
ICANN78 | Prep Week – New gTLD Program Next Round Update
Monday, October 9, 2023 – 4:30 to 5:30 HAM

JIA KIMOTO: Hello, and welcome to the New gTLD Program: Next Round Implementation Update Session. My name is Jia Kimoto, and I am the remote participation manager for this session.

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Interpretation for this session will include Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Click on the interpretation ICANN in Zoom, and select the language you will 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 VP of Policy Research and Stakeholder Programs, Karen Lentz.

KAREN LENTZ: Thank you, Jia. And welcome, everyone, to the ICANN78 Prep Week Session. This is the New gTLD Program: Next Round Implementation Update. So the agenda covers the main areas of activity since our last ICANN meeting in June.

That is mainly centered around the Implementation Plan that we published at the end of July, and that includes the different aspects of the program like communications. We'll talk about the funding, the

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timeline, and how the work is structured; and then also what to expect at the ICANN78 meeting in Hamburg. Can we go to the next slide, please? Next slide.

KAREN LENTZ:

So I will start with some background and context. So the work that we're doing on the next round of the New gTLD Program is derived from the multistakeholder community work. The group that is referenced in this slide is from the Generic Names Supporting Organization who works on gTLD policy, policy for generic top-level domains. And the group was called the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures.

That group was asked to advise on whether and how to continue having application rounds for new generic top-level domains to be added to the Domain Name System. And as you can see on this slide, the group affirmed and agreed that, yes, there should continue to be new top-level domains added “in an ongoing, orderly, timely, and predictable way.” And the reasons that they affirmed for that include the fostering of diversity, encouraging competition, and enhancing the utility of the Domain Name System. Next slide.

And so when we talk about those goals, these are the objectives that drive all of the implementation work that we will talk about in this session having to do with continuing to build out the multilingual Internet, creating new options and choices for consumers, providing opportunities for businesses and innovation. Can we go to the next section, please?

So I'll cover, first, the highlights since June. These are happening in a number of areas. First of all, we have been supporting the ICANN Board in considering the pending recommendations, pending policy recommendations from the Subsequent Procedures Working Group. And most recently in September, another set of recommendations was resolved. So [there are] 13 remaining.

In addition to this, we have the Implementation Review Team, or IRT, currently working on developing the Applicant Guidebook for the next round. And you'll hear about that also in this session.

And one of the key deliverables here is the Implementation Plan that was published at the end of July, informed by some of the community's updates and work plans. But this will be the basis for the work that we will describe in most of this presentation.

And I'm going to hand it over, next, to Jared Erwin, who's going to talk about the Implementation Plan. Thanks.

JARED ERWIN:

Thanks, Karen. Hi, everyone. Next slide, please.

So as Karen mentioned, one of the key deliverables over the past several months was the Implementation Plan, which we delivered to the Board at the end of July.

And this Implementation Plan builds on another deliverable that we gave to the Board at ICANN77, which is the Program Development Overview which includes all of the work that needs to be done after the Policy Implementation phase or the AGP is complete. And both of those

work streams—the Policy Implementation and the Program Development work streams—we're going to talk about later in this presentation as well.

The Implementation Plan also takes into account several other deliverables that were provided to the Board over the past several months including a plan for any pending recommendations that the Board still needed to consider—SubPro recommendations, that is; as well as a methodology and work plan for the IRT; a plan and timeline for policy work on closed generics; and also a project plan for the IDN EPDP Working Group Charter questions that may have an impact on the Applicant Guidebook.

So all of those things were considered as part of developing this Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan itself covers several different aspects, including an estimated timeline to the opening of the New gTLD Program: Next Round, which we'll talk about in the next couple of slides.

It also provides an overview of all dependencies, some of which I've already just mentioned, pending recommendations, other ongoing community work. It also provides an overview of the implementation financials, which we will also cover today. And it provides an overview and timelines for the key elements and projects that make up the plan.

So there are several things that we call primary projects that go into this Implementation Plan that cover different aspects of the New gTLD Program: Next Round, such as application submission and processing. All the things that need to go into developing that are accounted for in

the Implementation Plan. And again, we'll cover that later in this presentation. Next slide.

So we just wanted to provide a bit more detail on the timeline to the opening of the next round and what goes into that timeline. And you can see that 2+1, and you may have heard that before. If you've looked at the Implementation Plan, you saw that there. And that refers to, overall, a three-year timeline to open the next round. And two of those years, and a crucial driver of those three years, is the Policy Implementation Work Stream which would culminate in the completion of the Applicant Guidebook.

And so that work is expected to take two years, concluding in May 2025, having started in May 2023. The operational work is expected to take three years, and two of those years are to be conducted in parallel with the Policy Implementation work. So that work has also already started and will continue for one year after the completion of the AGB. ICANN Org will complete that operational or Program Development work after the completion of the AGB.

So with these things in mind, with that timing in mind, we expect the AGB to be completed in May 2025, and that would enable the application round to open in the second quarter of 2026 with a goal of opening in April 2026.

It's important to note that—and this is also detailed in the Implementation Plan—that any delays to the Policy Implementation Work Stream would have an impact on the overall timing of the opening of the next round. Next slide, please.

So here you can see a very high-level overview or high-level timeline of some of the key milestones that go into the opening of the next round. Within the Implementation Plan itself, there are a lot more detailed timelines and Gantt charts that you can look at for all the different projects that make up the plan.

But here you can see the general timeline for the Applicant Support Program, the Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program, the Policy Implementation Work Stream, and then the Program Development Work Streams. Next slide.

I think I'm handing it back to Karen.

KAREN LENTZ: [That's Bob].

BOB OCHIENG: Yeah. I'm sorry, Jared. This will be me.

JARED ERWIN: Sorry, Bob.

BOB OCHIENG: Great. Thank you for that, Jared. So this part, I will briefly talk about the communications and outreach strategy or plan around the next round. As all of you know, communications and outreach was also a major component of the Final Report. And a lot of emphasis was put on ensuring that there was robust communications around the next round

to reach out to relevant stakeholders and potential applicants to ensure that by the time the launch or the round opens, everyone who should have known has relevant information about the round.

So this has been approached from a two-prong perspective. There is a communications component, and under communications, the ARB will embark on a two-phased approach.

The first phase, which was launched in March 2023 and also leveraging our Universal Acceptance Days, as some of you participated in this, is really to create awareness around Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names. As you know, fostering a multilingual Internet is a key component of the next round, as we all understand.

The second phase of the communications and awareness component will be focused around the next round itself. This is because, as Jared has just explained, we have 2+1 sort of a target to open the next round for applications by Q2 of 2026. So 18 months before the actual opening, or before the submission period opens, to engage in a robust communication and awareness campaign on the next round itself.

So down there, you see a high-level timeline on what we have proposed on key communication milestones. I wanted to highlight that in June next year, focus will be around the Applicant Support Program, ASP, and the Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program which, as you might have noticed in the plan itself, will be opening in Q4 of 2024.

And therefore, this forecasts a communications and awareness campaign around those two services. We'll be targeting potential

applicants for the Applicant Support Program, but also potential applicants or registry operators.

And again, as I've indicated, 18 months to the actual opening itself, we shall embark on a robust communication and awareness campaign on the next round itself. You can calculate that back to around January 2025. So that is the communications component of the next round.

Together with that, the Org, of course, will work very closely, especially with the different departments internally, on outreach components of engagement. And this one will really leverage, specifically, our Global Stakeholder Engagement Teams (GSE), Government Engagements. Of course, we do have our Office of the CTO Engagement Team on Technical Engagement, but also within the department as a global domains and society division.

These teams will work very collaboratively to leverage national, local, regional, and global events to really outreach to potential applicants or stakeholders and really to craft information that is relevant to those various categories of stakeholders and potential participants in this next round.

And therefore, we are working on curated specific information and content that will be targeted at these different groups of stakeholders and potential participants in the next round. And we'll be leveraging these platforms across the globe to really ensure that you receive the right information and on time in terms of the next round.

So with that, I'll turn it to Karen to discuss the funding components of the next round.

KAREN LENTZ:

Thank you, Bob. I will talk a little bit next about the financial aspects of the implementation work. Can we go to the next slide, please?

So something that's important to know for background is that the original policy work that created the New gTLD Program recommended that the application fees be established in a way that would cover the cost of offering the program. So the principle was that offering the New gTLD Program should not take funds from ICANN's operating budget and should not detract from the rest of the responsibilities that ICANN needs to carry out.

And so that principle was also affirmed in the Subsequent Procedures Working Group, and so we're working to create a program and model that will be a cost recovery. This includes making some working assumptions because we don't know what the volume of applications will be to know the exact cost. And so the working assumption that we're using and have been using for the Implementation Plan is around 2,000 applications, which is roughly what was received in the previous application round.

And so the costs that we've calculated include full-time staff, contractors, also many of the outreach and awareness and communication activities that Bob just described.

And a new component for this next round will be the Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program. And this was recommended so that service providers that were offering back-end services of different kinds to applicants could be evaluated—have their technical capability

evaluated previously to the opening of the round. And so that process is also underway, but those costs are also being kept track of so that the fees for participating in that program can also cover the cost of that. Next slide.

So this is the budget that is included in the Implementation Plan document. It's a total of \$70 million for the three years that Jared described in the timeline. That includes \$9 million that was already allocated for the Operational Design Phase and another \$9 million that the Board allocated to the project in March. And that funding was to cover the continuing work through the end of this month, through the end of October.

So both of those are included in the \$70 million, and the expectation is that we as ICANN Org would request funding from the Board in a series of increments. So four to six times over the course of the three years, we would request another bundle of funding.

And along with that, would also be providing regular status updates to the Board and to the community as to what has been achieved with the money that has been spent and then what has it been spent on. And so that's an area that will continue over the next over the next period.

Next section. We will talk about the structure of the work, how we've organized ourselves. And so I'm going to turn it back to you, Bob, for that.

BOB OCHIENG:

Thank you very much, Karen. And as you can imagine, the New gTLD's next round program is one of the largest programs that the Org is deploying [inaudible] at the moment. And typical of such a program, you don't ordinarily structure it or separate it into small components for ease of course implementation, management, and also of follow-up.

So this program specifically has been divided into two broad components, what we are calling work streams—and I'll speak to that briefly—and then projects. So the entire program is broadly divided into work streams and projects.

Now, on work streams itself, we do have four distinct work streams which can also be looked at into two broad components. The first one, which we are calling Work Stream 1, focused on Policy Implementation, is work that the Org is doing in collaboration with the Implementation Review Team, the IRT.

That will result in the development of the Applicant Guidebook which, as most of you know, is the rule book for process then applications. Everything around the round is guided by the Applicant Guidebook. So Work Stream 1 on Policy Implementation is dedicated to that work whose final outcome will be an Applicant Guidebook.

Now, Work Streams 2-4 is what we call Program Development work streams. Essentially, they are a set of work streams that are geared towards ending with the right systems, the right processes, the right tools, and the right human capital to implement, to receive, process, and actually operationalize the next round of strings.

So Work Stream 2 is focused on program design, which is developing internal processes and procedures, that we will use to process the applications. Work Stream 3 is taking those processes and developing them into system requirements which then are used to implement systems and tools that the Org will use to process the applications.

And Work Stream [3] brings everything together in terms of processes, procedures, and systems, and the human capital; and making that work together so that you have a holistic, homogeneous system of processing the applications.

So the work streams, by the time this is fully done, then you expect that we do have ready the relevant platforms, the relevant people, the relevant tools to receive and process the applications.

On the other hand, the program itself is further divided into projects. And what you see here is what we are calling primary projects, essentially from projects that are supporting different parts of the program to mainstream projects that are about the program itself. So for example, in the program foundations, we have a number of subsidiary projects there that include the website for the next round itself that are complementary to the program which are all relevant for the program.

And then we have Projects 2-9. And you can see Project 9 is about post-contracting and program operations, meaning you have gone through the entire application evaluation and contracted. And what does the Org do after contracting?

So what you're seeing here is not all the projects, but just the primary projects that are key to documentation of the program. And I know we can all [read] this.

So with that, I can turn it to my colleagues to speak a little bit more on the work streams themselves. And I think the first will be on Work Stream 1. I turn it to Lars.

LARS HOFFMANN:

Thank you, Bob. I hope you can hear me okay, and I'm sorry for the slight delay. I was just trying to get some links ready for everyone. I welcome everyone. Sorry. For some reason, I cannot see the slides. There we are.

Yeah. I'm going to talk a little bit, as Bob said, about Work Stream 1 and Policy Implementation. As Bob said, the outcome of this is the Applicant Guidebook, essentially an updated version of the document that we used for 2012 implementing the recommendations and affirmations of the SubPro PDP. Karen spoke about that.

There's a couple of statistics here for you if you're interested. Bottom left there, you see the number of recommendations. To the left, the Board accepted or adopted 104. There were seven—you can't see that very well, I think, towards the right there—that have not been adopted.

There was a Board resolution in Istanbul around that last month, and 13 recommendations remain pending on the bottom right. And we expect those to be resolved in the upcoming meeting in Hamburg during the Board meeting there.

For those of you not too familiar, just a quick note. 165 that has acknowledged this Implementation Guidance, so that is not formally adopted by the Board. But obviously, it informs and guides the implementation of the recommendations, and so these are not formally adopted, as I said, by the Board, but simply acknowledged.

There's a couple of other stats I just want to point out very quickly. You see here a completion rate of about 16.5%. We talked with the Implementation Review Team, with the IRT, about this, and we're trying to find a formula to gauge how much progress has been made. 100% would essentially mean that the Applicant Guidebook is reviewed by the IRT and ready to go out for public comment. We're about 16.5%. As I said, that's really just a estimate. It's very difficult to put precise numbers on this, but you'll see on the next slide, a little bit, what has been achieved and what is upcoming.

In addition to that, you see we have about 600 days left until the Applicant Guidebook should be ready according to the overall timeline. 146 days have passed since the first meeting. And you see those dates up there as well that are also part of the Implementation Plan that Jared spoke about earlier. With that, if I could see the next slide, please, very quickly. All right, Bob. Thank you so much. I see you [inaudible] the text.

I'm going to post just a couple of links into the chat as well. This is the Implementation Review Team Wiki page and also the ICANN78 Briefing. Those links are also included in the presentation at the end, but I thought they may be helpful, nonetheless.

So this goes a little bit to the 16.5% percent from the previous slide. These are the 41 topics that are contained in the Final Report. You see here we have about seven of those that have been shared with the IRT so far, and this is the light blue, I guess, on the left. Then we have the green here in the middle. Those are lined up to be shared with the IRT either this quarter or the next.

And there's some substantive and rather large topics in here: RSP Evaluation. And a colleague, Francisco, ran a webinar in this prep week [inaudible]. And also, the Applicant Support Program, another topic as well we're working on that we'll discuss with the IRT. And then the remaining topics will then be dealt with in the four quarters that will follow that up until May 2025.

You see a few topics here with asterisks. It's kind of a soft indication here that these topics will contain very few recommendations—two or fewer, we say here at the bottom—meaning that there's potentially could be “dealt with” relatively quickly. And so the number of substantive topics are actually not—it's not that long for the second half of the IRT.

And then the bottom left, there's a couple of topics here. We listed these four. Essentially, the recommendation outputs don't really require any language per se in the Applicant Guidebook. They affirm things we did to give information for the next round, but it's not necessarily Applicant-Guidebook relevant.

Then with that, I see a question from Rubens, very quickly. I don't know if we want to do questions now. Yeah, Rubens, absolutely. Rubens

[notes]—if we can just go back very quickly that would be great. Thank you so much.

So Rubens notes that the Topic 29 is Name Collision. We're waiting there on the NCAP 2 report. I think, in fact, the Board adopted the recommendations on 29 with a clarifying statement from the GNSO Council. And in fact, I'm paraphrasing here, but to the best of my recollection, the clarifying statement says, essentially, the Board can accept the recommendation with the understanding that implementation will have to wait until the NCAP 2 report is released. And that is certainly what we are expecting to do.

With that, I'm definitely going to stop. I'm sorry if I answer the question halfway through. We can do that at the end as well. Chris, I think, is up next. Chris, over to you. Thanks, everyone.

CHRIS BARE:

Thank you, Lars. Happy Monday, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. I'll be talking about Work Stream 2-4 which, collectively, we call Program Development. The reason why they're put collectively is these tend to be the work streams that are more internally focused when it comes to implementing the final report, the SubPro.

The items themselves, Work Stream 2, in an earlier slide you saw was focused around the design and the process creation for everything that needs to happen. Work Stream 3 is focused on building out the systems and other capabilities that we'll be needing to actually deliver. And Work Stream 4 is about operationalization. It's taking those other two

pieces and ensuring that we have the resources and the training to be able to deliver those.

If you look through the slide here, you'll see there's a number of bullet points here. It's a summary of what's been happening. What I would say would be that the nine primary projects which Bob also talked about are the breakdown of work. And Project #1 has a lot of what we call core or baseline processes, which you'll see on bullet point four here.

A lot of the focus for the past couple of months has been in developing and documenting those processes, those baselines. And these are processes that occur several times throughout the program, usually with different nuances or changes based to fit where they're happening. But that's what the documentation is about, those baseline processes.

The other two projects that we're also working on actively right now are the Applicant Support and the RSP Evaluation Programs. And both of those have kicked off at various points in the last couple of months. Resources had been assigned to those, and they're in different stages of work.

We have worked on developing a dictionary, I guess, or an inventory of the processes that we know of to date, and I'll have a slide in a moment to show you that.

And the other thing that's been happening is that our Engineering and IT Department has been working with the other departments to progress the development of the systems. And we've been actively working on the RSP Evaluation System, and we plan to start working on the Applicant Support System in the upcoming months.

The other aspect to note here is there are a lot of other things that need to be developed in order to support the program that are not necessarily within the program itself. And you'll see the second-to-the-last bullet here talking about operational and strategic dependency projects. This is work throughout the organization that needs to occur in order to be able to support the program. And several of those have kicked off as well.

The focus for operations right now is—operationalization, I should say—right now is mainly on the vendor aspect of it. As you may know, the last time the program ran in 2012, a large amount of the cost went into the vendor aspect which provided most of the evaluation panels and the like. So a lot of strategy and thinking needs to go into that, and that's what's happening right now for that aspect. Can we go to the next slide real quick?

So don't strain your eyes trying to read this. You can download the deck and look at it later. This is meant to represent that inventory of processes that I mentioned earlier. So if you look through here, there's the nine projects across the top. And everything in the upper half, they're the shared processes, those baseline processes.

And if you were to take one item and look at it across all of the columns, you would see it's the same or similar processes all the way across. But the idea is that there's the baseline that we're developing, and usually in project one. And that as the other projects spin up and we work out the flows through all of those procedures, we'll end up actually having to iterate on those processes to be able to develop the specific one needed for that project.

You look at everything below, on the lower half. Those are unique processes that exist only within those projects that are there. So obviously, the ability for us to work on this and to get it into a system and then to actually [proceduralize] it are all aspects of being able to get through these projects.

So hopefully, you'll get a chance to look at that in more detail [at another point]. Like I say, don't strain your eyes on this.

I think with that, we're ready to go on to the next slide which, I believe, this is back to Bob.

BOB OCHIENG:

[inaudible]. And in this section, we will just highlight. As you know, we are in the Prep Week part of ICANN78, holistically, which normally consists of, of course, Prep Week sessions and then ICANN78 main sessions. So what we have here is a highlight of some of those sessions that are related to the next round. So for today, we have this update on the next round implementation status. And tomorrow and Wednesday, we also have related next-round topics that we would want to invite you to.

Tuesday, tomorrow, we have Applicant Support Program: Research and Updates. And again, we also have Name Collision Analysis Project Study Update. And then on Wednesday, we have New gTLD Program: Registry Service Providers Evaluation Program Status Update, or an update on RSP that we've been talking about today.

So this is for the Prep Week, and we wanted to highlight these and encourage you to follow. Then going into the main session, there will be a number of community-led sessions, some in different part. You could see a session that is one to three parts. So you could see 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3, to just highlight the fact that you'll have an iteration on both sessions happening throughout the week.

So on Saturday, we have a number of sessions. And on Monday, we have IDN EPDP Working Session (3 of 3) which will encourage you to consider following either on-site or remotely. All of these are direct links to those sessions, and you will be having the Zoom details when you click onto those hot links.

And then getting into the week, on Tuesday going through to Thursday, a number of sessions, some following up from the previous ones by the GAC, by Global Domains on Saturday, and also by the IRT. So I would like to encourage you as far as possible to look at these sessions and this plan to follow them.

On top of that, there is a rich list of information and documents. I documented quite a bit around the program [I also] highlighted. This program started a while back from a policy development process, and all of these documents are available on the ICANN website. Various links are available for you further refer if you really need to get actual details or further details.

We also have a dedicated webpage that is under development. So far, the landing page is ready. Of course, all of this is about the Final Report, but Karen talked about the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy

Development Process. Out of that came an Operational Design Assessment report which you can access on that link.

The IRT maintains a dedicated Wiki page with up-to-date information on their documents and the recordings of meetings. And you are encouraged at any one particular time to access that.

The Implementation Plan that has been talked about today is available online. And just a few hours ago, we published an update which speaks to some of the things we have talked about here in further detail, which is ICANN, we are calling a PRSP, Pre-ICANN78 Update. That's also available on that link. So feel free to access any of these additional documents or other information as needed.

And with that, I will turn it to all of you for questions or clarifications. You can put it in the chat, and my colleague Jia will read. If you put your question in the chat, she'll read it out aloud in the room, and one of us will be able to answer it. If we can't answer it today, we'll surely reach out and send it back by email. So questions and comments, please.

KAREN LENTZ:

There are a few questions, Bob. There are a few questions in the Q&A pod. The first one was around acronyms, so we answered that in the chat. ASP, if you hear us say that, it means Applicant Support Program. And RSP is a Registry Service Provider.

The next question is around: when will the communications for Applicant Support Program start? So, Bob, do you want to respond to that one? And I can add as needed.

BOB OCHIENG: Yeah, sure. And of course, this was covered in that part of the communications component. So the Applicant Support Program is currently projected to open for applications in Q4 of 2024. So that is from September going to December next year. And the intention is to kick off communications and awareness around that before it actually opens. So that is why we are projecting that for June to July period. So real communications awareness around both Applicant Support Program and the Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program will kick off in June and July, ahead of the actual opening in Q4 of 2024 for both ASP, applicant support, and RSP, Registry Service Provider Evaluation. I hope that clarifies.

BENJAMIN LEWIS: [inaudible].

BOB OCHIENG: Ben?

JIA KIMOTO: Hi, Bob. This is Jia.

BOB OCHIENG: [inaudible]. Yes, Jia. Please, go ahead.

JIA KIMOTO: Go ahead. I was going to the next question, but go ahead.

BOB OCHIENG: I just wanted to also highlight, you could also raise your hand in the room, and you could be unmuted to ask a question directly.

JIA KIMOTO: Right. There's a question in the chat from Thomas Kuiper. "Thanks for sharing the big effort it takes to design the systems and everything that needs to be developed. My question is: why it cannot be made possible that application submissions are done continuously from Q2 2026 onwards and continue to be reviewed over time instead of closing the application window indefinitely from the following quarter?"

The first gTLD round has brought us a lot of experienced, technical providers, and a very good ecosystem now, especially in the Registrars/Registries side. But also, thanks to organizations like the Trademark Clearinghouse, INTA, and other stakeholders that are very involved with improving how NG TLDs operate.

So has it ever been considered to accept applications run for a longer term or longer for the coming years? One point of the Final GNSO Report 2021 was a recommendation to have Affirmation 1.1 a systemized manner of applying gTLDs "in the long term." Thank you.

KAREN LENTZ: Thank you, Jia. I can take that. So this is a really interesting question because, as Jeff was noting in the chat, this was discussed quite a bit in the Policy Development Working Group. And when looking at [inaudible] ultimately came with a recommendation that we should

continue in rounds. And so that is what we are planning. And the recommendations foresee, though, that there would be regularly-occurring predictable intervals where we would have an application round.

This is something that the ICANN Board looked at when they were considering this group of recommendations and had some discussions with a small team in the GNSO on this. The question really goes to: what is the long-term evolution of the program? So we do this next round, but the program still exists, so how do we continue to evolve that?

And the agreement was to have a policy discussion as to what would be needed to consider what the model would look like for the longer term beyond the next round. So that is something that I imagine will continue to be discussed and worked out. Thank you.

JIA KIMOTO: We have another—

BOB OCHIENG: [inaudible].

JIA KIMOTO: All right, we have another question from Martina Barbero. “Does the \$70 million budget also cover the Applicant Support Program? I believe the precise figures of the program are still to be decided, but was there a working estimate made for the ASP? Thanks a lot.”

KAREN LENTZ:

Sure. Thank you, Jia. Could we go back to slide 19? That has the budget on it. Yeah, thank you. So I'll answer in a couple of aspects here. One is, the recommendations for the U.S. for the Applicant Support Program provided that we should develop a funding model. So the policy guidance is that we need to develop a funding model that allows us to provide that assistance to qualified applicants.

So in terms of figuring out the work that is necessary to develop the applicant program in terms of staff and estimated hours that is included, looking at some of the—there were other policy recommendations that related to the Applicant Support Program. These have been continuing to be discussed. They were pending, still, for a while.

And so we are now looking at what the Applicant Support Program package would include and correspondingly, then, how we develop a funding model that is matching with that. So that is work in progress in terms of taking the now resolved policy recommendations and developing that funding model. '

I'll also add one other clarification while we're on this slide. When I talked about the Operational Design Phase that was previous to the allocation that occurred in March, so the 70 is starting in 2023 Q2.

So can we go back to the Q&A slide? And we can continue with the questions. Thank you.

BOB OCHIENG: Okay. Any further questions?

JIA KIMOTO: There's another question in the chat. "What advice would you give to the newcomers, as I am a new ICANN78 fellow?"

BOB OCHIENG: Well, I think Jeff summed it up, really. To ask as many questions and feel free to approach everyone and anyone whether committee leaders that you meet in the corridors, or the ICANN Org staff. You will find a very friendly environment. But, of course, with very interesting terminology and language in general. But also very ready people to help and support and answer questions.

Most of the time, it seems very complicated. But to Jeff's point, if you hang around long enough and [inaudible] persistent, you should be able to get the hang of it. And of course, at some point, you will find your bearing in terms of what exactly interests you, as not everything within the meeting or around the discussions will be of interest. But identify what interests you.

Okay, do we have any other? Okay. I see Akinbo's hand, if he could be unmuted.

ADEBUNMI AKINBO: I'm a media person, so I want to ask: at what point do we know if a document should be published for the public? And at what point do we

understand if there's any reason for us to inform others from our region about certain things that are ongoing and where we feel that we should get their response?

At what point do we get to understand this, and how best do you think we can manage it, coming from the media aspect of ensuring that people from certain regions are also involved indirectly through our participation? Thank you, and you're doing well.

BOB OCHIENG: So I did not get that question very clearly. I'm not sure if someone got it better than me. Akinbo, I think you [failed from my end].

ADEBUNMI AKINBO: [Yes, I'm sorry].

BOB OCHIENG: If you want to give it a go again, please?

ADEBUNMI AKINBO: Yes. Let me try it one more time. Adebunmi Akinbo from—

BOB OCHIENG: Yeah. It's better now. Yes.

ADEBUNMI AKINBO: Okay. So my question is, as a media person and while we're discussing certain issues, at what point is it right for the media person to pick a

topic and take it to his or her region to discuss that particular topic and be able to get feedback as a representative from such a region? How do we get to know: this is a discussion where we need to take home and share amongst people that I may not be on that platform, but would actually have something to say? And what [do they advise]? Thank you.

BOB OCHIENG:

So, Akinbo, I'll try and probably respond, but, of course, my colleagues can add in. I think, and being very familiar with how ICANN probably documentation process works. If it is a policy development process, of course, you know there will be a draft report that will then go for public comment.

And then after a public comment period, you then have those comments received and incorporated. And then a final report or a final version of the document is published, normally by ICANN. Now, if at any stage in the process, you would want to highlight these, I think there's no harm as long as you point out the status of the document.

For example, if it is a discussion that is still going on, I think it's important to point that out. If it is in a draft document, it's important to point out that to initiate and to spur discussion. But if it is a final report or if it's a final, adopted document, then you can discuss it and report on it, you know, as a fact or as decided upon.

So I believe there is no harm in discussing various issues as long as you point out in what state the discussion within ICANN is. Really no harm. And, of course, whatever discussions within the policy development process within ICANN are normally public sessions which are even

recorded and posted in Wikis. So I believe highlighting the status of that discussion is what is important.

I'm not sure if anyone wants to add to that from the team. Okay. Jia, do you have any [inaudible]?

JIA KIMOTO: Jeff has a question. Jeffrey.

BOB OCHIENG: Go ahead, Jeff, please.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah, thanks. Hopefully, you can hear me. Yeah. Let me just try to expand on Akinbo's question because I think I understood it to be, you know, like, when can we as a community expect documents to be published for review? Like, the IRT documents. When will there be public RFPs for vendors to respond to that we can see? What are some of ICANN's communication plans in the coming months? I think that's kind of what the question was so that he could get feedback from the region. So I think that's the way I interpreted the question.

BOB OCHIENG: Thank you, Jeff, for that expansion. Maybe I would invite Lars to speak on the IRT component. Lars, if you're on.

LARS HOFFMANN: Absolutely. Thanks, Bob. Yeah, the IRT documents. I did paste the link to the IRT Wiki, I think, into the chat. I'll do that just one more time here. They are already available, obviously.

And there's also a new work plan that we updated with some information around the various topics, and we intend to discuss them with the IRT. That also can be found on the Wiki. We're going to share that on the—or just have shared on the IRT mailing list as well. You can also sign up to the IRT. It's an open group. Again, the link to that, you will also find that on the Wiki page.

And I think, for the other topics, Bob, I'm going to pass it back to you about communications plan and other information. Maybe you can speak to that. Thanks.

BOB OCHIENG: Thank you, Lars. And I think I want to just highlight probably one more time the overall milestones on how comes around the next program [is structured]. So there are high-level timelines, as I indicated. The communication I've got two parts, or two phases.

The first phase is really awareness campaign focused on the marketing quality of the Internet. And for a good reason because the next round is, really, one of the key objectives is really to leverage the ability for different languages and scripts to make use of domain names. So we'll spend quite a bit of time and effort in creating awareness and supporting Universal Acceptance across different regions.

The second phase, which will then focus specifically on the next round itself, will be from January of 2025. And this is because the next round only opens [inaudible] from today.

So from a high-level perspective to Jeff's question, we have different focus areas between now and the opening on what messaging and what efforts [that they] will be spending efforts around. For Applicant Support Program and Registry Service Provider Evaluation services, the plan is to get into a concerted awareness campaign from June to July of 2024. This is because this program's open for launch in Q4 of the same year. So it makes sense to focus on them ahead of their launching.

And when those launches in Q4 of 2024, then come January, or roughly 18 months to opening of the round itself in 2026, all of us will be around the next round.

I see Cheryl's hand. Cheryl, before you come on. This will be in addition to the outreach efforts which [inaudible], as I said, about our GSE Teams, Government Engagement Teams, and also the Office of the CTO.

Cheryl, please.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR:

Thank you, Bob. And like Jeff, very long in the tooth in all of this, as many of you are. I think here—and this is a comment, obviously, not a question—I suspect that Akinbo's also inquiring about the opportunity for some media packaging to be ready. And I'm confident that the

Communication Team will be putting together some appropriate media packaging for various points in this exercise. Thanks.

BOB OCHIENG: Thank you very much for that, Cheryl. I see Sally's hand. Sally, please.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thanks very much, Bob. Cheryl, you're absolutely right. We will be developing media packaging that can be shared.

And to be really clear, the next round campaign begins in earnest, to Jeff's question, January of 2025. But leading up to that, in phase one of the campaign, we are talking about the next round and embedding and starting to introduce those concepts of the ASP and the RSP as they're ready.

But, yeah, we will have a full media plan, and it kicks off 18 months before the window opens. Hopefully, that's helpful.

BOB OCHIENG: And if you don't know Sally, Sally leads Comms within ICANN. So that message is directly from [inaudible].

Any? Of course, I think we are almost on the top of the hour. Do we have anything left? Okay.

So with that, I see we are at the top of the hour. I really want to thank you for participating in this session. It's been, of course, very helpful and

very rich in conversations. And we do hope that this information, of course, proved quite relevant for all of you. So thank you.

And with that, we adjourn and stop the recording. Thank you very much, everyone.

LARS HOFFMANN: Thanks, everyone.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]