



79 | COMMUNITY FORUM



New gTLD Program: Next Round Implementation Status Update

ICANN79 Prep Week

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21 February 2024, 18:00-19:30 UTC



Agenda

1. Update on the implementation of the new governance model
2. State of implementation
 - a. Applicant Guidebook
 - b. Applicant Support Program
 - c. Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program
3. What to expect at ICANN79
4. Q and A

Update on the implementation of the new governance model

Agenda Item #1

Recent developments

- Appointment of new leadership team (1 November 2023):



Marika Konings, Program Owner



Lars Hoffmann, Program Manager

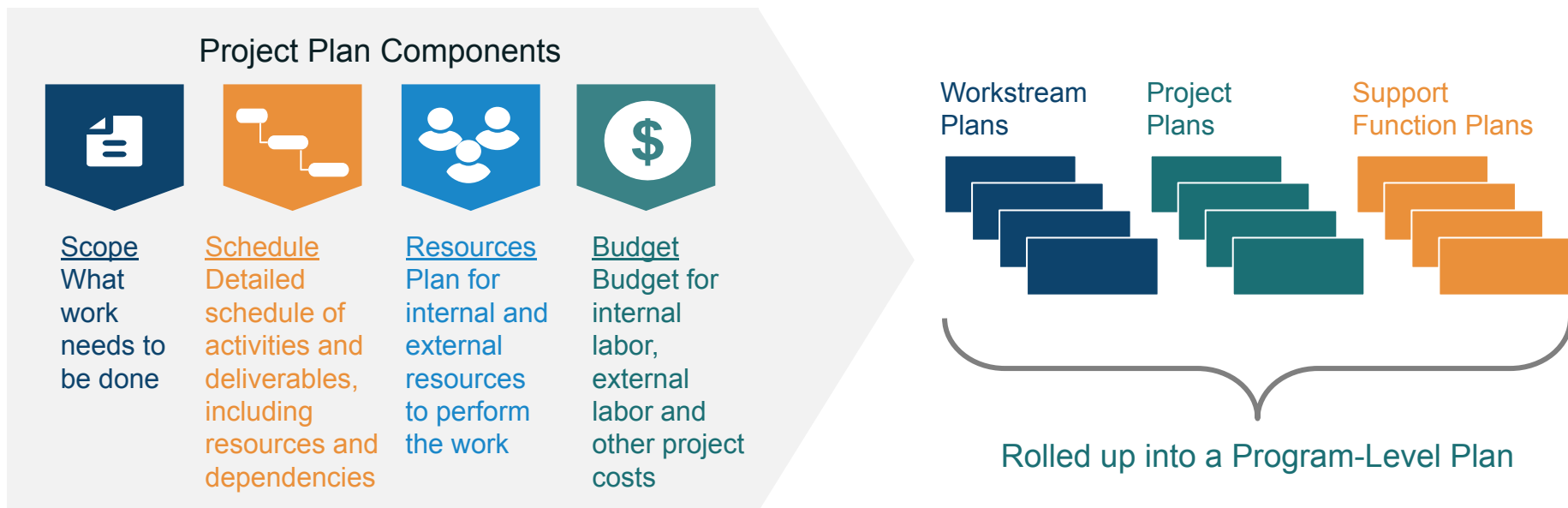


Julie Hoffmeister, Implementation Manager

- Program Organization, including establishment/confirmation of leadership at workstream, project and functional level

Program Governance Recap and Progress to Date

Objective: Align the overall program plan to each workstream, project, and supporting function to provide increased visibility, ownership, and governance.



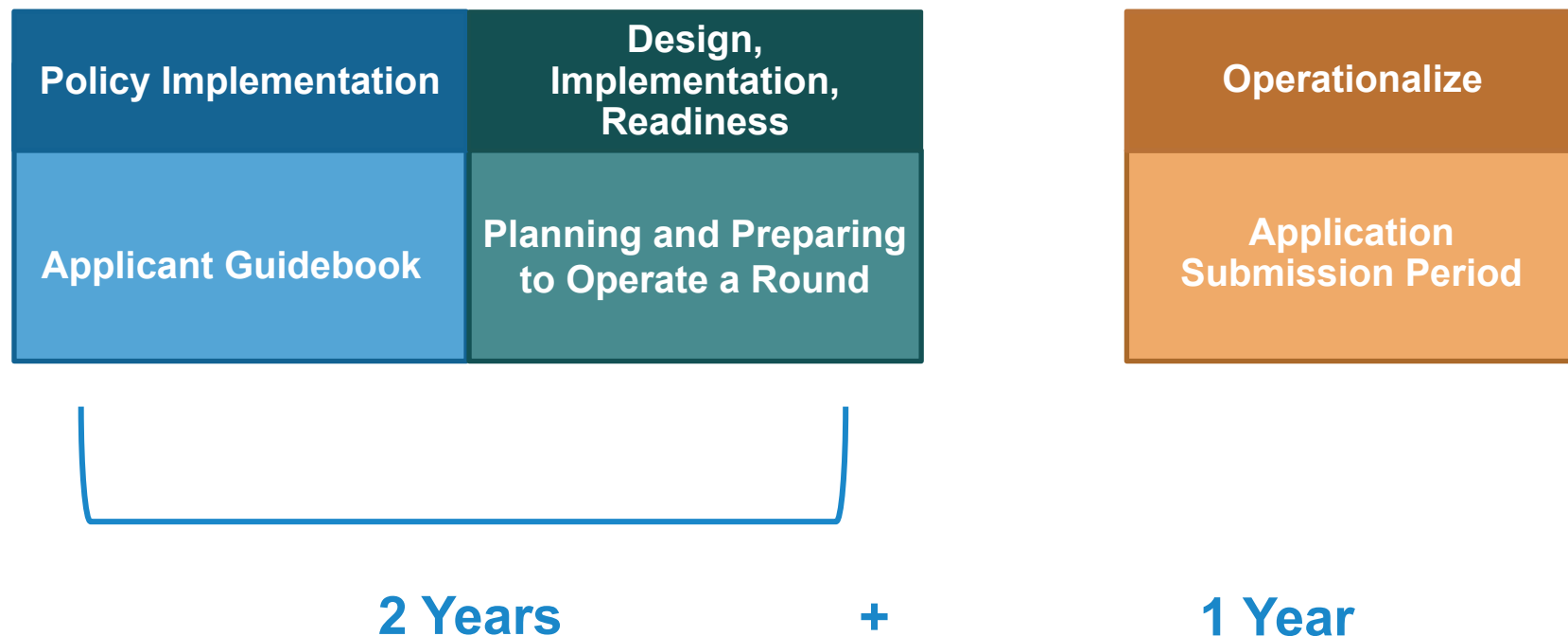
Next Steps:

- Teams continue to develop detailed plans, with support from program management
- Development of program-level plans based upon a roll up of detailed plans
- Documentation of a critical path to open the round, including dependencies within the program and external to the program
- Identification of major risks and issues with the detailed plan

Next Round Program Status Dashboard

Workstream / Project / Function	Status				
	All	Scope	Schedule	Resources	Budget
Overall Next Round Program	●	●	●	●	●
Workstreams					
Policy Development	●	●	●	●	●
Program Design	●	●	●	●	●
Infrastructure Development	●	●	●	●	●
Operationalization	●	●	●	●	●
Projects					
Project Foundations	●	●	●	●	●
ASP	●	●	●	●	●
RSP	●	●	●	●	●
TAMS	●	●	●	●	●
Contracting	●	●	●	●	●
Post Contracting & Ops	●	●	●	●	●
Fee Structure	●	●	●	●	●
Engagement, Comms and Website	●	●	●	●	●
RST	●	●	●	●	●
Support Functions					
Program Management	●	●	●	●	●
Finance	●	●	●	●	●
Human Resources	●	●	●	●	●
Vendor Management	●	●	●	●	●
Legal	●	●	●	●	●

Path to the Next and Future Rounds: “2+1”



Current target date for opening of the application window: April 2026

State of Implementation

Agenda Item #2

Applicant Guidebook

Agenda Item #2a

Context

- ICANN org is working in cooperation with the [Implementation Review Team](#) (IRT) on the drafting of the **Applicant Guidebook** based on the Board-approved outputs from the [Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process](#).
- Target date for submitting the complete AGB for Public Comment: **31 May 2025**.

Project Information	IRT Information
05/16/23	93
1st IRT meeting	# Members
05/31/25	35
Expected AGB completion	# Full IRT meetings held
280	33%
Days since 1st IRT meeting	% Full IRT attendance
466	3
Days to expected AGB completion	# Sub-Tracks
	14
Project Health	# Sub-Track meetings held

What has happened since ICANN78?

- Discussions around the draft **policy language** for the following topics were initiated with the IRT:
 - Topic 3 | Applications Assessed in Rounds
 - Topic 6 | Registry Service Provider Pre-Evaluation
 - Topic 17 | Applicant Support
 - Topic 19 | Application Queuing
 - Topic 28 | Role of Application Comment
 - Topic 30 | GAC Consensus Advice and GAC Early Warning
 - Topic 31 | Objections
 - Topic 39 | Registry System Testing
 - Root Zone Label Generation Rules module
- Three **sub-tracks** were launched:
 - [Applicant Support Program](#)
 - [Registry Service Provider Evaluation](#)
 - [Registry System Testing](#)

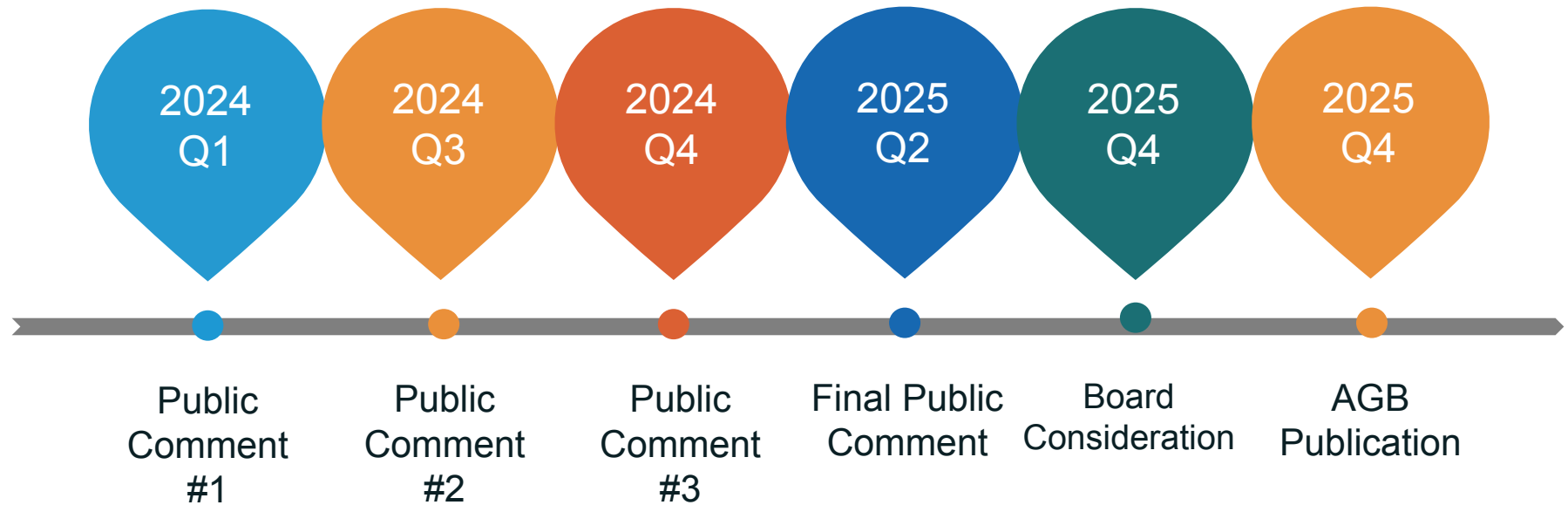
What has happened since ICANN78? (cont'd)

- An initial **Public Comment** proceeding was [launched](#) on 1 February 2024 and will stay open through 19 March 2024.
 - Next Public Comment proceedings of draft AGB sections planned for Q3 2023
 - The entire draft AGB will go through a final round of Public Comment prior to the launch of the Next Round.
- Work on the **Community Consultation on Public Interest Commitments/Registry Voluntary Commitments (PICs/RVCs)** was [started](#), with the objective to ensure that the framework for implementing the relevant Final Report recommendations, adopted by the ICANN Board on [26 October 2023](#), remains consistent with the ICANN Bylaws.
 - A [webinar](#) was held on 18 December 2023.
 - The Community Consultation was launched on 21 November 2023.

What has happened since ICANN78? (cont'd)

- The Board acted on the GAC Advice on Closed Generics and in a [letter dated 22 January 2024](#), the ICANN Board informed the At-Large Advisory Committee and the Generic Names Supporting Organization Council of its decision that “***closed generic gTLD applications*** will not be permitted until such time as there is an approved methodology and criteria to evaluate whether or not a proposed closed domain is in the public interest.”

Timeline for AGB



Open for submission

Topic
2. Predictability
3. Applications Assessed in Rounds
8. Conflicts of Interest
10. Applicant Freedom of Expression
11. Universal Acceptance
21. Reserved Names
21. Geographic Names

N.B. No extension will be granted.

Public Comment #2 | Q3 2024

Topic	Expected IRT Discussions
30. GAC Consensus Advice and GAC Early Warning 28. Role of Application Comment	✓
24. String Similarity Evaluations Root Zone Label Generation Rules 19. Application Queuing 31. Objections	ongoing
20. Application Change Requests 5. Applications Submission Limits 16. Applications Submission Period	March 2024
4. Different TLD Types 23. Closed Generics 22. Registrant Protections 25. IDNs	April 2024
15. Application Fees 18. Terms and Conditions 33. Dispute Resolution Procedures After Delegation	May 2024
27. Applicant Reviews	June 2024

Topic	Expected IRT Discussions
35. Auctions 32. Limited Challenge/Appeal Mechanism	July 2024
36. Base Registry Agreement	August 2024
29. Name Collisions 7. Metrics and Monitoring DNS Stability	September 2024
34. Community Applications 9. Registry Voluntary Commitments / Public Interest Commitments	October 2024

Remaining Dependencies for Policy Implementation

The timeline for drafting the AGB is dependent on the successful delivery of the following dependencies:

Board:

- Board agree on framework for **PICs/RVCs**.
- Board decision on how to proceed with **Private Resolution of Contention Sets**.
- Decision on **Limited Challenges/Appeals**.
- Addressing open **advice**.
- Consideration of and Council-approved **supplemental recommendations**, if applicable.
- Consideration of **IDNs EPDP Phase 1** Final Report.

Community:

- Completion of **IDNs EPDP Phase 2**.
- Completion of **NCAP2** (will become a Board dependency once submitted to ICANN Board).
- Finalizing and approving **supplemental recommendations**.

Applicant Support Program

Agenda Item #2b

Applicant Support Program

- The Applicant Support Program (ASP) is an initiative of ICANN's New gTLD Program.
- The ASP is intended to provide financial and non-financial support for eligible entities that demonstrate financial need.
- The ASP is designed to be in line with Affirmation 1.3 of the [Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures](#) Policy Development Process:
 - “The Working Group affirms that the primary purposes of new gTLDs are to foster diversity, encourage competition, and enhance the utility of the DNS.”

SubPro Final Report Outputs: Applicant Support

Applicant Support Topic in SubPro Final Report includes:

- **8 Recommendations**

- Recommendation 17.1: Fee reduction
- Recommendation 17.2: Expanding the scope of financial support
- Recommendation 17.3: Outreach, awareness-raising, application evaluation, and program evaluation elements, as well as usability of the Program
- Recommendation 17.11: Consider leveraging the same procedural practices used for other panels
- Recommendation 17.12: ICANN org plan for funding the ASP
- Recommendation 17.15: Bid credit, multiplier, or other similar mechanism
- Recommendation 17.18: Applicants must have the option to transfer to the standard application process & pay the fee
- Recommendation 17.19: The Financial Assistance Handbook to be incorporated into the AGB

- **11 Implementation Guidelines**

What has happened since ICANN78?

- **Public Comment**
 - On the Draft of the ASP Handbook, Currently ongoing: 12 February 2024 - 02 April 2024
- **Support Applicant Review Panel (SARP) RFP Announcement**
 - Announcement published 12 February 2024
- **GNSO Guidance Process on Applicant Support**
 - Nine guidance recommendations are awaiting Board consideration
 - Where applicable, ICANN org included its current interpretation of the GGP guidance recommendations in the draft ASP Handbook.

What has happened since ICANN78? (cont'd)

- **Recent work with the IRT**

- The ASP-IRT sub-track commenced on 30 November 2023 and has been discussing the Draft ASP Handbook.

- [Link to the ASP IRT Wiki](#)

- [IRT Meeting #26a](#)

- [IRT Meeting #26b](#)

- **Updates on the ASP Funding Plan**

- To be shared with the ASP IRT Sub-track and appended to the ASP Handbook once available.
- Proposal for cost-sharing between ICANN org and cost-recovery.

- **Ongoing further planning work** re: the expanded scope of ASP support

- Pending Board consideration of supplemental Rec 17.2

RFP for Support Applicant Review Panel (SARP)

- [Request for Proposal: ICANN Support Application Review Panel](#)
- **Overview:**
 - ICANN issued a request for proposal (RFP) to identify a supplier to assemble and manage one or more Support Application Review Panel(s) to conduct evaluations of Applicant Support Program (ASP) applications
 - ICANN seeks to engage experienced and competent suppliers who can carry out a fair, efficient, consistent, and reliable process to assess ASP applicants based upon the criteria of the program.
- **ICANN Community is kindly asked to circulate the RFP announcement to their networks.**
 - Closing date for RFP 8 April 2024.

Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program

Agenda Item #2c

Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program

- Registry Services Providers deliver critical functions on behalf of the registry operator, such as RDAP, EPP, DNS, and DNSSEC.
- The RSP Evaluation Program streamlines the gTLD application process by evaluating the RSPs separately from gTLD Registry Operators.
- Ensures that RSPs have the proper technical qualifications for running a gTLD back-end.
- A list of pre-evaluated RSPs will be available before the gTLD application submission period opens.
- New gTLD applicants are required to use evaluated RSPs.

What has happened since ICANN78?

- **Technical Questionnaire Reviews**

- The technical questionnaires for RSP applications were reviewed by an IRT sub-track on 28 November 2023 and 12 December 2023.
- Questions covered:
 - Main RSP, DNS RSP, DNSSEC RSP, and Proxy RSP applications
 - IDN and Registry Services Applications

- **Full RSP Handbook Reviews**

- RSP Handbook reviewed by IRT on 8 February 2024 and 22 February 2024.
- Covers all materials needed by applicants including information on using the RSP Evaluation System for applications.
- The RSP Handbook is planned to go for public comments in early March 2024.

What has happened since ICANN78? (cont'd)

- **RSP Evaluation System**

- RSP Evaluation System development completed its first phase in January 2024.
- Second and final phase to end in Q2 2024.

- **Registry System Testing (RST 2.0)**

- Integration points between the RSP Evaluation System and RST 2.0 are being defined and developed.

What to expect at ICANN79

Agenda Item #3

Next Round Related Sessions @ ICANN79

Time UTC	Time AST	Session
Saturday, 2 March 2024		
13:00-14:00	09:00-10:00	GNSO: IDN EPDP Working Session
14:30-16:00	10:30-12:00	GDS: SubPro IRT Work Session (1 of 3)
Sunday, 3 March 2024		
14:30-16:00	10:30-12:00	GNSO Council Working Session (2 of 3)
17:15-18:30	13:15-14:30	GAC Discussion on New gTLD Program Next Round (1/2)
Monday, 4 March 2024		
14:30-16:00	10:30-12:00	Plenary Session: Community Consultation on PICs and RVCs
17:15-18:30	13:15-14:30	Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) Discussion Working Group Meeting
19:00-20:00	15:00-16:00	Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) Discussion Working Group Meeting
20:15-21:30	16:15-17:30	GDS: Subpro IRT Work Session (2 of 3)

Next Round Related Sessions @ ICANN79 (cont'd)

Time UTC	Time AST	Session
Tuesday, 5 March 2024		
19:00-20:00	15:00-16:00	New gTLD Program Next Round: Planning for String Similarity Review Work Session
Wednesday, 6 March 2024		
14:30-16:00	10:30-12:00	GNSO SubPro Supplemental Recommendations Community Consultation
20:15-21:30	16:15-17:30	GDS: Subpro IRT Work Session (3 of 3)
Thursday, 7 March 2024		
13:00-14:00	09:00-10:00	GNSO Council Small Team Plus - SubPro Supplemental Recommendations Work Session

Engage with ICANN



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ANNEXES

Reference Material

- [Implementation Review Team workspace](#)
- [Blog: ICANN is Building Awareness to Support the New gTLD Program: Next Round](#) (February 2024)
- [Board Resolution](#) (October 2023)
- [Scorecard](#) (October 2023)
- [Board Resolution](#) (September 2023)
- [Scorecard](#) (September 2023)
- [GNSO Council to ICANN Board: Transmission of Clarifying Statement to ICANN Board](#) (September 2023)
- [Next Round Implementation Plan](#) (July 2023)
- [Board Resolution](#) (March 2023)
- [Scorecard](#) (March 2023)
- [New Generic Top-Level Domain \(gTLD\) Subsequent Procedures Operational Design Assessment \(ODA\)](#) (December 2022)
- [Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process](#) (February 2021)
- [gTLD Applicant Guidebook](#) (June 2012)