 2023, and I'll just give you a summary in no particular order on each of the resolutions and what it implies or the impact of that.

So the first one was to proceed with the implementation of the adopted recommendations based on the scorecard that was provided. Now, this call card was in three parts, Part A, Part B, and C. And Part A has the adopted recommendations, Part B includes pending recommendations, and Part C has a set of dependencies.

The second resolution was for the Org to call for volunteers for the IRT as Karen has mentioned. So the IRT is the Implementation Review Team, and public call for the same was done by ICANN on 5th of April, 2023. The next recommendation, the next resolution rather, was to provide relevant information regarding all four implementation streams by ICANN77, specifically by June 15th, or the end of ICANN77, the last day.

Those four streams include the Policy Implementation Stream, Program Design Stream, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization Streams. The next resolution was to deliver an implementation plan by 1st of August. Now, this plan will contain a number of parts, a plan, and a timeline for Part A of the scorecard, that is the adopted recommendations, a working methodology of the IRT and work plan and timeline, the GNSO Council plan for handling closed generics, and IDN EPDP charter questions affecting the applicant guidebook.

Next. The other set of resolution was to authorize the Org to spend up to \$9 million from the current or from the New gTLD round funds of 2012 up to October 31st, 2023. And at the same time, in the next resolution to prepare additional budgeting request for beyond October 31st anticipated spending. And this is expected to be

submitted to the Board Finance Committee in a timely manner for a decision by ICANN78.

The next resolution was to continue the Org's communications and outreach strategy, and then, is specifically targeted to promote the New gTLD program to prospective applicants and focusing on supporting digital inclusion with diverse stakeholders and regions. And the last set of this resolution on the final report was for the Org to publish a set of report prior to every ICANN public meeting two weeks before each public meeting up until the next round is opened.

So with that, I now move to the next section. That will be a recap on-- sorry, the previous slide, which is a summary on what those recommendations were, how many. Yes, if I could just get the previous slide briefly. So effectively, the Board out of the 136 recommendations adopted 98, that is what is contained on Section A, and Section B which is a pending slate as 38 recommendations.

The final report also included 165 affirmations and implementation guidance for the Board. And just to note that for this set of 165 affirmations and implementation guidance clauses are to guide, but not really meant for or subject to Board approval, though they continue to guide ICANN, or we take this inconsideration when drafting policy language.

So we'll now move to the next session and give you a briefing on work done since these recommendations were passed. And this section will cover two main components on how this work has been divided. The policy implementation component, which is really work between the

Org, closely the community, and the program development component, which is focused on three Work Streams, that is the Program Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization. And in this slide, we'll take this with my colleagues. So I'll take the next two few slides there.

Now, I just want to introduce how we have approached the implementation work coming from the resolutions. There is a Policy Implementation Work Stream and the program development set of work streams. As we mentioned, we have four work streams in total.

So the Policy Implementation Work Stream is work that we are doing with the community, specifically the IRT or the Implementation Review Team with the final output that will be an applicant guidebook for the next round. And since the resolutions, there was a public call for the IRT in April, and the IRT has since begun its work and meeting since May. And there'll be session at the ICANN main meeting to give an update on where that work has reached so far.

On the Program Development Component, which includes the Program Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization, which is being covered together within the Org, also as a set of milestones as we move towards ICANN77 and eventually August 1st requirement. And within this, we are working on developing a working model that will inform the overall program development requirements, and at the same time drafting an overview of an implementation plan. And we'll be discussing final details of this, including with the Board and the community around ICANN77.

So with that, just to underscore that this work happens in parallel, so both the Policy Implementation Component and the Program Development set of Work Streams are running in parallel. Next slide, please. So I'll now invite my colleague Lars to take this on the next few slides. Thank you.

LARS HOFFMANN:

Thank you so much, Bob. Hello everyone. My name is Lars Hoffman. I work on Karen's team. I'm based in the Brussels office, and together with my team are responsible for the Policy Implementation office. As Bob pointed out, that means drafting the applicant guidebook working together with the Implementation Review Team, the IRT. Samantha, if I could see the next slide, please. Thank you.

We have a couple of slides here as an overview from the IRT. I'm going to go through them one by one, but I might not read everything out. The slides are available afterwards, and there's also a wiki page that all the information for the IRT as well. With that said, since ICANN76, Bob referred to the Board resolution, we had the statement of public presentation published for the IRT. And as Bob said, the four volunteers went out in early April, and we've had three meetings.

The work so far has really been administrative. I don't want to overpromise anything. We have worked on the work plan and started some discussions around chartering of the SIRT team which is the Standing Implementation Review Team. It's a new group that has been formed based on the final report, and whether we continue that work or not will depend on some feedback on the council. And then

we're going to dive into the substantive work, really after ICANN77. I'm going maybe a little ahead, but the next slide please. I'm going to give some more background on the IRT as well.

There's some information here on the role of the Implementation Review Team, of the IRT. It's to serve as a resource to ICANN Org on policy and technical question as well as from the background and the rationale of the recommendations from the final report. And obviously, if there's any concerns or issues with the meaning or the intent of the recommendations, then the IRT is also has the GNSO council liaison who then will take those issues back to the council.

So as I quickly said earlier, we've asked members of the IRT to submit a statement of participation which really just points out the amount of work that is involved, which is quite substantial, as well as some other administrative aspects. In addition to that, we introduced as a test, I guess, an open and representative model for this IRT, it's based on a GNSO PDP 3.0 model.

And it essentially means that in cases where we have representatives and participants, they make up the members of the working group, they have the exact same role and responsibilities during the day-to-day work of the IRT. The representatives are asked to represent the views of the stakeholder groups, constituencies and advisory committees and supporting organization that they represent, and therefore have an active communication channel open with their groups to make sure that their views can be reflected or is reflected in the IRT discussions.

And then there's also circumstances where there's discord within the IRT or misalignment between ICANN Org and the IRT, in which case the council liaison is asked to take into consideration that the representatives don't just represent themselves, but also the SO and ACs that have sent them, which is really just there to hopefully streamline essentially any roadblocks or bottlenecks as they occur. With that, I spoke about the [00:19:40 - inaudible] responsibilities here for the representatives below, so I hope that's covered.

If I can see the next slide, please. Thank you. I'm going to speak to this I think in more detail on the next slide. This is an overview of the work model that we have adopted with the IRT. This is also reflected in the work plan for the IRT. Essentially, I'm going to go to this in more details I think on the next slide. If I could see the-- oh, one second. It's actually slide 19. So I'm going to go back to the work model on slide 19. It goes a little bit into the first and second readings. I think the key takeaway from this slide really is that we have a lot of issues to go through with the IRT.

There's 40 topics in the final report. The Board has adopted over, well, 98 recommendations so far, 38 are pending. There's still a PDP ongoing, the outcome of which will also be absorbed by this IRT. And so to move through the recommendations as sufficiently as possible, we propose a model whereby ICANN Org really prepares drafts [00:21:05 - inaudible] language, shares it with the IRT, gets feedback once, then there's a realignment to explain what feedback has been taken on Board, and why, and then we move on to the next topic. It

minimizes or really streamlines and makes the exchanges between Org and the IRT as efficient as possible.

The next slide, please. I spoke to that just a second ago. We have 98 recommendations that have been approved, or outputs, I should say, that have been approved by the Board. There's also substantial implementation guidance, I think over 140 or so individual implementation guidance that are contained in the final report that also will be taken into consideration when we implement the recommendations.

Bob and I spoke to this as well. There's 38 outstanding or pending recommendations or outputs. The Board is in discussion with the GNSO council on how to resolve these. There was in fact a session between Board and Council, I want to say maybe two weeks ago. For those interested, the recording should be available. And once the Board has resolved on these recommendations, those that have been or will have been adopted will then be integrated into the work plan.

The timeline, which has been discussed in some detail with the IRT during the first few meetings. At the moment, we have a range of a timeline between 15 and 24 months to complete the draft applicant guidebook. We have the methodology in place, we have the representative and open model in place, so we hope we can meet that timeline.

There is the one issue that those dependencies, that recommendations that are not yet adopted by the board obviously are still forthcoming. And for some of these, you'll see it on the next slide,

the timeline is not clear yet. With that, Sam, can I see the next slide please? Thank you. So these are the dependencies, the different processes, at least the first four here.

The outcome of which will be absorbed by the IRT and will feed into the draft applicant guidebook, depending recommendations we spoke about. The second one here is the GNSO guidance process for applicant support. That is a group that has been working for a few months now. And the current timeline estimates completion by December, 2023, at which point they will submit their work to the council, who will then consider adopting it, and then we'll have to put the board, and then we'll feed into the IRT hopefully early next year.

The second item here is the timeline around closed generics. And there's currently a group of GAC, ALAC, and GNSO members who are having a framework discussions around what possible recommendations on closed generics could look like, or at least the principles around that.

And once that framework is completed and is successful, obviously then a policy based on that framework, sorry, will have to be developed. And for that policy development process, the timeline is also as of yet unknown much like the pending recommendations and the next item as well, the IDN EPDP, the definitive timeline, or at least the estimated timeline for those is deliverable for the council at ICANN77 per the Board resolution from March.

The fourth item is the completion of the internationalized domain names EPDP. They have just revisited or reviewed their timeline at the

moment at a standard pace. I think the estimation is about October, 2025, just over two years from now. They also have proposed an accelerated timeline with some built-in face-to-face meetings. And that would bring us to a completion of the final report in October, 2024.

I think that for those of you familiar with the PDP processes, I won't have to tell that once the PDP has completed its work and written a final report, it is then submitted to the council for its consideration, if the council adopts the recommendation, they will go out for public comment, and then the Board will consider those recommendations taken into account, the public comment. And if adopted, then the recommendations will be fed into the SubPro IRT to be turned into applicant guidebook language.

And the other two dependencies, the NCAP 2 study, there's a recommendation that the board has designated as pending waiting on the outcome of the NCAP 2 study. Publication for that is currently envisaged around ICANN78, this year's general meeting in Hamburg.

And last, but certainly not least, there's also the implementation, or at least the consideration of some review recommendations advice and Work Stream 2 items that is not a Work Stream of the SubPro implementation. This is from the IANA transition, you recall the Work Stream 2 had additional recommendations that some of them pertain to the next round of new gTLD as well.

And I think I have one more slide at the end. I'm sorry to go on a little bit here. I spoke about that when we saw that chevron slide on the

methodology. I think the key aspect here is it feeds also into the timeline. We've detailed that in the work plan that we have committed to submitting to the IRT new topics every two to four weeks in the beginning of the IRT, which is where we're know.

Those topics might take a little bit longer as we are ramping up work and making sure that the documentation and the wording is ready for the IRT review. But we are confident that shortly after ICANN77 in June, we'll get into a cadence of submitting topics, applicant guidebook language to the IRT on a very regular basis. And then we've adopted this first and second reading methodology for now.

I won't go through all of this. What I will say is there has been a lot of talk about parallel work that speed things up, and we are certainly supportive of that, and we're very glad to hear that the IRT is also keen to get working and to work in parallel and to shoulder the burden of the extra effort. The idea is really though that the cadence of delivering new topics to the IRT will remain the same.

But if the discussion within the IRT on a specific topic should go on for longer or beyond when the next topic is ready, we'll create Ad-Hoc subgroup, which will continue the discussion on the first topic. Meanwhile the main group will then start discussing the new topic that ICANN Org has [00:29:31 - inaudible].

When I say subgroups, I don't want to go into too many details, those groups are going to be open for everyone, as is the IRT. If you wanted to join, obviously feel free to reach out here or any other way as all the information should be on the wiki as well. And I think with that, I am

done with my policy implementation section, and I believe I'll pass it on to my colleague, Chris, right?

CHRIS BARE:

Yes, Lars, that's correct. Thank you. I hope all can hear me. Greetings, everyone. So, Bob talked about it earlier that we've taken the three work streams that come after policy implementation, and we are calling them Program Development. And the main focus here is that while Work Stream 1 has the IRT component that has a heavy interaction with the community, Work Streams 2 through 4 are much more internally focused.

So the idea of calling them program development to give them a single term is what we've got here. So program design is the part where we build out the processes or we design the processes, I should say. Infrastructure development is where we actually work on the systems and the tools that we're going to need to actually provide the capabilities to deliver those processes.

And then operationalization is putting all those together into a service that we can deliver, meaning that we have the resources required, that they're trained correctly, and that we've got all of that working cohesively, all those pieces, working cohesively.

So what I'd like to do is talk a little bit about what we've done in the last few months. Can we go to the next slide, please? So, program design, we worked on the procedures that we're going to do to actually develop these processes. We've created an inventory and

done an initial assessment of those processes including some process that go beyond the immediate need of the program as we see that some processes that currently exist in other functions will likely be impacted.

We've also done a mapping of processes that we know to date, and the ones that we know we're going to need to develop back to the topics that were part of the Work Stream 1, and also the systems that we expect to have to build. And the idea here is to see how those pieces fit together and how they're going to fit into the overall project structure that we're going to have [00:32:10 - inaudible] in the implementation plan.

We've also identified the needs we're going to have in that process development build, and where you've got positions that we're looking to fill, and we've been working with vendors for augmented staff in the meantime. Those vendors that we've been talking to are bringing the resource capabilities for us to be able to handle all of that process design in a relatively short period of time so that that can be handed off to the next Work Stream.

Along with that, we've worked with it in some of their proof-of-concept workshops to talk to some vendors as well for their work that they're doing. In the infrastructure development side, and again, this is the systems and the tools that we're building to be able to deliver those capabilities. Again, the process for how we're going to do that has been worked out, and these processes include milestones that we expect to report again once we get the implementation.

And again, that mapping that goes back to the processes is a big part of understanding how each system will need to be built. When you think about it, each system needs to support a number of processes that isn't one system for process. So mapping out the processes into chunks of work that the teams can work on and develop as part of the planning that goes into all of this.

The IT function, the engineering and IT function here has also been working on a proof of concepts as with vendors where they're testing out certain platforms or systems that exist out there. And specifically, certain vendors will see how the capabilities of the vendors are to be able to work with ICANN and turn our requirements into actually functioning features in a system.

One thing that we don't have anything on here yet, as to note though, is that many of the tools that we expect to build are likely to be manual tools as well. It was something we did a lot last time. We hope that the systems will be able to take some of that on this time, but there are some processes that will likely continue to be manual no matter what systems we have in play. And so those will also be developed [00:34:36 - inaudible] developed.

Now, you'll see operationalization is down here at the bottom, and it doesn't have a lot listed there at the moment. And that's partly because it really is taking the pieces that come out of the processes and the systems and tools and putting them together and building out the procedures.

So when we look at it, a lot of that work at this point is estimating, but when we get to the point where we actually have artifacts that have been created in work stream 2 and Work Stream 3, Program Design and Infrastructure Development. We should be able to, at that point, have a much more refined sense of the level of effort operationalization will take.

Next slide, please. All right. This is a quick view of the service development lifecycle. And this was something that we put together to envision how a policy recommendation or a topic from the final report gets all the way to an actual service that we can deliver. If you think of policy implementation as the requirements that come to us in the recommendations and in the AGB, those get put into the program design stage, which is where we develop the processes.

That gets then sent over to infrastructure development, where we've developed the systems and the tools that give us those capabilities. And then in operationalization, we take those processes and capabilities, put them together to build those services. So if we look through here, we have in policy implementation, the documenting of the process requirements that came from the final output. And you could think of that as the language of the AGB in essence.

And any clarifications that are required for us to be able to implement, those requirements are expected to be worked out at this point as well. In Program Design, that's where we're identifying the actual business requirements from those policy requirements. And that's where we develop and document those processes, and the processes

will be documented at high levels and at iteratively more and more detailed levels to be able to produce a very clear process flow.

The infrastructure development piece is where we take those business requirements and processes and turn them into technical specifications that are actually used by the developers in putting those features and functions together in a system. And of course, that's where we're also going to, not just develop the systems, but test them and then roll them out. And then in operationalization, that's where we take those processes and systems and tools and we create the procedures, the actual click by click procedures that need to occur.

We also create the training materials required. We make any organizational changes we need to support these new operations that are going to occur. And then there's the hiring of staff as well as any vendors that might be required to perform any of the operational work. And all of them get trained in this timeframe during operationalization.

Another factor to think of is, I don't know if any of you remember from 2012, the last round, but there were some of our evaluations that occurred that had more than one vendor. And when we have more than one vendor, we have to normalize the work amongst all of them so they get identical outputs. And that's an effort that would occur here as well, ensuring that the quality that comes out of the vendors is actually normalized all the time.

So this is the service development lifecycle, this is what we expect to happen for each topic or maybe even with a recommendation along

the way. But even though these are linear, by doing these in pieces, we're able to break them out and do them in parallel.

So each one of these steps is expected to take a certain period of time, but that doesn't mean we wait till the end and get everything done before we move to the next one. We'll be breaking them into smaller pieces to allow us to do the parallel work that Bob mentioned earlier. I hope that's good. I think at this point, I hand it back to Bob. If you have any questions, let me know.

BOB OCHIENG:

Thank you very much, Chris. And I think we get to the more interesting part where we'll just highlight very quickly what we have planned for you on this topic at the coming ICANN77. So we'll run through that very quickly, so if I can get the next slide. So at the coming meeting, there will be several sessions that have been planned including those by community as well as SCSOs and also the Org.

So this sessions will run from Sunday, that is June 11th, all through to the last day of the ICANN meeting, and this is just to highlight you in a series of sessions and point you and ask you to plan to join these sessions during the meeting. As you know, this will be possible both whether you are in DC or you are following remotely. So the sessions have got the respective links attached to them, and you could actually pick this and load onto your calendars directly with respective Zoom links.

I wanted to note that you will notice on some of the sessions, for example the GNSO IDN EPDP working session, one of core that they have asterisk on them. This is to note that these are specifically sessions that do have dependencies to the ongoing implementation work on program development.

So I will not read through all this, but just to give you snapshots and do ask and encourage you to consider and to plan to be part of the sessions. So we have two slides of this. The next slide has the next set of those sessions. [00:41:17 - inaudible] could have that.

So with this, I now want to open it up to you, the community, and others in the Zoom room for any questions so far. And you could do this on the Q&A pod. You could also raise your hand. I believe that should be possible. And then you could be allowed to ask your question. So if we could ask, any questions, over to you. Any questions from anyone?

ANDREW CHEN:

Thanks, Bob. We are now at the Q&A portion of this call. If you wish to speak. Please raise your hand in the Zoom room, and once the session facilitator calls upon your name, kindly unmute your microphone and take the floor. Before speaking, ensure you've selected the language you are speaking from.

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BOB OCHIENG: Thank you, Andrew. So I see a hand from Dr. Kossi. So we could have Dr. Kossi, yes.

KOSSI AMESSINOU: Thank you.

BOB OCHIENG: Yes, we can hear you.

KOSSI AMESSINOU: Good evening, everyone here. I'm sorry, I have many updates here, it's very fine, but my question is to know how the process of the New gTLD you have last time, do we evaluate it, especially in poor countries like mine in Benin? Do you know if some of us are interested in this

process? How part are we interested, how many information we will receive from the countries like mine to be part of this process? Is it the problem of money? Is it the problem of capacity?

What is exactly the problem of people who are not making contribution or are not taking part of the process to submit anything? Have you evaluated very well, or what is the conclusion you have after evaluation if you done it? If you have not done it, what is the process now? Is it possible to evaluate the previous action before you make new one? Thank you.

BOB OCHIENG:

Thank you, Dr. Kossi. So probably we could take a number of questions if there is another hand in the room, and then we could give a round of answers. But as I see none, maybe I ask Karen to take that as I ask you to raise hands if there are further questions. Karen.

KAREN LENTZ:

Thank you. Thank you very much for this question. You touched on a few different areas, and I'll start by saying there are some reviews of the program in terms of the 2012 round at the link that I put in the chat. And those focused on different areas. Some were technical around the stability and security of the DNS root server system, some were around consumer trust, how the new g TLDs were being used. And there was a team that looked for example, at participation in terms of the geographic regions where we did receive applications from in the 2012 round.

There was a study that looked at that specifically. In terms of the goals, you asked about the goals of the program, one of the goals that was explicitly mentioned when the community originally came up with the consensus to add new gTLDs, was to create additional competition consumer choice, and especially to be able to include internationalized domain names in the gTLD space.

I think as the program has continued, there's been quite a lot of interest in participation, in diverse participation from all of the regions of the world to be able to support users in each of the regions with including different languages and scripts.

There are many components of the program that relate to your question, but one of the things that I'll mention that is recommended in the final report that we've been speaking about, is an applicant support program, which allows for financial fee, some of the fee reductions having to do with the application process.

So that is an area that the team is actively working on now. I think a lot of this also has to do with communications and outreach. And so this is also something that the team is and continues to plan as far as sharing the information with groups that may not be aware yet of the coming opportunity and how that process will work. So I hope that addresses your question, and we're available for any additional questions on that. Thank you.

BOB OCHIENG: Thank you very much, Karen. Further questions, and probably as we wait, also to highlight that the applicant support program is also targeted to be launched well ahead of the opening of the round, and that is specifically to allow for the process of identifying those that would qualify to be supported and actually [00:49:04 - inaudible] support as evaluated. So that is why this same round it is being done while ahead in time or planned ahead of time before the opening date. I don't see further hands at the moment.

ANDREW CHEN: Bob, there are currently no questions in the Q&A pod either.

BOB OCHIENG: Okay. So probably if no further questions, Andrew, do we have a receiving email, for example, or any questions that probably might come via email afterwards? If that is possible, I'm not sure, but if not, probably I'll turn it to Karen to give any closing remarks for this session. I mean, to Theresa, sorry.

THERESA SWINEHART: Thanks, Bob, and thank you everybody for the presentation and really for the excellent participation and questions. And I've been following the chat, so really good. Thanks everybody for joining this session from whichever time zone and region you're in. This is an important program for the entire world, so we really appreciate the participation here.

We will be posting the slides, and of course, there'll be a recording available for you to share also with anybody who couldn't make it. And with that, for those who are joining in person for the ICANN meeting, safe travels, we look forward to seeing you there. Those virtual, likewise, look forward to seeing you there. And wishing all a good morning, afternoon, or evening. Thank you.

BOB OCHIENG: Thank you very much.

KAREN LENTZ: Thank you.

BOB OCHIENG: Bye, everyone. Bye.

KAREN LENTZ: Bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]