
ICANN79 | CF – GNSO: NCSG Membership Work Session
Sunday, March 3, 2024 – 3:00 to 4:00 SJU

ANDREA GLANDON: My name is Andrea, and I am a participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand and Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute and Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. I will now hand the floor over to our chair, Julf. You may begin.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you, Andrea. Welcome, everybody. We don't have that many people here in the room, but we have some people remotely. And I'm sure people will start showing up a little bit late as usual, but we will go on with the program. So welcome, everybody.

SHAYNA ROBINSON: Hello, and thank you so much. This is Shayna Robinson. I am the grant program director here at ICANN, and I'm so excited and happy to be with you all today to talk a little bit about the grant program that's opening very soon at the end of this month. I'm here with my colleague, Giovanni Seppia, and we're just going to go through a few slides to talk about what's happening.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

If we look at our agenda on the next slide, we'll talk a little bit about what the program is, how we can expect it to operate, who is eligible to apply, what activities are eligible to be funded, key dates, and then at the end, we'll have some time to answer any questions that anyone has about the program. The next slide. So again, to talk a little bit about the program, what we're really hoping to achieve with the grant program is to further the mission of ICANN through grant making. So this means supporting and investing in organizations and projects that really align very well with the mission of ICANN, that support the development of the domain name system and other systems that support the unique identifiers. So we're really hopeful, and I know it's been a long time in the works of coming through the CCWG on auction proceeds, and here we are at the finish line to really get this program launched and off the ground.

On the next slide, we'll talk a little bit about the objectives of the program and what we really hope to see and achieve. Basically it's about, again, a competitive global program. So this program is not limited to a specific geography. This is open to anyone in the world who meets eligibility criteria, and so we have and expect quite a number of applications, meaning that this is a competitive program. We also hope that through funding projects through this program, that we're going to make a difference in the Internet ecosystem. And as we go through more specifically some of the objectives, you'll see where we're hoping to target and support projects that align to very specific outcomes and intended impacts.

If we go to the next slide, we'll talk a bit about those and how the program will operate. So first, this is the first cycle. The complete fund

is actually over \$200 million, but we're not going to give away all the money at once. We're actually going to release the funds in tranches, with the first one being \$10 million. So we'll see how that goes. We'll test it out, and then we'll make a plan for how we'll deliver for future cycles and what those funds would look like. For this first cycle, projects would be eligible for between \$50,000 and \$500,000, so smaller projects on the small end, \$50,000, and on the larger end, \$500,000. And again, all of these things will be revisited after the first cycle. We're treating this really as an opportunity to test some of our assumptions and some of our procedures and things like that, but we're open and hoping to make improvements as we go along. Next slide, please.

Who can apply? Firstly, we ask that all organizations who are interested be charitable in nature, and that means different things around the world. So in the US, that means being registered as a nonprofit, and there's a specific tax code that accompanies that. But in other parts of the world, that means something different, and so we have a process for determining and making equivalent determinations of charitable status. So I can't answer those questions today. Just so you know, if you have those, I'm not going to be able to answer that, but we will do that as a part of our administrative review of applications.

Applicants must also be meeting all applicable US trade laws and sanctions. So because ICANN is based in the United States, we must adhere to specific regulations that the US government issues, and that includes checks against sanction databases and OFAC and things like that. So we want to make sure that we're legally compliant and carrying out our fiduciary responsibility very well.

The third one is around having no conflicts of interest with ICANN, and this is an important one because we want to ensure that not only do we avoid actual conflicts of interest, so that means people who make decisions should not also necessarily be benefiting from the program, but we also want to avoid perceived conflicts. So those are things that maybe in actuality are not really a problem, but someone looking from the outside in could say, you know, that doesn't make a whole lot of sense. So we want to avoid those as well. Meeting all background standards for background checks as well, and then also having bank accounts that can receive funds from a US institution.

If we go to the next slide, we can talk a bit about the activities that are eligible for funding under the program. First, again, they must be consistent with ICANN's mission. So if you have great ideas for things that are really out of the scope of ICANN's mission, that's wonderful, but they may not be eligible for this program. Secondly, we want to avoid any duplication of activities that ICANN is already funding. So if there are funding streams at ICANN where certain activities or projects are already receiving funds, we don't want to duplicate those efforts. We don't want to confuse the funding streams. We want to make sure that those remain separate.

And then lastly, we want to make sure that we're maintaining ICANN's legal status as a public benefit corporation. So there are some things that you'll see there on the slide around lobbying and political activity that we should avoid. Any, again, conflicts of interest or things that result in benefit of an individual financially. And any, you know, illegal or unlawful activity happening locally, wherever the project is being implemented. So those are just some things that we want to make sure

that you're aware of when you're thinking about all the great projects that you're going to submit and all the wonderful applications we're going to read. Just make sure that you remember some of these things and keep them in mind. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Giovanni.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thank you, Shayna. Yes, if we can go to the next slide, please. I'm going to speak about some dates. So the application window is planned to open on the 25th of March at 3:00 PM UTC and is expected to close on the 24th of May at 20:00 UTC. So this is the application window for the first grant cycle, and it's 60 calendar days. And if you can go to the next slide, we're going to provide you an overview of the following steps. So by the 15th of March, we plan to publish the Applicant Guide version 3, and that will be released in English with the privacy policy and also information on the grant platform that are going to be provided within the version 3 of the Applicant Guide.

The Applicant Guide at the top will list the changes against the previous version, and we currently have published version 2 of the Applicant Guide, and there is a list of the changes against the previous guide that is also at the top of version 2. Those changes, they are not, let's say, impacting any of the key elements of the program. They are main language refinements that are meant to introduce further clarity on the language and make sure that there is a clear understanding of what are the rules and the procedures. Next step is the 25th of March. As I said, that's the launch of the call for proposal and the application window for the first grant cycle, closing on the 24th of May. And then once the

application window closes, we'll start the admissibility and eligibility initial checks on the applications and on the applicant, and they will be followed by the evaluation of the projects by the independent panel. This process is expected to complete at the end of October, and then in November 2024, we'll perform further eligibility checks on successful applications.

Then at the end of the year, there is the process ending for the first grant cycle with the submission to the ICANN Board of the slate of successful applications. And that slate will be accompanied by documentation that, according to the cross-community working group on auction proceeds recommendation, this documentation will prove that ICANN, as well as anybody involved in the process, has followed the procedures and that the process has been complete. So the expected Board resolution is tentatively between the end of this year and early 2025.

As you can see, you can read in the slide, this is subject to a dependency that is on recommendation 7, which is a specific recommendation regarding accountability mechanism and the grant program, and the Board is currently discussing this recommendation 7, and has recently sent yesterday a letter to all the chartering organizations, to the cross-community working group on optional procedures, to explain the process for implementing this recommendation. And so this approval of the final slate of successful applications by the Board is subject to the positive conclusion of the process about recommendation 7, as well as the amendment to the fundamental by-laws. We can go to the next slide, please.

So the next two slides are about where you can find more information. So we have a grant program webpage where the key information about the grant program is published. This webpage also includes a link to the applicant guide, the latest version, and also the translation of the applicant guide in the other UN official languages. The webpage is regularly updated, especially the part that is on the FAQs, and we will continue to populate the page with further information, including, and more specifically, the link to the application windows as soon as it opens on the 25th of March. If we can go to the next slide, which is the last one, please.

So we have a dedicated grant program mail address, just in case you want to ask for more information, and there is also the ICANN help desk that is available to provide key information on the grant program, and there is a system so that if there is any specific request that is escalated to the grant program team for being responded to. As Shayna said at the beginning, if you submit to us a project or an idea, we cannot tell you if that is going to be assessed successfully, that is going to be part of the evaluation process that is going to open at the end of the application window, so we are here to answer questions regarding the process, but certainly not the content of any possible project that might be submitted during the first grant cycle. With that said, I'm happy, and we are happy, to answer any question. There is a main session on the ICANN grant program, which is scheduled for this week on Wednesday the 6th at 3:00 PM local time in the main boardroom, boardroom A. So if you are interested to learn more or to listen again to what we just presented, please join that session. It's going to be a bit more extensive information, including a specific section on recommendation 7 and the

way we propose to socialize the approach to recommendation 7 with the community. Thanks a lot for having us, we are open to questions. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. I really appreciate you briefing us on this because I think this is something that's going to be very interesting to our membership. So thank you very much.

FARZANI BADII: So I just had a question about the assessment panel. Is this like an external expert of people who understand the internet field and they assess? It's not from the community.

SHAYNA ROBINSON: This is Shayna again. Yes, you are correct. So this is an independent evaluation assessment panel or application assessment panel. It will be managed by independent external vendors, so not from us. Giovanni is not just us selecting our friends to be on the panel, but really to have an external vendor to increase independence from ICANN Org. So we'll be sure to share our information about that as soon as we're able to do that.

FARZANEH BADII: Just to follow up, so I'm thinking ahead, but maybe we should also think about having a foundation in the long run, like ICANN foundation, I don't know. It makes it a little bit more independent. And can

community members also apply for these grants or are they not allowed?

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Okay, thank you. So on the subject of the foundation, as some of us may know, the cross-community working group on auction proceeds ended the work with a final report where there are different scenarios about how to disburse the auction proceeds. And the current scenario that has been selected and approved by the board is a scenario that foresees the creation of a department, the one that Shayna is directing within ICANN, to manage those funds. The foundation, of course, as Shayna said, we are into the first grant cycle preparation, so it's going to be a big testbed for all of us, and then we'll see for the future. So we are not in a position to say if in the future it's going to be a foundation or not. This is something that has not been further discussed and investigated.

And then when it comes to community member applying, we have explained and the applicant guide contains the list of requirements for applicants and also the kind of requirements for applications. One of the requirements for applications is that they should not duplicate existing ICANN efforts and activities. And there is a reference to the current strategic plan and operating plan of ICANN so that there is a sense of what are the currently financed ICANN activities. So again, as long as you are submitting a project that is in line with the requirements, both from the applicant and the application perspective, this is a project that will be considered for assessment. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Benjamin.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: Thank you. My name is Benjamin Akinmoyeje, NCUC chair. I just wanted to find out from your team what effort you're doing in terms of making this program publicly available beyond the ICANN community. I mean, there's a lot of money at stake here. And yeah, I just wanted to know. Also support the [inaudible].

SHAYNA ROBINSON: Thanks. This is Shayna again. Exactly. So this is why we're here and talking to you all. We need your support. We've been speaking to groups for the last few months around ICANN to really help and also internally at ICANN to help spread the word. In addition to that, we do have a formal awareness campaign that we've launched earlier in January where we've really targeted a few communities where we think we can have a lot of leverage, specific types of organizations, the academic community, the nonprofit community, and others who are really interested or could benefit from this type of program. But we really, really hope that we extend beyond the traditional ICANN community. But we need all of your support. So please share with your networks. Feel free to share the contact information from the slides if folks have questions. We've tried to make the application and the applicant guide as accessible and as readable as possible so that it's not so intimidating for folks who maybe aren't as familiar with ICANN and the work that goes on here. So we've had that formal campaign, but we also rely on our informal networks to share the word and to get the message out there.

JULF HELSINGIUS: I have Stephanie next.

STEPHANIE PERRIN: I do apologize. I haven't really looked at your website. So that may be the answer to my question. I'm just wondering, I realize you can't very well set out sample projects that you think would qualify. That's kind of leading people by, I don't know, a little too much. But is there any way you could give hypotheticals of the kind of thing that you're looking to fund? Is that going to be in the guidebook?

SHAYNA ROBINSON: This is Shayna again. So there are some more detailed themes and work areas that we are anticipating projects to align to. So you'll see that in our applicant guide. And also if you come to our public session, we'll go through those in a bit more detail. So yes, there are some specific themes and work areas. We do not provide actual ideas or sort of sample proposals because, as you said, we don't want to limit the possibilities of what folks may want to suggest or propose for funding. So again, it's tricky also because this is the first time we're doing this. So we don't have any historical knowledge about things that people are interested in and projects folks want to have funded. But absolutely, check out the applicant guide and look at those themes and work areas for more detail on that.

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- JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. I'm trying to manage the queue here, but it would help if you all would use the Zoom hands. But Tomslin, do you want to go next?
- TOMSLIN SAMME-NLAR: Thank you. I think my question has sort of been asked by Stephanie. And from your response, I was wondering whether we could have one or two themes quickly out of that. We haven't read the guidebook yet, but just curious.
- SHAYNA ROBINSON: This is Shayna again. Thanks. So the two themes, they're kind of no brainers. The first one is the internet's unique identifier systems. So projects that support development and application of that innovation around unique identifier systems. And the second one is around a unified internet. And that can mean a lot of things. That can mean open standards, interoperability, access, sustainability, those kinds of things. So they're pretty broad. But again, we really want to encourage you to think about the work that's important to you, the work that you're doing, things that you hope to do but never had money to do. This is exactly the type of thing that we would love to see proposed.
- GIOVANNI SEPPIA: And thanks for an interesting question. So just to complement what Shayna said, the themes are not themes that have been decided by ICANN Org. They're coming from the recommendations, because there is one recommendation that speaks about the objectives of the program. And so the recommendation had four objectives. And so the themes that Shayna just mentioned, they're coming from the
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objectives. So there is the ICANN mission, the objectives of the program, and then the themes and work areas. So it's like a flow that we have been following for producing those themes and their work areas.

JUAN MANUEL ROJAS:

My question was related to something that Stephanie and Tomslin said, but it's more, in this case, more how would you expect the impact of this? The projects we propose in this grant program, could be local impact, regional impact, or I don't know, or just what kind of impact to—beyond ICANN, because I think it's not just for here, but to apply in a country or a region. That's my question. Thank you.

SHAYNA ROBINSON:

This is Shayna again. That's a great question. And actually, in our application, we would expect applicants to tell us. So we don't have an expectation of the scale of a project. That's something that the applicant would have to detail, whether it's local and specific to a community or really broader and universal and really global in nature. So that's something that you would explain in your application. We also expect that applicants would detail what success looks like. So if this project is successful, what's the impact of that? What are we hoping to achieve? And what are the goals and objectives of what the project is? So these are all things that we would hope applicants would answer and tell us, and things that will help in the assessment of their application. So it's not something that we're trying to prescribe, but really open to hearing from applicants about the impact that they want to see with their projects. Thanks.

INES HFAIEDH:

Thank you very much. Ines Hfaiedh speaking, NCUC Africa representative in the Executive Committee. Thank you very much. Really, I learned a lot from this. My question is, first, is it like a move for ICANN to their corporate social responsibility, kind of, like having projects which have an impact on the social life of some communities? And also, I'm thinking, I think kind of Stephanie asked the same question. So when I checked out the website, you are speaking about diversity and inclusion. Are you thinking about project, because I'm an educational counselor, are you thinking about projects related to education? Would that be interesting? I mean, I'm sure it's the first time and stuff, but you don't really have an idea. But would that work? Thank you.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Yeah, thank you. So those are really interesting questions. So as we are saying, the applicant guide contains work areas that are associated with each of the two themes. And there is also what we call a sort of transversal theme that should accompany. And so if you go to the applicant guide, you can see that while producing their applications, applicants that will pay attention to elements like diversity, inclusion, participation, special attention to underserved population for which there is a definition within the applicant guide. And also the long-term impact of those projects, because there is a moment when the ICANN funding will finish. And if there is a plan for the project to be continued, how the applicant plans to continue resourcing the project. So all those elements are, let's say, good ingredients to be placed in the recipe for a

good project. And so this one, together with meeting the work areas, the objectives, and the ICANN mission are elements to pay attention.

So the applicant guide is not a monster document, as many other special ICANN documents. We wanted really to make it accessible, because the purpose of the program is to be global. And also that's why the applicant guide is really less than 30 pages document. And so we wanted to make it as accessible as possible. And we also created this email address for any question regarding the applicant guide or specific information including the applicant guide. So I think that to answer your question, those elements that you have just mentioned are really elements that the applicant guide also is explaining as good elements to be in a project.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

Thank you so much. And I really appreciate your presentation. So two things is my concern. And it's sort of retreading with my colleagues in the house have actually raised. The first one is the success criteria of this program, because this is related to non-profit organizations. So we want to know what are the success criteria. We know that you said you cannot give us what to put into the application. But we need to have an idea of what you want to measure in terms of those that are submitting applications, what should they look out for. We just don't want to open it to broader than a lot of people submitting applications. And we don't consider that.

That leads me to the second question of we don't want -- how do you -- what volume of these you want to select? Because we don't want a situation whereby we receive 100 applications and we're saying we're

selecting just only five out of it, is frustrating. We just want to know what are the measures, success criteria. The same question Stephanie actually asked. The same that we keep repeating. So we want to really hear from you.

SHAYNA ROBINSON: This is Shayna again. Thank you so much for the question. Again in the applicant guide there's actually an entire rubric that outlines the success criteria and what the independent panelists will be assessing applications on. So you can certainly see that. We'll also go through that in more detail in the public session on Wednesday to ensure that everyone understands exactly what panelists will be looking for and how those projects will be assessed. So I completely hear that and hope you can come to that one. But also check out the applicant guide and happy to talk to you more offline if you'd like as well.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just to follow up. Is that subjective evaluation? Are there defined criteria that guide the evaluator to measure those things? Are there some room for subjective evaluation from the expert?

SHAYNA ROBINSON: Yes. So there is no -- and again, thank you. I think these are really great questions. There isn't really an objective way to assess whether or not a project will be funded. There is no magic stone that will help us do that. There is some level of subjectivity. And we've tried to, by bringing on an external vendor to manage the independent panel, to source panelists who are experts in the field, who understand the trends and

things that are happening in the sector, to address and assess those projects based on their knowledge and expertise. So yes, there is a level of subjectivity. However, that rubric is available. And we're trying to be as transparent and accountable to those standards that we've set and made public. You had another question. I forget now what that second question was. It was about funding.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You've sort of, you know, piled up the whole thing.

SHAYNA ROBINSON: No problem.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So thank you. I have two questions. The first one is, you see, participation, diversity, and all of that, are components of capacity building of some sort. But now you said if the program has already been, and you're already going interventions, that ICANN is already funding one way or the other, you won't—applications doing the same thing might not be successful. What I'm considering, what about some kind of awareness program that will bring newer participation but is because some of these old activities that ICANN have been funding before hasn't gotten any form of engagement from this space, how would that be addressed and things like that?

Then also it seems like the way this—I quickly thank you, the applicant guidebook is simple to read, and I think I've almost understood what is in there right now. It seems like you need an entire consultancy and all

of that to put together a good team to apply for this because all of that. I'm thinking what if somebody has just a small project that doesn't need this humongous amount of money and it's just three people coming together to do something. What are their chances? Because they might not have even staff or great budgets, but they have a good project in a small corner somewhere. How do they stand a chance in this space? Thank you.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thank you. They're both very interesting questions. It's Giovanni. So with reference to your first question regarding if, again, it's content of the project. So currently we're not in a position to tell you if that kind of project that you were just referring to, like something that ICANN has funded in the past but there was no follow-up or there was no awareness, if that can be funded. We are not in a position to say because there is a procedure as described in the applicant guide that will be followed to determine if such kind of project can be eventually funded.

And when it comes to small projects, so for the first grant cycle, the, let's say, funding is between US\$50,000 and 500,000. Those are the caps for the first grant cycle. We are aware there are some small projects and sometimes the small projects are the best projects. And so we really would like to encourage any kind of project, small or big project, to apply for the grant program. And currently we have the US\$50,000 cap. But in the future, for future cycle, we may reevaluate this cap. And nobody is excluding that it could be lower in the future, could be higher. Much depends on this testbed for the first grant cycle.

But I understand also your point about the fact that to submit, you need a group of people who are participating to submit the project. What we are also trying to do is to build an application form online that is simple, so it doesn't need to have bookkeepers or lawyers, something that is really accessible, something that is part of a project management, but at the same time it doesn't require massive work at the time you submit the project. And so this is the approach we are having for the first grant cycle. We are collecting all the input like yours at present, so we are really happy to take this kind of input on board as part of the progress towards the launch of the first cycle and also for refining future cycles.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So thank you very much. My name is [inaudible] and I think my question is a bit closer to what Peter asked earlier. I'm still trying to understand the theory of change that this grant program really wants to achieve, I mean, in a very simple way, because I think that can also guide what kind of projects people will submit. And the second question is how do you plan to include the non-English speakers, because I come from a part of the world where we don't speak English, and those people are excluded? Or the grant platform will be in English and the evaluation will be in their native languages as well? So thank you.

SHAYNA ROBINSON: This is Shayna, thank you so much. In terms of the theory of change, we are really hoping to see that if we support projects around these objectives that support inclusion, diversity, capacity building, that we'll have a stronger base of internet users and stakeholders who are more equipped for the future development of the internet around the world.

So there's a really nice section in the applicant guide that really talks about the intended impact of the program. It's much more elegant than I just described it, but it really is about investing in communities and folks who are interested in furthering future development of the internet and how do we do that. We do that by bringing them into the fold. So that's your first question.

To your second question around language, yes, we are requiring that all applicants submit their application in English. I know that is a barrier for some folks, and again, we'll assess how difficult that is, I understand that. But that is the requirement for this first cycle. So again, if there are challenges around that, please make sure that you register those concerns so that we can take that back and as we make decisions for subsequent cycles that we can be informed.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

That is fine and thank you. So I've observed the same thing with Internet Society. We are in the same ecosystem and I noticed that for the last grant program that they did, almost 80% of the organization come from the United States. So the question that, it comes to my second question that I asked earlier, because it's very important for people around the world. I think the non-connected people are more outside there than in the US. I'm not excluding the US in terms of connectivity, but I think in terms of inclusion, that has to be looked at seriously because if I look at in terms of number, in terms of need out there, not every organization in those countries can submit an application in English and if that has to be something that excludes them from it, from Internet Society, from ICANN, at the end of the day, it will be very difficult for them.

SHAYNA ROBINSON: Thanks. And I will just respond just before I came to this job. I was working at Internet Society, so I know the programs you're talking about. Yes, these are challenges and this is to be expected when you're managing global grant programs. I think it would be really an expectation that we could say this exact number of grants will be allocated per country or per region. I know that feels like the answer, but it's really difficult to do that and it's actually not very fair. So we have to be open. I understand the concerns. I get it. I see it. But again, we've designed the program to really be as accessible as possible. We as a grant program department and as Giovanni, we're available. Again, I can't advise you, I can't give you my opinion on what to submit or what I think will be successful, but we're happy to answer questions and to support as you work through those applications.

Again, in future cycles, if we find that there's a demand for more capacity building on how to design an application, how to design a project, how to outline success and tell the story of what you want to do, then we'll work to do that and build programming around that. But I appreciate that and I hear you. So thanks.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Stephanie next.

STEPHANIE PERRIN: I appreciate the last speaker's concerns and I think maybe this is something, maybe NCSG ought to put in an application in this tranche to provide translation services for members in areas where they need

help with their English translation, because this does seem to be vaguely discriminatory. And it's a hard one to solve. I used to run a small grant program. I know how difficult this can be.

That brings me to my second comment. I'm concerned that if you're trying to make a simple application form, that you're not skipping out on accountability. There are a lot of programs, and if you've been at ISOC recently, I don't really need to pound this home too closely, but there's a lot of grant programs where there isn't a whole lot of follow-up on whether the deliverables meet the expected standards and whether the money was well spent and whether there was conflict of interest and, and, and. And I certainly hope that ICANN's going to hold itself to the highest standards on that, because anything else will draw quite a bit of criticism.

And oh, I had another one, but I'll let it go at that. I've been talking enough. I'll show up at your other meeting and say when it comes back to me. Thank you.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Thank you, Stephanie. It's Giovanni. So to answer this question that you just made, so first of all, there is, there are terms and conditions. There's going to be a grant agreement, so the applicant will be requested to sign off the terms and conditions. If the applicant is successful and therefore it becomes a grantee, the grantee is going to enter into a grant agreement with ICANN. In the grant agreement, there are provisions to make sure that there is a throughout accountability process during the development of the project, which means that ICANN is not going to disburse what is going to be the funding of the project at start, but there

is an initial disbursement and then the following disbursements are associated and subject to the submission of reports, progress reports, both administrative and financial progress reports by the grantee, and those reports will be evaluated so that the disbursement is conditioned on the submission and approval of those reports. So this is to make sure that the funds are disbursed for the delivery of what is, you know, the project as it was proposed. And of course, the project can go through changes over its lifetime, and those changes, there is also a procedure to have those changes communicated to ICANN, and therefore, but the project, you know, and its funding is going to be fully monitored by us.

There was also this question that I saw that you had put in the chat about the publication of the application. So applications will not be published. They will be kept confidential. There is a field in the application form where the applicant is going to be requested to have a sort of short summary of the projects, of the idea they are submitting, and that is the, let's say, the excerpt of the project that ICANN may use still in, let's say, in agreement with the applicant or the grantee to, you know, explain what kind of projects ICANN has been financing. But again, this is really a summary, a very high-level summary of the project, and again, it's going to be only for successful projects.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. Last quick question.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, thank you so much. And that leads me to the question I ask. Okay, when we talked about language diversity, so who sits on the selection

committee to evaluate? So that is another thing that we need to consider. My second question, again, is how will the fund be disbursed in such a way that is there -- I just want to, like, understand how the fund will be disbursed for the selected applicant. So is it one's disbursement? Are there any further criteria for the disbursement of the money, or is there any caveat or clauses in such a way that, oh, this is the project I'm looking at, and we run out of funding, can we still come back and say, this -- we didn't achieve this, can we request for additional funding to be able to achieve the project because we are looking at the success of the program?

SHAYNA ROBINSON:

Thank you. So to your first question about the panelists, we do not know yet who those panelists are. Again, we have an independent vendor who is managing the selection and administration of panelists. They will come from all over the world, from a variety of backgrounds, but certainly, you know, having expertise in technology and IT and Internet. But we don't know them yet, and they're not necessarily -- again, like I said, they're not friends of ours. So we have some independence there. But they will be recruited and managed by the panel. To your second question, I'll let Giovanni answer that one.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

Yeah. It's Giovanni. So regarding the disbursement of the funds, if an applicant is successful and, therefore, the application is approved, the applicant becomes a grantee. There is, you know, the cost of the project and the funding of ICANN, and there is a grant agreement that the applicant is going to be requested to sign to become a grantee officially.

And in that agreement, it's going to be described the disbursement process. So there's going to be an initial disbursement after a certain number of days since the signature of the grant agreement, and then subsequent disbursement will be subject to the submission of progress reports that should be administrative and financial reports by the grantee. And those reports will have to be submitted in the online platform, and they will have to be evaluated and approved by ICANN. And the approval of the subsequent, you know, progress report will trigger the disbursement of the following installment of the funding. So that is, again, to make sure that there is an accountability process embedded in the program to make sure that the funding is spent for the projects that are approved and contracted. T

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. Very quickly, first Ben and then Sam.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE:

I posted a question in the group chat. Do we have the profile of kind of organization we are looking at that we expect to submit applications? First I'm thinking about government organizations. They are not political, but like they are agencies, but probably do similar things or trying to -- I mean, maybe they will be the typical organizations you will [inaudible]. So if we know those organizations, the work you give us to do, that's to put this word out, will be easier for us to do. So we'll just go to those organizations and talk to them. So that's the first question, like what kind of wording should we put out and which kind of organizations do you think we should -- I'm not saying you should tell

me we will be successful, but like kind of organizations that might be suitable candidates for this kind of grant.

Then the other question that I saw and I found it strange, I know I participated -- I've been disqualified from this because I participated in the auction proceed working group a long time ago, so why that?

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

So I'll take the second one, which is this conflict of interest provisions that we have built for the program. We understand the point. We understand also that part of the recommendation of the cross-community working group on auction proceed is that the grant program should be developed considering also robust conflict of interest provisions. And robust conflict of interest provisions are not only looking at conflict of interest per se, but also at the perception of possible conflict of interest. So that's why we want to be very strict to make sure that the grant program is a global, accessible grant program that is -- I'm not saying immune from conflict of interest, but at least in a safe box, because again, we are launching it, and anything that may happen in the launch may affect future cycles. So we want to make sure that the conflict of interest measures are the highest possible to enable the program to live for the coming years and for future cycles. And then there was your first question. And so again, it's a bit difficult for us to say that at present. And again, it's a process that we are going to board on together. And so the best I would say at this stage is really have a clear look at the applicant guide. Just look at what's written in the applicant guide. Make sure that if there is any question about the applicant guide, we have this dedicated email address. There is also the

ICANN support help desk. And then we are here. As Shayna said, we are available all this week, but also for the future days, weeks, to provide support.

Because again, you know, I understand the language. I understand that you like to receive more tips and tricks about how to produce an application. But at the same time, it's a project and it's a big program that we are doing together. So it's thanks to all of us. So thanks to those who are having their hands into the program. Thanks to the community. Thanks also to those who are not members of the ICANN community, because really, as we say, we just want this to be a global program that we will make the future of the program.

SAM LANFRANCO:

A comment to the program committee and to the community. For communities that don't handle English, there are a dozen or more organizations like Translators Without Borders who will translate your material for free. And so you submit a verified copy in English. And the program may make that information available to potential candidates.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA:

we are not going to pay attention to the grammar. It's really the project per se that counts. If there is a typo, if there is a grammar issue, I'm not English mother tongue, as you can easily guess. It's not that we are looking at. So just rest assured that those who are not English mother tongue, it's not an English grammar test. It's not the Cambridge certificate or whatever, the TOEFL, no, it's not that one.

WISDOM DONKOR: I had wanted to ask them to elaborate more on the conflict of interest. But I think he has done that, and I'm fine.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. I think I have to end this conversation. It's gone a little bit over time. So very quickly, one thing I still want to squeeze in is a very quick report on the seat 14 from Farzaneh. So thank you to the two of you. Really appreciate you being here, and sorry of taking so much of your time.

FARZANEH BADII: Thank you. Thank you so much. So if you know about this, the board seat 14, we have to come up with a board candidate for seat 14 with CSG, with the commercial stakeholder group. So it is a contracted party house -- sorry, noncontracted party house or NCPH decision. The past few months, we had a few problems because we couldn't come to a decision to who to appoint. And as a result of that kind of struggle, we convened this working group on board seat 14 to look at potential solutions for how to not delay the process of appointments of the board and how not to face a deadlock. Because we kind of did, and we had to tell the board—ICANN Legal which board member we wanted to be on the board, and we were late and there was quite a lot of angst.

So in order to solve that problem, we have this kind of working group, it's Rafik, Bruna, and I, and a bunch of CSG people. And so there are three from our side and three from their side. So today I had a meeting with them and we discussed -- I'm going to share this with you on the

mailing list. We discussed the goals and potential work plan of what we want to do and what are the solutions that we want to come up with.

At NCSG, we are quite sure that we don't want to make fundamental changes to the procedures. We think that procedures are accurate and appropriate and they were -- we came up with those procedures with the CSG. But we probably need some kind of best practices and approaches to avoid this kind of delay that we faced. And that's about it. I will share with you the work plan and the strategy that we have and if you have any comments -- and we have to like -- also like the first step to do some kind of fact finding on what went wrong and why we face these issues. So we are in that stage. And then we are going to move ahead and we are going to take our time because we do have two and a half years for the next appointment. But the plan, the rough deadline, the aspired deadline is to come up with solutions until like next year. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you, Farzaneh. Quick but informative. Tomslin?

TOMSLIN SAMME-NLAR: Will the constituency [inaudible] best practice?

FARZANEH BADII: So actually we talked about that. The CSG was talking about okay, how about we come up with some kind of mutual criteria for the Board? And I argued that like for example like how many years of experience on the board and stuff like that. I said we can't come up with strict criteria, but

we can come up with like ideal criteria that we want in a board member so that we don't waste time introducing people that we know that we are going to hear no from the CSG or vice versa. And I suggested that we kind of come up with some kind of best practices. They said that you know it's not nice to say no thank you and we need to have interview processes and stuff like that. I said well it's actually quite okay with us if you say no thank you. But if we want to be collegial and polite, then we come up with these best practices and say, oh, we should give you an opportunity to do an interview. And I think it's an okay idea to do that. We have time to waste you know.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. Any more questions for Farzaneh? Yes, go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

Thank you so much for that update. What I see here is a kind of informal politic going on in between, because this is just one seat actually. So I'm glad that we are not going the route of changing procedures and thereabouts and trying to like we just need to enhance relationship communication in between. So and that brought me to this as NCSG and the house that we need to start raising quality people that we think not just we should be waiting for that time. So we need to raise people so that when we nominate them, know that the existing ones—and I'm just speaking this from what has happened and transpired, that people that has consensus that when we push them forward and they will not be back and forth. So we just need to find a way, like you said, best practice, if we can agree to best practices, then it will really help us to not be going back and forth on selections and wasting time, because

this actually makes us look bad, waiting for the non-contracted party house to actually select board member for the seat when NomCom is done with their other people and we're waiting for ourselves. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. We are out of time, so I will have to close the meeting, and everything that's left on the agenda will be handled over email. Thank you everybody.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]