
ICANN83 | Prep Week – New gTLD Program: Next Round Implementation Status Update
Tuesday, May 27, 2025 – 20:00 to 21:30 CEST

RENATE DE WULF

Hello and welcome to this session, New gTLD Program: Next Round Implementation Status Update. My name is Renate de Wolf, and I'm the remote participation manager for this session.

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Interpretation for this session will include French and Spanish. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking in a language other than English. Please speak at a reasonable pace. I'll now hand the floor over to Lars Hoffmann.

LARS HOFFMANN

Thank you, Renate. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, everyone. Welcome to our ICANN83 prep week update. This is the

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Next Round New gTLD program Implementation Status Update. If I can see the next slide, please, Renate. And one more. Thank you.

My name is Lars Hoffmann, as Renate said. I'm based in the Brussels office. I'm the deputy lead for the program. Our lead, Marika Koenings, is on a well-deserved break. So I'm afraid you'll have to do with me for the introduction today. Marika will obviously be back next week, and she'll be in Prague as well.

With that, here's the agenda for today. We'll give an overview. We go through some of the aspects of the program here, including ASP-RSP, the applicant journey. Update also on the registry agreement activities. Then we talk about readiness, ICANN in your language. And give a brief overview of what to expect at the upcoming meeting in Prague. And obviously, there will be Q&A at the end.

If there's any urgent questions, please raise your hand or add it into the chat. We'll try to capture that. Otherwise, I think it would be good to ask the question at the end of each section and then obviously the Q&A at the end as well. With that, I'll give it a go. Renate, next slide, please. And one more. And one more, it seems. Thank you.

All right. This is more than a traffic light now. Ombre traffic light system. And for the program status, this is true as of 30th of April, we do these monthly. And so, we hopefully will get the May one just in time for Prague. But this is true as of the 30th of April. You see the overall program is kind of middle of the road, yellow veering towards green. And overall, you see that here. I'm not going to go

line by line. It's mostly green, a couple of yellows. And then the RST program has a scheduling red dot. We're working on a mitigation plan here to launch that ASAP and we'll communicate that as well as soon as feasible. But we do not think this has an impact on the overall launch or on the program overall. The next slide, please.

And before I talk about the next slide, just very quickly, the deck will be available as soon as possible on the meetings page after the call. You see here the critical path. These are the different steps that we require to launch operate the program. As you know, our target goal for opening the Next Round remains April 2026. So, 11 months and counting. And the green squares, I guess, those steps that we have already completed.

And so, you see that kind of technical shared service completed here, the fifth block from the left. The ASP has launched on the top. And then the bottom, the RSP has also launched, in fact, has closed as well. We're looking at the RST 2.0 to be completed next. You see a target date here for July. And the draft public comment, sorry, the public comment for the draft AGB will also launch hopefully by the end of this week. That remains our goal as we communicated it also to the IRT.

And then you see the next steps here, the adoption of the AGB, the adoption of the Base Registry Agreement. The goal for that is December. I think technically there's a little bit more time for the Base RA. The guidebook has to be published four months before

the launch of the Next Round. So, December is a big deadline for that. And we are also working here on the evaluation of vendors, contracting, etc., etc. That's all part of the eventual launch of the round in April 26. Next slide, please, Renata. Thank you.

It's kind of a little bit of text to what you just saw. The key milestones here, the RSP launched November last year. The website here is also completed. Again, we have limited time. I won't read through all of this. The RSP has now closed. It will open again in parallel with the Next Round. So, providers or potential providers can apply again the next year.

The ASP also launched in November last year. That program remains open for application, I believe, until November. You see as well the vendor has been hired, completed, and the website is up to date as well. On the Applicant Guidebook, you see we just spoke about that as well. There was outstanding advice. I think we still had that at the last prep week session. So, that has been completed as well on SAC114.

The CPE criteria, which were also hanging chat as it were, have also been included in the draft Applicant Guidebook that is due to go for public comment this week, as I said. Then the Base RA, which we're aiming to publish at the same time as the draft Applicant Guidebook, as the then future hopefully adopted Applicant Guidebook in December this year. Then you see at the bottom here the launch for the program in April. The guidebook has to go out.

The vendors have to be in place. The application system has to be obviously operational. Those things are due in April next year.

The Name Collision observatory system, we don't have a date for that yet. Then the operationalization of staffing obviously has to be also in place for when we are ready to receive applications next year. With that, I think this was the initial overview section. I will pass it on for now to my colleague, Kristy Buckley, who will talk about the Applicant Support Program in more detail. Kristy, over to you, please.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

Thank you very much, Lars. Welcome, everyone. I'm Kristy Buckley. I serve as the lead for the Next Round's Applicant Support Program. As you see on this slide, we have a number of applications in progress, 44 in total, with one application at the bottom there noted as withdrawn. We recently had three applications proceed to the external evaluator for phase two of the evaluation process, so we are seeing some movement in that pipeline in terms of applications progressing. The team has also put together a brief survey for ASP applicants, which I will touch upon a bit more in a moment. Next slide.

Here you can see the regional breakdown of ASP applications. The bar graphs show the total number of ASP applications in the region in green, with the blue bar representing the number of countries in that region. So, for example, Africa has seven ASP applications across four different countries. For context, on the right-hand side,

we have included the 2012 ASP applications, just noting here that there were three in total and one that qualified for support. Next slide, please.

As I mentioned, we are recognizing that most ASP applicants are still in the early stages of their application, so the team has developed a brief five-question survey to understand potential challenges, as well as the likelihood of applicants submitting an ASP application, and also to give them an opportunity to ask the applicant counselor to reach out to them. Based upon the responses so far, the team is analyzing the challenges that were identified. We're planning a recording for a tutorial webinar for applicants based upon what we've heard. We are publishing the pro bono professional services and mentor list as a resource. And we're creating tailored responses via the applicant counselor to highlight available resources, and to learn more about where they might be challenged. Next slide, please.

More broadly, the team continues to raise awareness about the Applicant Support Program with a new social media campaign starting soon. The team continues to work on applicant readiness and capacity development materials, including a welcome package once ASP applicants qualify for support, as well as more comprehensive applicant onboarding and learning journeys to prepare them for the gTLD application process. And I'll speak in a few moments more about readiness tools and resources that are underway. Next slide.

Our current focus with the ASP Capacity Development Plan is to ensure that as the first supported applicants are approved, we can get them started right away on building and reinforcing their foundational knowledge of ICANN, the DNS ecosystem, and the new gTLD program overall. So, this work includes a self-assessment to identify where applicants might want to start their learning journey depending on how much experience they have, resources to help orient them to the Applicant Support Program, and to ICANN touch points with the Applicant Counselor, and introductions to pro bono service providers and mentors to access more in-depth guidance. With that, I will turn it over to my colleague, Gustavo, to talk about RSP. Thank you.

GUSTAVO LOZANO IBARRA

Sorry, I was on mute. Next slide, please. So, in the case of the RSP program, as you may be aware, we opened the pre-evaluation period on November 19, and it's now officially closed. It closed on May 20. Now, the next step and the focus of the organization is to do technical evaluation, which is basically the review of the answers that were provided by RSP applicants to the questions that you can find on Appendix A of the RSP Handbook. For those interested in knowing those questions, as I mentioned before, they are in Appendix A. Every question must be answered. Every question must have a 100% pass rate in order to clear technical evaluation. And it's important to mention that more than 50% of the questions are yes or no answers. Next slide, please.

And for those of you that have participated in previous webinars, this diagram depicts all the different steps in the RSP evaluation program. First, we start with the completed check, then we have legal compliance, then we have the payment, background screening, and most of the applicants, they have gone through all these steps. Now, next slide, please.

The organization is going to focus on what you have on that red square, which is basically technical screening or technical evaluation. And once the RSP applicants clear technical evaluation, we have the step of technical testing, which is performed using the registry system testing, and final publication. Next slide, please.

This is the statistics as of May 20th. These are the statistics that we computed or analyzed after we closed the window. We have 19 applications or organization applications that are in draft. These won't proceed because they didn't submit an application before the period closed. We have nine organization applications that are initiated, and so basically they have submitted applications. These applications will continue as also as the 13 that are in submitted states. So, of this total, those 19 won't proceed, and the rest, they may proceed if they decide, depending on the status, to proceed with payment or once they clear background screening. Next slide, please.

This slide shows the RSP applications at the moment of the closure of the pre-evaluation window. As you can see, we have a good

number of RSP applications for additional registry services, IDN applications, for the main types, sorry, for the core types, like main, DNS, DNSSEC, and proxy, and you can see that we have zero on the right because, well, we have not yet done the evaluation, right? Once we start doing the evaluation, you will see that those numbers to the right will change over time. Next slide, please.

And this is the number of organizations per region. Well, that total number is 65, and again, of those 65, 19 won't continue because they didn't submit an application before the period closed. And with this, I'm going to hand over to Jared.

JARED ERWIN

Hi, everyone. My name is Jared Erwin. I work with Lars in getting the AGB out the door. So, I'm just going to provide a quick update on the status of that. Lars touched on a couple of the points earlier. We can go to the next slide, Jia. Thank you. So, as Lars mentioned, the goal is to post the full draft of the AGB by this Friday on the 30th of May, which will open the public comment period, which will be open for 54 days, which takes us to the 23rd of July.

After that time, we'll be working to review the comments that we received and making any updates as necessary and going through those updates and comments with the IRT. And as you can see, that will take us through August to October, after which time, that we'll present the final version, final draft of the AGB to the Board, review that with the Board for their approval and adoption of the AGB, which we're expecting that that would be done no later than

December, that the final version of the AGB would be published no later than December.

Next week, after we post the AGB for public comment, we will be having a couple of webinars on the AGB, where we'll provide a more detailed overview of what is in the AGB, going through several of the modules and key sections and highlighting key points on that. And you can see the invite link there, that will be on the 3rd of June, and we'll have two sessions to accommodate different time zones. So, we hope that we'll see you there as well. I think that's it for me. And so, I'm not sure. I think that's Justin next. Thank you.

JUSTIN HO

Thanks, Jared. So, I'm Justin Ho, and I serve as Deputy to Yuko, who is the lead of the gTLD Application Program, or GAP. Can I go to the next slide? Thank you.

So, this is a high-level flow which shows the applicant journey from submission to delegation. Not all of these steps are mandatory. Specific applications journey depends on its application type, other submitted applications, and input from the public or ICANN community. Can I go to the next slide?

So, this is a more focused view from submission to prioritization draw. So, starting from the beginning, once the window opens, prospective applicants can begin providing the necessary organization application data, including a replacement string within the TLD application management system, or TAMS. After the

submission window closes, ICANN confirms payment of the gTLD evaluation fee, performs an administrative check on those paid applications, and forms preliminary string contention sets based on identical string matches. And after that admin period ends, the public portions of the submitted applications and the preliminary contention sets are published on reveal day.

So, reveal day opens the replacement period, allowing applicants the opportunity to review public application data, and then choose between their original or replacement string, if they chose to submit one. And on string confirmation day, the public pages are updated with each application's confirmed string selection, and the preliminary contention sets are also updated accordingly.

The string confirmation day is a trigger for a number of events, including the prioritization draw, community input, which is represented by the pink arrows, objections, and string evaluation. Just going over to the prioritization draw first, that's where applicants may opt in and pay a fee. The draw event determines the order for applications to undergo a temporary delegation, contention resolution, and application applicant evaluations.

Looking a little bit lower to those pink arrows, during this application comment period, the public can provide public and confidential comments on applications through the Application Comment Form, or ACF. GAC members may issue early warnings, allowing applicants an avenue to address the specific GAC member's concerns, and objections can be filed during this time if

someone withstanding believes an applicant should not be allowed to operate a TLD for a given string. At the same time, independent objectors may also file objections based on the submitted public comments.

Lastly, we have the singular/plural notifications, which may be submitted through the New gTLD website. Any approved singular/plural notifications may affect the final contention sets. May I go to the next slide, please?

So, this slide is talking about String Evaluation and Contention Resolution. So, as I previously stated, string evaluations start after string confirmation day. It evaluates all applied for strings against the evaluation areas listed on the left side of the slide. These evaluation results are published and determine whether applicants are eligible to proceed with their applied for string. At the same time, the official contention sets are published, and they're used for contention set procedures. This publication triggers an additional string confusion objection window.

Going back to the green string evaluation box. Temporary delegation of applied for strings determines if any are a high risk for a name collision. At the same time, challenges may be filed against a number of the string evaluation results. You can look at the left side list for asterisks to see which ones are eligible for a challenge.

Moving forward on to string contention, this is a major divergence point between applications in contention and applications not in contention. For those that aren't in contention, they're able to

proceed to the next phase, which is application and applicant evaluations. It's represented by that B on the slide. Applications in contention proceed to contention resolution. These are processes which determine which applications in a contention set may proceed to application and applicant evaluations.

Applications in a contention set may undergo community priority evaluation or CPE or brand string change to determine a prevailing application. The contention set undergoes an auction if CPE or brand string change are not invoked by the applicants or if these processes do not resolve contention. After these processes, the prevailing application is then allowed to proceed to application and applicant evaluations. Next slide, please.

Application and applicant evaluations evaluates an applicant's eligibility to operate a TLD and whether the applicant's stated intentions for a TLD operation are compliant with ICANN's rules, procedures, and bylaws. After these evaluation results are published, an applicant may be or application may be eligible for extended evaluation or a challenge. You can refer to the list at the bottom to see which ones are eligible and just that full list of applicant application evaluations.

Moving onward from there. Applications that receive an overall passing result succeed in extended evaluation or if an evaluation challenge results in an overall passing result, that application is invited to execute a registry agreement with ICANN for that applied for string. After executing that registry agreement, applicants

become a new registry operator and they need to complete onboarding activities to ensure compliance with contractual obligations and operational responsibilities.

After completing these activities, the TLD is allowed to delegate into the DNS root zone. I'm happy to take any questions at the end of the webinar, but as of now, I'm going to pass the mic to Karla to speak on Base Registry Agreement.

KARLA HAKANSSON

Thanks, Justin. Hello, everyone. Can you hear me okay? Thumbs up. Yes, great. Thanks, Catherine. All right, so next slide, please. This is a relatively quick update as it relates to the Next Round Base Registry Agreement. We continue to work with the SubPro IRT to finalize the implementation of the SubPro recommendations. We also continue to work with the RySG to finalize the operational updates.

Just as a reminder, we have these parallel paths that are happening with both the SubPro IRT specifically on policy-related issues and any operational updates with the RySG. We had hoped to have the registry agreement posted for public comment at the end of this week, closer to the date of the AGB. But we have decided to move that out to the 4th of June, which is just next week. It will still be out for the full public comment until mid-July, and we will have a second public comment period beginning in mid-September

through the end of October. If you could move to the next slide, please. Thank you.

So just as a roadmap as far as how we are working through this, we will have the public coming out as of next week. And during that time, well, let me just say that we do have bracketed areas within the registry agreement that we are continuing to have discussions with both the SubPro IRT and RySG on. And those conversations will continue while we post the public comment or post the RA for public comment next week. So we'll continue that dialogue.

And any of the updates or changes that we need to make or including into the RA will be added to the public comment that the second public comment that will be posted in mid-September. And our goal is, I believe as Lars mentioned earlier, to have the registry agreement out near or close to the time that the AGB is posted by the end of December, which gives us four months before the application window opens.

So that hasn't changed. And we look forward to hearing comments. What we would suggest, as it relates to the first public comment period, is more substantive comments to come in during that first public comment period, as we're hoping that the second public comment period is really going to be primarily focused on those updates or tweaks that we need to make before we finalize the registry agreement. And with that, I'm not sure who I'm handing it over to.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

Thank you, Karla. Thank you.

KARLA HAKANSSON

Thank you, Kristy. Thanks, all.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

Hello again, everyone. I'll speak a little bit about Readiness Activities underway. And in case folks are wondering, what is readiness? To put it simply, it is about preparing all audiences for the Next Round, which includes applicants, both newcomers and maybe more seasoned applicants, as well as community members. And with that, I'll go to the other side and turn it to Lars just to speak briefly about the recent blog post. And then I'll carry on readiness, Lars.

LARS HOFFMANN

Thanks, Kristy. Yeah, I'm going to see if I can manage to, start happening the way I'm hoping, there we are, posting that blog also in the chat. We published a blog last week. I think it is now 21st, six days ago. As Kristy said, on some of the readiness materials, we received a lot of feedback through the IRT, through other SO/ACs, through the public comment on the various sections of the Applicant Guidebook that had already been published for public comment. On making the text more accessible, obviously, that's a fine line. It's a legally binding document. It prescribes the rules of

the program. So in one respect, it has to be very detailed and in places technical.

However, we understand that there is a desire to have those texts made accessible for those subjects, especially those who are new to ICANN and the DNS. And so we are in the process of providing what we call topic overviews of some of the issues that are featured in the Applicant Guidebook. And the blog details that with that. We also published, I think, six or seven already. And there's four phases going forward. And so there will be more of these to come. In addition to also building out our Q&As, sorry, FAQs that we are also developing. Kristy, I hope I captured it back over to you.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

That's great. Thank you so much, Lars. And thanks for posting the blog link in the chat as well for folks to see that if they haven't already. So as Lars mentions, we are working on a portfolio of supplemental materials intended to improve accessibility and understanding. And so that portfolio includes those topic overviews, FAQs, or frequently asked questions, as well as webinars and training. And this is all sort of in support of the Applicant Guidebook and applicant journey ahead. Next slide, please.

For the key topic overviews, the readiness team is working with subject matter experts to develop succinct briefings in simple language wherever possible. The focus is on various Applicant Guidebook topics, policies and procedures. And these are organized into batches, prioritized as best we can based upon the

sequencing for when applicants and the community will need to be familiar with these topics. Prior to ICANN83, maybe already, we've published the first batch of topic overviews.

On the right-hand side here, you will see an example template of what those will look like. These will be on the website and also in a printable format for more easily briefing audiences that might be interested to understand at a higher level, but may have less interest in reading every page of the AGB. But it is important to note that the authoritative source for all information about the Next Round is, of course, the AGB or the Applicant Guidebook. Next slide, please.

So in addition to the topic overviews, we are working on FAQs or frequently asked questions. And these are intended to provide concise and easy to understand details about Applicant Guidebook topics. Similar to the topic overviews, these are batched according to the order in which applicants will experience different stages of the application and the evaluation process. These will also be posted on the Next Round website as they become available. And with that, I will turn it over to our language services colleagues to talk about the New gTLD Program in Your Language. Thank you.

BUTCH PFREMMER

Thanks, Kristy. Hello, everyone. My name is Butch Pfremmer from the ICANN language services team. And we wanted to give you a

quick update on the New gTLD program in your language. So if we can go to the next slide. Great, thank you.

If you are not familiar, the New gTLD program in your language program is essentially a no-cost program that allows for us to provide some on-demand translation for Next Round outreach materials into the languages beyond the normal ICANN languages. And this program is really meant to help meet some of the outreach goals, address some of the feedback that we received from the regions managed by the GSE teams.

And the language services team was able to do this through AI neural machine translation platform technology that integrates with our translation service platform already. So we've essentially pre-translated a number of documents that qualify as outreach documents and into 12 different outreach languages that we would not have translated or provided without this program.

And you can see in the table below, there's 12 languages. I won't read them to you, but they're there. And in the middle column, these are the available outreach documents that we've already pre-translated. And again, the idea of the program is for the community or interested volunteers to do a review of that output. These are languages that we don't normally provide translation for. We don't have an ICANN staff member who's a language expert. We did train the engine with a human translated glossary that took out some of the key terms from these outreach documents. But we still have to have a final review. There may be some small layout or

format issues. And we certainly invite those reviewers to provide those comments on those review documents.

All of the documents and even the glossary that we pre-translated are available on the ICANN community wiki under the language services space in the new gTLD program in your language pages. Once that review is completed, what we'll be doing is making sure the comments are resolved. And we'll be publishing a final PDF version on the community wiki for groups to download and use to evangelize the program, continue with that outreach program. So if you have any questions about that, you can look at the community wiki page. The link is on the slide. Maybe I'll have someone post it. Oh, I think I see it in the chat. And we're certainly going to answer any Q&A. But if we can go to the next slide, I want to quickly just kind of go over the process.

So again, the dozen documents that really qualify for this outreach program to date, we pre-translated. We published them on the wiki. And we're making them available for reviewers and community members to perform a review on the documents. Once those review periods are resolved, and we're trying to manage it for a completion date so that it just doesn't go on forever, we'll publish a final PDF. On the wiki page, there is a way to request an additional document or an additional language. And if you do that, we'll be able to evaluate that document in that language to see if it qualifies to run under this program.

Not all languages are supported. So we do need to do that evaluation. And there's some documents, just their length or their complexity may not qualify for the program either. So that's kind of the update that we wanted to provide. And, again, we can address any questions or answers at the end of the session today. Thank you. And I'm passing it off to Lars. Sorry about that, Lars.

LARS HOFFMANN

That's okay. Thank you so much, Butch. The next slide, please, Gia. And I apologize. Gia was moving the slides. I called out Renate earlier. Gia, thank you for doing that.

We have a busy week ahead of us in Prague. You see all these sessions here. I will say that the first and the last one are IRT sessions. We will use both of these. I think the second one will be an update on the outreach and engagement work. The team that's led by Chris Mondini and Bob Ochieng. They're both going to be in Prague and run a booth as well.

And then we reached out to the various stakeholder groups and constituencies of the GNSO, as well as the supporting organizations and advisory committees, and asked whether anybody would like to engage, especially with the Applicant Guidebook team on the AGB, as it will be up for public comment by the time that ICANN83 starts. And maybe to no one's surprise, we had a very good uptake on that. I won't read all of these, but the team will make in-person or remote appearances at these sessions.

Some of these are listed in the official schedule. Others are not, because we're just part of, for example, picking a random one here, the GeoTLD group. I'm not sure that it will say in the official schedule that we're going to update from the team. That's for the individual groups. Maybe if you go to the meeting pages and they have a detailed agenda, it may feature there, but maybe not on the overall schedule. Nevertheless, the slide is available, so that also gives you a link here to the sessions if you'd like to attend in person or remotely. And this session, obviously, will be recorded as well.

I think that is all. I think we squeezed all of these onto one slide. Jia, can you go one forward? Oh, and thank you for posting that into the chat. I suspect it was Elisa. Yes, thank you. With that, I'm going to pass it on to Ariel, the Master of Ceremony, for the Q&A. Ariel, over to you, please.

ARIEL LIANG

Thanks, Lars. This is Ariel. I'm speaking to you from Washington, D. C. I didn't do any of the Master of Ceremony service, but I will help facilitate the Q&A session. And now the floor is open. And if any audience have any questions, please feel free to raise your hand and then we will make sure your audio is working and you can speak directly. Or if you prefer, you can post your question in the chat, and I can help read it out and the team can answer. And Jeff, please go ahead.

JEFFREY NEUMAN

Hello, it's Jeff Neuman. Hopefully this is an easy question. So in some of the previous reports that you gave before ICANN meetings, you had a chart. I think Marika had a chart, like a program management chart, where things were like green, red and yellow. Is there anything that you see at this point that puts the launch date in jeopardy or would have been red on those charts? Does that make sense? And maybe, Lars, you know what I'm talking about. Because there were a couple items on the last time that were yellow or red with development, but is everything now in the green?

LARS HOFFMANN

Thank you, Jeff. Appreciate that. I'm going to answer on the spot if that's okay. Jeff, it's a very good question. So to give you a short answer, yes, we think that we are on track to be able to launch in April next year as planned and anticipated. On the traffic light, ombre traffic light, maybe, system that we shared at the beginning, we do as a team try to flag problems as soon as possible. And we have developed the culture internally to be overly cautious.

So if there was anything that, you know, looks maybe could go into red or could go into yellow on screen at the moment, we are more prone to move it to that, quote unquote, worse color, to be able to mitigate as soon as possible, see that we have plans in place to course correct when necessary, reallocate resources, etc., etc.

We know that the timeline is really the big guiding light. And so resources and scope would have to adjust to that. And there were

some projects that were, I think, in a more yellow or more red state during the previous update. We have put mitigation into place. We are back on track for those projects. At the very least, we are in yellow, which I think is certainly no danger for the launch in April. So where we stand at the moment, Jeff and everyone else, we are as confident as we can be that we are on track to open in 11 months.

ARIEL LIANG

Thank you very much, Lars. So Jeff also commented and thank you. And I see a hand up from Alex. Please go ahead.

ALEX MAYRHOFER

Thank you, Ariel. Thanks, everybody, for the information. I have a question regarding the registry service provider testing. More specifically, on one of the slides, there was a date that was July 2025 for the OT&E of the registry service provider testing environment. And I have two questions about that. First is, what can we expect on this date, like end of July? And second, does that mean that this is probably also like the earliest date on which an actual application can be passed technical evaluation of a registry service provider? Probably goes to Francisco, I guess. Thank you.

GUSTAVO LOZANO IBARRA

Hi, Alex. This is Gustavo for the record.

ALEX MAYRHOFER

Yeah, Gustavo, sorry.

GUSTAVO LOZANO IBARRA

Yeah, no worries. Yeah, so right now we're working on the RST system or the RST 2.0 platform. We're in the process of fixing what we call the critical bugs so that you guys, when you use the system in production, you don't find any critical bug that we have discovered up to this point. The idea is, by the end of July, to have the system ready, as you mentioned, to start doing technical testing, right? And this will be the earliest that an RSP applicant will be going through technical testing. Obviously, they need to go through the technical evaluation. So once you clear technical evaluation, the next step is technical testing. And yeah, that's the earliest that we anticipate.

I think as we're mentioning that we're working right now on adding additional functionality to the platform, additional functionality that was identified or suggested by an RSP applicant. So we are working on that timeline. The good news is we have the OT&E system and we have a good participation of RSP applicants in the OT&E. So if you want to have certainty that you're going to be able to pass technical testing in a very, very quick fashion, then I think that you should go through the OT&E and be sure that your system is ready.

ALEX MAYRHOFER

Thank you, Gustavo.

ARIEL LIANG

This is Ariel Liang. And also, a quick reminder for all the audience and speaker, if you do start speaking, please state your name so that we have on the record. And I see there's a question for Gustavo from Jeff Neuman. Will all RSPs find out if they passed on the same date or will it be on a rolling basis as they are completed?

GUSTAVO LOZANO IBARRA

So the process is dynamic, right? Some RSP applicants may receive more clarifying questions than others. It depends, obviously, on the responses that we get and how fast those responses for those clarifying questions are sent to the applicant, right? I mean, from the applicant.

What is important to mention is the first time that we publish the list is going to be December 2025. And we are going to publish the list based on the snapshot that we have in the system, right? I think that's important, right? So that's the first publication of the list. And if someone passes, let's say, in August or is able to clear the whole process in August, that doesn't mean that we're going to publish a list in August just with that specific applicant, right? So that's how the process works.

ARIEL LIANG

This is Ariel. Thank you, Gustavo. Any other questions from the audience? Please feel free to raise your hand if you wish to speak. Oh, yes. So another question from Krupasha [ph] in the chat. Will

the RSP who passed in August know that they passed in August or will they have to wait till December? Gustavo?

GUSTAVO LOZANO IBARRA

Yeah. So the statuses are visible in the system. So there is a status when someone clears technical evaluation. There is another status when they are going to technical testing. And there is another status that reflects the, let's say, result from RST 2.0. So the answer is yes, based on the status in the system, an applicant can understand in which step of the process they are at that point in time.

LARS HOFFMANN0

Thank you, Gustavo. This is Ariel. Any other questions from the audience?

ARIEL LIANG

Jeff, please go ahead.

JEFFREY NEUMAN

Yeah, thanks. And sorry for harping on this one area. It's Jeff Neuman. So I guess I'm looking at it from the front-end applicants. So if someone knows their status, a back-end registry, and they represent to a front-end applicant that they have passed the ICANN testing, there's really no way for an applicant to verify that until you post the final list in December. Is that correct?

GUSTAVO LOZANO IBARRA

Yeah, that's correct. The official list that is going to be provided by ICANN to the gTLD applicants, that's going to be published in December 2025. If I were a gTLD applicant, I will go through that list, right, to understand who has clear evaluation or not.

JEFFREY NEUMAN

Right. This is Jeff. I understand that. I think there may be some applicants that may be looking to select service providers prior to the publication of that list. But that's, I guess, at their own risk. Thanks.

ARIEL LIANG

Thank you, Jeff and Gustavo. And this is Ariel. Any more questions from the audience? We're well ahead of scheduled end time, so we do have the time to take more questions, if you have. And I haven't heard anything. Oh, actually, Lars, I guess it's not a question.

LARS HOFFMANN

All right. Luckily, I have no questions for myself. Well, maybe, but that's a different story. More seriously, we have also another announcement I just want to make that I'm not sure it was on the slides. We have a webinar on Tuesday next week. Well, for some time zones, it still will be Monday early for UTC. I think on Tuesday is the first session. Posted the announcement here in the chat as well. I just wanted to give that a quick highlight, where we will go at a very high level through the Applicant Guidebook, which is due

to be out for public comment by then. So, if you are interested, feel free to sign up to that webinar. Thank you. Sorry.

ARIEL LIANG

Thank you, Lars, for the plug. This is Ariel. I see Elaine Pruis has her hand up. Elaine, please go ahead.

ELAINE PRUIS

Thank you. It's Elaine Pruis. Just a follow-up question to Jeff's question. Is there anything in the RSP handbook or terms and conditions that prevents a successful registrant service provider from putting out a press release that says they passed the test and they're qualified well before December 2025?

GUSTAVO LOZANO IBARRA

That's a good question, and we'll come back to you on the list. Yeah, we'll need to review that.

ARIEL LIANG

Okay, thanks. Thank you, Elaine. Thank you, Gustavo. Any more questions from the audience? And, of course, we have the webinars coming up on the AGB-specific, and definitely welcome all to attend as well and ask your questions there. And if not, perhaps I will give the floor back to Lars for closing remarks.

LARS HOFFMANN

Thanks, Ariel, for putting me on the spot. Yeah, thanks to everyone for participating, for asking the questions. If there's any follow-ups, reach out through hopefully known channels. You can get information on the website as well. Before we let everybody go, I'd just like to give a final shout-out to the team. We've been working on this for some of us for over two or three years, and I think we're making good progress. We remain on track for a date that we agreed to two years ago, so that's always a good sign.

And I just want to thank everybody, including, I include here very strongly the IRT, who's been working really hard with us, especially over the past few months. A lot of meetings, a lot of hours every week for volunteers to put that in and make this happen. So thank you to everyone, the team and the community and the Board as well for making this happen. With that, I thank everyone. Have a lovely rest of your day, afternoon or evening. And for those of you traveling, I will see you in Prague. All going well. Thank you, and good evening. Thanks.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

Stop the recording, please. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]