
ICANN84 | AGM – Joint Session: ICANN Board and ALAC
Wednesday, October 29, 2025 – 9:00 to 10:00 IST

WENDY PROFIT

Hello and welcome to the joint meeting of the Board and the ALAC. My name is Wendy Profit and I'm a participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. Interpretation for this session will include English, French, and Spanish. Please observe the following guidelines to participate in this session. I'll also post a note in the chat for your reference.

This is a meeting between the ALAC and the Board, so we'll not take questions from the audience during this session unless we have time at the end. For remote participant members from ALAC, if you would like to speak during the session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, you'll be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants from ALAC will be able to use the physical mic here at the staff table.

Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak, if speaking a language other than English, and speak clearly at a moderate pace. I'll now hand the floor over to ICANN Board Chair, Tripti Sinha.

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TRIPTI SINHA

Thank you, Wendy. Hello, everyone. Welcome to the first bilateral meeting of the Board with the ALAC. We're delighted to be here and have a conversation with you. My colleague, you know, Leon will chair the session. However, if you don't mind, I'd like to start with introductions before I turn it over to him. So, if you could start, please.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Good morning, everyone. Amrita from APRALO.

JUSTINE CHEW

Good morning. Justine Chew, ALAC Co-Vice Chair.

EDMON CHUNG

Edmon Chung from ISOC Hong Kong, ALS from APRALO.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Hello all, I am Claire Craig from ALAC, Co-Vice-Chair.

CHRIS CHAPMAN

Beautifully done. Chris Chapman, ICANN Board Vice-Chair.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Jonathan Zuck, ALAC Chair from NARALO.

LEON SANCHEZ

Leon Sanchez, Board 15, designated by the ALAC, Board member.

TRIPTI SINHA	Tripti Sinha, Chair of the ICANN Board.
KURTIS LINDQUIST	Kurtis Lindquist, President, CEO, ICANN.
BECKY BURR	Becky Burr, Board Seat 13, Contracted Parties.
ALAN BARRETT	Alan Barrett, Board Member appointed by the ASO.
CHRISTIAN KAUFMANN	Christian Kaufmann, ordinary Board member.
JAMES GALVIN	James Galvin, SSAC Liaison to the ICANN Board.
AVRI DORIA	Avri Doria, At-Large and fellow traveler with ALAC.
TRIPTI SINHA	Thank you. I'm going to turn it over to Leon now. Leon, over to you.
LEON SANCHEZ	Thank you very much, Tripti, and thanks again to the ALAC and the At-Large community for being with us here today. We've asked a

question, we've posed a question for you to answer to us. I don't know if we have that on screen. Thank you. Good.

So the question is, what does ALAC believe should be the Board's and the ICANN organization's policy priorities in 2026 taking into consideration the new five-year strategic plan, the WSIS+20 review, and the recently launched cross-community group on the review of reviews. We've got notice that you have pre-assigned speakers for each of these topics, so I am told that the first speaker on the At-Large, on the strategic plan would be Claire. Is that right, Claire?

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you, Leon. So, I have a script just to make sure that I stay on track. The ALAC's role as an advisory committee, as mandated in the ICANN bylaws, includes a specific role in contributing to discussions and feedback to the ICANN regarding operational and strategic matters. And so, to this end, we continue to provide the At-Large's input to the ICANN strategic operation matters. In that regard, the At-Large is aligned to ICANN strategic priorities.

We, the At-Large community, play a critical role in ensuring that the interests of individual internet users are reflected in ICANN's work. It's aligned with the ICANN FY26-30 strategic plan, and it focuses on end-user-centric policy, outreach, and education, and demonstrates a clear and continued commitment to ICANN's core mission and strategic goals.

ALAC and the At-Large generally welcome the newly structured strategic and operational planning for the '25-'30, which is simple, clearly understood, and visually rich method of outlining the objectives and the facilitation and/or implementation plan to reach the key organizational goals and objectives.

So, we have identified our strategic priorities for FY26 in collaboration with RALOs. We've selected three specifically and these are strategic objective one, to evolve and promote ICANN's multi-stakeholder model to sustain its inclusive approach to internet governance. Specifically looking at strategic goal 1.1, which deals with the stakeholders, and strategic goal 1.2.

We also selected strategic objective three, collaboration with relevant stakeholders to evolve the internet's unique identifier system and in that regard, we have selected strategic goal 3.1. And then finally, strategic objective four, which is to strengthen the stability and security of the internet's unique identifier systems and we've looked at strategic goal 4.1.

So, we are working with the GSE in relation to with our RALOs and the At-Large are focused on outcomes directly related to these strategic objectives and goals. We look forward to engaging actively in the coming cycle in the prioritization exercise related to the implementation of the Board's approved recommendations from various reviews and cross-community processes.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Claire. I would like to open for any comments from my colleagues. I see maybe Chris is the mastermind strategic planner, you could have some comments on that.

CHRIS CHAPMAN

I think Maarten Botterman, there's Maarten there, Maarten and I co-chaired the Strategic Planning Committee, so I'm sure Maarten would agree with me when I say to you, Claire, thank you for those comments. They were very complimentary in the main. Not in the main, they were very complimentary and it was music to our ears, because I think there is, and I've said this on a couple of occasions now, a momentum around refocusing on the strategic plan as an ultimate guiding document about transparency, accountability and this is my particular point.

We have a president and CEO who is craving to demonstrate accountability and delivery and the Board is very supportive of that. We were very satisfied with the strategic planning process. It was rich in many new elements over and above what had existed prior. It contained a whole stream of strategies. It gave cadence and prioritization indications. It gave a first cut of KPIs and with Amitabh taking on the chair of the SPC going forward, he's very keen to demonstrate to the community through reporting back against progress on that strategic plan that it's a very meaningful document.

I go further than that, as Avri and I have had a discussion about, for example, I think it's an ultimate accountability document because

if a constituency feels that there is something that ICANN.org is not doing that it should be doing, and it's not referenced in the strategic plan after a constructive contention of ideas, then it means the strategic plan has come up short.

So, I think it's very heartening to hear you outline the specific areas that you have chosen for discussion within ALAC and its various parts and I compliment you on that. I express appreciation for that. I think it's very heartening to know that people are starting to coalesce around and get what the strategic plan is about.

And the other thing, final thing I'll add is that the strategic plan is reviewed annually, not only the prioritization exercise. And that provides you an opportunity each and every year to say, we, the community, feel X, Y, and Z. Thank you, Leon, for that opportunity.

LEON SANCHEZ

No, thank you, Chris and Maarten, for all the work that you led and that produced this excellent document. And as Chris is highlighting, we see this as a living document, so it's something that might change through the evolution. Yes, it's alive.

Well, next I see that we have the WSIS+20 Review, and for that I think that you've assigned Amrita to speak. So, Amrita, your turn.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Leon. Amrita, for the record. As the Board may know, the At-Large community globally has been engaging in the WSIS+20 review process through their ALSs, individual members,

national or regional IGFs, making submissions or speaking in stakeholder consultation. Some of the young community members from our community have also been articulating their views.

However, as end user community, we have limitations in terms of our reach, well as resources and opportunities to know what is going on, because we don't have a seat in the table when things are happening inside, you know, the corridors of the UN.

So, what we would like to see from the Board and the ICANN organization to continue now that the negotiations are going towards the end, at least for the next two months, is to keep the community updated as has been done through the WSIS+20 mailing list or if there are more information coming.

More clarity on the implications. If certain things are being decided, what would be the implications for the ICANN community as well as the end-user community? Explore opportunities where the community can participate. For example, if there are concerns coming from some areas, if we have our community members there, we could obviously mobilize them similarly. If there is something happening in New York, we do have our ALSs or individual members in New York too who can go there and articulate those views.

So, exploring more opportunities, how we can synergize common places where we want to work with so that it benefits the

community and ICANN community as a whole. I think I would stop at that. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you very much, Amrita. And I agree, I think that the collaboration between be the At-Large community and the organization and the Board to this end it's quite important, as you say. And I can assure you that there are a lot of efforts to keep the community updated.

As you have seen, there have been plenaries. We were lucky to have the co-facilitators here. They offered the session as well. I mean, as far as I can see and as far as I can tell, there is no additional information that could be shared that it's not being shared. Everything is transparent, but I don't know if someone would like to comment on this. Kurtis?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

No, thank you, Leon. Yeah, we are very active in sharing as you know on the WSIS+20 mailing list. We share the information as we learn it. We share the information about what our input is and why and other organizations has come to use the same mailing list, which has created this great resource of information and what goes on. And the analysis and other analysis is being shared as well and discussed so I think that's been a very strong tool for this.

As you heard from the ambassador on Monday, the actual format and openness of the negotiations is yet to be decided. So, I don't

think we even have any clarity on what they will be and as that evolves and we'll know what the modalities for the coming steps are, then we will, of course, share that, and we will think of how that can be incorporated, what we can do. But we commit to continue sharing the analysis and the input that we receive to the community as we've been doing so far.

And when we have needed to, I think all the ICANN stakeholders have been great in speaking up, and as you heard from the ambassador, this is a very engaged community, which they appreciated greatly. So, I think I would encourage all the community stakeholders to continue doing that, because we know from the engagement with the core facts that they really appreciate it.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Kurtis, and I think in this same fashion, it is very important that, as you say, we create this synergy. So, what I would like to see is also that information coming back from you guys to the organization and the Board so that we really create this, you know, channel of communication that goes back and forth and we can collaborate accordingly.

Any other comments on this on the table? No? Okay, so with that, I think we can go to the next topic, which is the Review of Reviews CCT. And for that, I'm told that you have assigned Avri and Jonathan, so please.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you and I guess I'll go before Jonathan, but hopefully Jonathan will fill in. I think, you know, it was no surprise, I assume, to the Board that At-Large and ALAC were severely disappointed with the cancellation of the holistic, and that disappointment is perhaps abating, but it's not completely gone. And there's still a very strong feeling that there's a need for a review that does look at the infrastructure, that does look at our structure, that does look at the components of ICANN and goes forward to it.

However, ALAC has very much accepted, having run the gamut of the empowered community and such. Very glad that we were actually able to go to the empowered community with our appeal and though it was rejected, it was good that the mechanism was there to exercise. And I'm hoping other people, and this is a personal hope, I'm hoping other groups do take advantage of it in the future as necessary. So, at this point, and by the way, at the moment, I'm only sort of transmitting what are At-Large ALAC and not my positions as the co-chair of the ensuing RoR.

I have very much accepted that this is the way forward, still looking for the notion of we needed what we thought the holistic was going to provide and think that that's among the requirements for any set of reviews that come out. And I guess we'd also add that we're really hoping that this whole process with Review of Reviews and all that doesn't actually consume more bandwidth and more time than going through with the ATRT would have.

So other than that, we're sort of supportive of the process that we've got now and are committed to working with it. You know, if I put on the hat of the co-chair, I was very happy with Chris's standing up and giving sort of an out-of-the-box or perhaps very much in a box, but very out-of-the-box suggestion of the way to look at it and going forward. But that's still a personal opinion that hasn't really been, you know, totally discussed within At Large yet to see how supportive they are of that. And hopefully, Jonathan, as sort of the non-chair participant in the Review of Reviews CCG, the RoR CCG, you know, you can add something. Thanks.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yes, Chris, I fully agree with you. Put the gun away. It's been a very interesting process, and as we've constructed this sort of bottom-up document, in other words, trying to define the needs for reviews instead of coming in with a prejudice about what reviews need to take place, has made it an interesting exercise, and I find it difficult, myself sometimes, not to go back and say, well, I thought this was a pretty important review. Let me make sure that these things would result in this review at least being on the table for discussion. So, it's been an interesting exercise.

The question you asked is, what should the focus of the Board be given these contexts, and one of our questions to you, if I might jump the queue a little bit, has to do with focusing on what the Board believes needs to come of this to have been a successful process. Because I know that there are individuals on the Board

that have particular opinions about what might have been wrong with the reviews that have gone before, what the problem might be, what the solution might look like.

There's a lot of individual input, but I wonder if the Board has spent time considering, you know, what characteristics there are of this effort, this Review of Reviews, that would make it a success and merit your approval, you know, after the fact. And so, that's one of the things that I think should certainly be an area of focus for the Board is thinking that through and forming an opinion and communicating it so that there's not a surprise at the end of the process.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Jonathan. Do you want to say something, Tripti? Please.

TRIPTI SINHA

Yeah. So, thank you for the question, Jonathan. One of the first things you do when you're looking at fixing a problem, which we believe this had become problematic, is, where did it fail us? So clearly, we were buckling under the pressure of all these reviews which were colliding into each other. There was, you know, fatigue on part of the community where we're a volunteer community, we're coming together and serving on all these different reviews. They came out with recommendations that were not being implemented, right?

So, you balance that against, okay, what's the purpose? It's accountability, transparency, and effectiveness. Was that achieved, yes or no? And furthermore, coupled with that, we have something called the strategic planning document, which the entire community was engaged in creating it. What's that plan about? It's built against our mission and our deliverables. So that should play a role, a significant role in reviewing our ability to deliver on the mission in an accountable and transparent manner. So, what do we expect from you? Something that is reasonable, that will deliver on the outcomes, and does not put us under undue pressure and have us buckling yet again and how the strategic planning outcomes play into this.

LEON SANCHEZ

I see Avri has a two-finger here.

AVRI DORIA

Yeah, thank you for that answer. I want to bring up something, you know, at the moment perhaps it's difficult to speak of, but the results of ATRT3, which I happen to have been amongst you at the time, that we approved that particular outcome. And that outcome actually had paused all the other reviews, but one, so the pressure of doing reviews was off us. Had offered the Board a solution, which it accepted, of ways to deal with the incredible backlog and ways to review it, to eliminate it, so to deal with the issue of that.

So those two issues had not only been given a solution, but had been approved by the Board with a solution, and we were now at the point of trying to implement that. So, I'm actually kind of curious as to what precipitated a decision that sort of said, we know we've approved a solution, we know we've paused all of the reviews, but for one, yet we have to do something of a gigantic value that may actually take more resources than anything that we were facing at the time.

TRIPTI SINHA

So, Avri, I don't want to re-litigate where we were, but as you recall, to kick off ATRT4, we would have to review the outcomes of ATRT3. And also, it's been over 20 years since we've put this in place. It was time for us to take a step back and make sure that they are fit for purpose in current times. So, I do not want to relitigate that discussion. We are where we are. We're in a good place. Let's move forward. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thanks. You gave the same reason, so that's why I was asking.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you. Jonathan, do you want to say something?

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yeah, and I don't want to relegate the past either. That's why I was trying to ask the question the way that I did because there's a

backlog of recommendations now, and it is not in the remit to the Review of Reviews to deal with that backlog. So, there will be a backlog of recommendations unless something magical happens over the course of the next year or something like that. So that can't be one of the criteria for the approval or success of the Review of Reviews, and that's why I'm not really expecting you to have an answer now, right?

But I think at some point, the idea is that... I don't want to name names, but I've heard one of you say that I'm concerned about how the members of the review team are chosen, for example. I've heard somebody else say that I think that the scoping has been a problem, et cetera. These are specific things that have been raised as problems associated with reviews.

My personal opinion, all the problems come from having Work Stream 2, right, because there was like a hundred recommendations that were dumped on the front door of this entire process. But the extent to which the Board have these views and are able to coalesce around characteristics of a new framework for reviews, it would be great to-- I know you have representatives on the team, et cetera and if that's enough, if it means their representation is enough that whatever we end up suggesting will get approved, that's great. If it's not, it'll be really important for the Board as a body to communicate expectations at some point during the process, and I don't mean here at the table. I mean

sometime during the process so that we make sure we're all on the same page. That's all.

LEON SANCHEZ

Becky? Okay, good. So just to add to what's been said, Jonathan, as a member of the RoR, let me tell you what I've said in our meetings of the RoR of what we as a Board have been discussing that could be seen as a successful outcome of this group.

And to the Board the success from the work of this group is that we get a simple and clear set or fresh set of reviews, right, that we eliminate those that are unnecessary, that we establish a flexible set of reviews that could be even called upon on, on an ad hoc basis and that do not overlap in time, right, so that we take out that pressure that Tripti was mentioning, both on community resources, on org resources.

And that in the end this fresh set of reviews can be understood by anyone coming from outside of ICANN in a very simple way, right? That is what we envision as a successful outcome for this. And I don't know, Jim, if you want to compliment anything.

JAMES GALVIN

Just one thing to add to that, and then I do want to comment on something that Jonathan had said earlier. I think the purpose discussion that we're having now is important. In terms of success factors, Leon was explaining all of those. Those are the things that the Board is looking for in whatever solution comes forward, but

the what that actually gets reviewed is an important part of this, and the purpose document is going to derive that.

Now, to be sure, I know that the purpose document that we've been putting up and that will again be put up this afternoon and be discussed as has been emphasized by the chairs as a draft and it's there. Personally, I expect that even whatever we come to conclusion about here after these two things, I suspect that purpose might evolve a bit as we get into phase two and I think that's fair. So, I just want to be careful about there's the what we review that's on top of everything that Leon reviewed, and that's still an open discussion in the community.

Which brings me back to one of the comments that you had made earlier, Jonathan, about presupposing what a Board decision might be, presupposing what are the other things that the Board has talked about in terms of what it cares about in terms of the reviews. I think it's fair to say that all of us in the community, as well as the Board, have varying opinions about different issues that have come up and that doesn't mean that those are hidden. I mean, I would say that the Board is pretty well informed about all of those issues, but bringing it down to our success factors is enough.

I don't think it's important that we relitigate all of the issues. I think we know what they are, and the community is bringing them up and that'll be in there. You had asked about what are the issues that the Board cares about. I think focusing on the future and what

our success metrics are is where we're coming from, and I think that's the most important part of all of this. Thanks.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Jim. Chris, do you want to add something?

CHRIS CHAPMAN

Just a final quick one. I think Jonathan's question is profoundly important. It's foundational. You cannot get to the end of this process and collectively as a community be satisfied with the outcome and hope that it is an enduring, constant solution, and we're not talking about solutions here, without first coming to grips with the question of, what is the purpose of the transparency outcome, the accountability outcome?

And so, I'm just giving strength to your observation question that that is foundationally necessary to address. What does accountability mean? Because as I said the other day, personally, I think we're coming from a suboptimal position. I think we need to go back to first principles and figure out what does accountability mean? I have a view about that, but that's not relevant today, and that'll be for the community and the various review groups to take forward. But what is the essential definition core of accountability? That's where you start. So, I think, Jonathan, you're on the right track.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Chris. Are there any other comments on this topic? Okay, I see none. So, now we can go to the next topic, which is IDNs and UA and for that, I think you've assigned Justin Chew.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thank you, Leon. This is the wrong slide, by the way. On behalf of the A-Large community, I want to bring up a question that is pertinent to individual end users, right, which is around the issue of universal acceptance and internationalized domain names. So, you asked the ALAC what are the policy priorities for 2026 for the Board and ICANN.org, I'll just give a bit of context.

We have received an update from Edmon, our appointee on the Universal Acceptance Expert Working Group, and we appreciate the work that's being done there. Our understanding is that work is more outward-facing, so what ICANN is telling the world or advising the world or encouraging outside of ICANN to do, to make UA and IDNs happen for the ultimate goal of making the internet multilingual.

I also recall Sally Costerton telling us about how ICANN.org has now started to become more UA-ready. So for example, making sure that whenever you engage a third-party contractor, that they are somehow also UA-ready, and we appreciate that too.

My question is, what is the Board doing, or ICANN.org doing, to make ICANN.org more UA-ready? For example, applying for a gTLD string in the next round, an entity cannot use an IDN email to apply

for string, right? So, when we're talking about making the internet multilingual, but we're not even doing simple things like that to promote the actual cause of making it UA-ready, what does that say about us? So, I'd like to find out if there's any efforts on the part of the Board and ICANN.org to do these little, little things internally to make us as a community UA-ready. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Justine. Kurtis?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

So, thank you. Yes, you're correct. We do require all vendors to be UA-ready, or at least present their path to it. Not all systems require we can find a solution that isn't UA-ready, but we do have as a requirement, we do push for this.

92% of all ICANN systems are UA-ready so we actually have a very high degree of UA readiness internally already. I think we're probably higher than any other organization and that's the work we continue. We are continuing to go through the systems, the remaining 8%, I guess, to make them UA ready and make sure that the parts we have that doesn't meet this.

As I said, I believe there's a mix between systems that are not yet transferred internally and systems that we are buying where there simply isn't a solution that is available that would support UA. I think also, just to give you a bit of background, the resources we have, there is five. As you know, the strategic plan actually has IDN

and UA readiness as one of these objectives, so that's what we're reporting on and that's what we are working towards.

We have five FTEs who are committed to UA work, both externally and pushing for this internally. So, they're also the ones who support the UA expert working group and they're also working in these cross-functional teams internally, that is GDS, GE, COMS, Legal, E&IT. They also, as I said, have this internal work where they promote this.

And then we also, there are a team that support all the policy development work that you are aware of as well, which is the SubPro, IDN, EPDP Phase 1 and 2, Latin Diacritics, IDN, ccPDP4. They are also supporting all this work, as well as the work we're doing internally. But yes, it's definitely a commitment to transfer all the ICANN systems we have internally to be UA ready.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Kurtis. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW

Thank you for that answer, Kurtis. So, I suppose I would go the extra mile and ask, are there any plans to make the whole ICANN ecosystem UA ready? So, contracted parties, for example?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

So, we are pushing vendors for-- That's why I said, we have a requirement in vendoring that they should be UA ready, but it's not

always that we have an option to pick a system that is UA ready. But we are engaging every single vendor with UA readiness that is happening today.

Contracted priorities is maybe, I think that's a little bit more of a complicated topic. There's a limit to our powers, I think, as well, how far we can take this, but, of course, we are championing it. I mean, we have done-- Those who went to the last UA day when we had this contracted partisan in Hanoi, we also know that we are working with a lot of the hyperscalers, and we have ICANN staff engaged in a lot of the open-source community, but we have actually produced a lot.

There's a milestone for WordPress. It's something that we have committed to detect this code to make UA ready as part of that. So, we are also actively reaching out into the community and pushing solutions. So, it's not just that contractual and advocacy, we're actually committing source code to some of these projects to further push for UA readiness so we are definitely pushing for that in the ICANN ecosystem as much as we can and we will continue to work that, absolutely.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Kurtis. Are there any other comments on this topic? No? Okay. So that leads us to the next part of our meeting. We thank you for the comments and the thoughts that you've shared with us

in regard to the questions that we posed to the ALAC and the At-Large community.

And we also received some comments and some questions on your side for the Board. And the first one is the discussion on the ALAC's formal response to the Board's reply to the joint ALAC Act letter on the applicant support program. Would you like to go over those topics, Jonathan?

JUSTINE CHEW

Yep, thanks. I'll take the first one on the ASP review. Firstly, we want to express thanks for having the opportunity to participate in that webinar that ICANN, or at least the ASP team, ran for the Government Advisory Committee. I think we received kind of an invitation and we participated in that and that is the point where they were talking about the way they expanded what they were reporting on to get to the answers that we were asking in our joint letter with GAC.

So, we appreciate that and appreciate the fact that, you know, the comprehensive report was made available to us, and also all the updates from the outreach and engagement communications team of ICANN for the next round. I also noted Kristy Buckley's blog of 15 October, and also the update to the stats on the ASB website.

We would just like to make some observations post that, and have some follow-up questions to the Board. So, we know that now there is an increase in the numbers of applicants in the system. I

think it's sitting at 103 right now, but we also note that out of that 103, 69 of them were marked active, and there's still the smallest number of those that were marked coming from the Latin America region, and Caribbean region, sorry.

Could we anticipate more applications coming from that region by the 19th November deadline? So that's one question. I just pose them and you can choose to answer which one you think you can answer. We also noticed a small number of applications coming from the African region. So, two underserved regions are kind of impacted by our comments.

Are we expecting to see more applicants submitted? We know that there are some African applicants in the pipeline, but they haven't progressed to have submitted the application. They've just put in their organization name or something like that. And we know and appreciate the fact that the deadline for submission of applications has been extended to the 19th of December. So, are we expecting to see more submitted applications from the African applicants by 19 of December?

We also appreciate the fact that now the ASP team has embarked on an approach that focuses on three categories of audience group, right? Prospective applicants, applicants in the pipeline, and supported applicants. Do you think that this approach has yielded the results that we're looking for or will do so in terms of getting applications through the pipeline to a submitted status?

And I think from what I remember, we only still have two approved applicants. Are we expecting that number to grow, bearing in mind that the GNSO guidance process did propose that, you know, we should have a minimum of 10 supported applicants that will get the string eventually so bearing that in mind.

And is there preparations to obtain data to inform any further improvements down the line? I know that that was a lot, but to the extent that you could answer, we would appreciate it.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Justine. Yes, this is a full battery of questions here and I know that my colleague, Alan, is prepared to provide with at least some initial reply, but I don't think we're going to cover each and every of your questions at this point, but Alan, please.

ALAN BARRETT

Yeah, thanks very much for your questions. This is Alan Barrett. We really appreciate the At-Large community and ALAC's attention to the applicant support program. We do hope that we will get more applications from the underserved regions, but there's no guarantee of that. ICANN's Board or staff are not in control of who applies. We can perform outreach. We can go to events in those regions. We can be in contact with people that are suggested by the At-Large community or the GAC representatives in various countries, and I think they try to do that.

So if you have particular target audiences that you think have not been reached sufficiently, we would greatly appreciate some kind of contact from whoever knows about these underserved communities to the ICANN staff handling the support program so that they can do more outreach. I'm sure they'll be very happy to do that. Let me just consult my notes here.

Yeah, only two supported applicants. Do we expect more? Yes, I think it's very likely that more of the applicants in the pipeline will end up being approved. Okay, that's all I have for now.

LEON SANCHEZ

Kurtis?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

Just to add to that, I'd be really interested to hear what ALAC thinks, because you are working with the applicants and you are out there working in these communities. Do you think there'll be more applicants? Because you would have more data than we do, most likely.

We know that the number of applicants has increased significantly in the last few weeks. We believe that the closer to the deadline we get, the more applicants we will see. We are now at a much higher number. I forget the number off the top of my head. Obviously, those are progressing through the system, so the two are the ones that have completed review so far.

The review process and the background checks are ongoing for all the applicants, so they are progressing through the system. So of course, we are expecting more of them to be approved as they progress through the background screening and reviews, the steps they have to go through the screening process. As more and more get through that, they will be put forward for approval and then we expect to do the mid-batch approvals as we did the first one.

But when it comes to expectation applications, we expect to see some more, but it's very hard to know because no one is going to tell you beforehand. But maybe you have more data on this because you are very actively engaged. And as Alan said, if you know there are regions or if you know about communities we are not reaching, then please tell us because we'll happily work with them to try and help them apply.

JUSTINE CHEW

To answer to your question, I think there's been some constraints with the ICANN's obligation for maintaining confidentiality of applicants. So, we don't even have data in terms of which countries we're getting pipeline applicants from. You give us overall that stats in terms of regions and you tell us within that region, three countries have people in the pipeline, but we don't actually know which countries those are. So, all those data is kept confidential.

KURTIS LINDQUIST

I understand that, but my question was, when you are engaging with your communities, do you hear of more applicants? That's not based on our data, that's your engagement because I know ALAC is very active engaging as well on applicants. That was my real question.

JUSTINE CHEW

We engage through GSE mostly, as far as I know anyway and we don't get the data from GSE. So, for example, we in APRALO, I'm from APRALO, we did a joint collaboration with GSE, APAC, and the ASP team of ICANN. org. We ran a webinar. We invited who we could invite. We don't know who actually attended the webinar because of this confidentiality thing. So, we have no way of assessing whether something's working or not because we simply don't have the data.

LEON SANCHEZ

Yes, Claire.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Hi, thank you. I may be speaking on my own behalf, but I am from the LAC region, and I can assure you that we have done quite a lot to engage our communities about the importance of this program. And some of you may have heard there was one of our representatives from the Caribbean at the GAC yesterday who spoke about the issue of not understanding the business case for having this.

And this is what we have been saying from the very beginning and this is one of the things that we know that ICANN says is outside of their mandate. So, I'm not sure really that it's about marketing and letting people know what is happening.

We could bring all the people in, but if they're not able to see what is the value to them, I think that's part of the problem. And as I said, you know, we're looking at the end user community, and I'm just speaking on my own behalf and not necessarily that of the ALACs. Thank you for this opportunity.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Claire. And again, I think it would be useful for us and for the organization to know what is missing in this outreach, because I can assure you, and I'm pretty sure that you've witnessed the outreach efforts that the organization has carried through Latin America because you've been part of them and I've been part of them. I mean, I just can't think of what else can be done to engage people and try to bring them in, right?

CLAIRE CRAIG

If I could just add one other thing, Leon, sorry, Claire again for the transcript record, we've also worked with the African community to have a joint webinar. So, we recognize that this is not something that is in the Latin American Caribbean region only and the underserved regions are working together to try to resolve this situation.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Claire. I see Becky. Yes, let me go to Becky and I'll come back to you.

BECKY BURR

So we are very hopeful that more of the applications that are in the pipeline will make their way through getting to the point on November 19th, where they get the additional four weeks. I think there's been a lot of progress in that. And all of this discussion is really important, but I just want to remind everybody that it's not over on December 19th.

We anticipate an ongoing new gTLD program where we would get to a steady state. That is anticipated to include an applicant support program. So, all of the lessons that we're learning in this process, we need to collect, we need to collate, we need to think about the things that Claire is talking about, like understanding the business case.

We've heard, at least from the LAC region Board members, that there's incredible outreach in the LAC region, but the message is not getting through, probably because of issues like that. So, we need to understand all of those, not diminishing in any way the importance of getting this round right, but also just I want to sort of put on the table that this is an ongoing process. So, we need to collect all of this information and be thinking proactively about getting it right over time.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Becky. I see Avri wants to say something.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

And then I'm going to close the topic so that we can continue to the next topics.

AVRI DORIA

Did you want to go first, Jonathan?

LEON SANCHEZ

No, you go, Avri, and I'll come back to Jonathan.

AVRI DORIA

There's something I wasn't going to bring up, but Becky brought up next round, so therefore I'm going to bring it in. I think one of the things that will be important is a postmortem on this, not only looking at the process of the ones that didn't succeed, assuming many will not succeed, why did that occur, but also a lot of the things that we started hearing in the GAC meeting yesterday about the approach we're taking is, whether it's the business models, whether it's whatever.

Are we sure that the approach we're taking, as hard as we're working at it, and we're working at it quite hard and quite extensively, and nobody's commenting on it, is it indeed the right approach? Is it what they need to be looking at when they're looking at it in terms of the opportunities, what it gives them, how it would help them in other aspects of their economies? So, as we look at a future round, we really should probably step back after our postmortem and say, what does it take to convince people that this will actually be important to them, will help them?

The other thing we have to look at is while we say that an 85% discount is a lot of discount, the 15%, the whatever that's left, is still an incredible amount of money for so many. And we have to take into account the different levels of economy, how different economies work, how different expenses work, and it really doesn't look to people like in those economies that we've taken full account of the difference between an L.A.-based economy and a Central Africa economy and how the finances work in there. So, we really need a rethinking of it as we move forward. Thanks.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Avri. Jonathan?

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yeah, I know we're running low on time, and this is a long conversation. Kurtis's mandate of being outcome-based really has permeated through many conversations, so I congratulate you on

that. I'm hearing it from a lot of different people, and that's one of the hardest things to do is to have it permeate down, and I guess we're approaching this similarly, you know. Those with engineering backgrounds, we know that every system has a bias and the bias on this has got to be toward getting people into the program and away from risks, audited financials, what could go wrong, et cetera.

The bias, I think, that needs to be built into the ASP program is toward more risk and making sure that we do whatever hand-holding needs to happen for these folks to join the community. So, I won't go further, and I don't expect an answer, but I'm hoping we can think about it that way.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Jonathan. Kurtis?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

Just a quick response. I know we are out of time, but the entire response, I think we absolutely should do a postmortem. You should always do a postmortem, but going back to my business school studies, the biggest customer group is always the non-customer, right? And it's phenomenally hard to understand why a buyer didn't buy, right, because you don't know who they are.

So getting the grip on that, and I think one thing to Becky's point, if this was about outreach, we keep hearing that there's communities we don't reach, but no one is really coming forward with who the

communities are. So, we can't actually go and reach them, and that's a bit of a chicken and egg problem, and I think that's part of the post-mortem is where are the communities that groups knew about and we couldn't reach, and in that case, who were they and why didn't we reach them?

The second part is to find these non-applicants, why didn't they apply, and try to understand if there was a reason. If this is about business case models, and I think this comes to Becky's point, if this is about having innovative ideas, stimulating innovation around domain names, utility applicants, and the business cases, that's a much, much longer-term process than you can ever run in one ASP cycle. That's going to be a maturity that's going to have to go over many years and future rounds and next, next, next, next, next rounds and whatever it is because we're not stopping here, right? So, I think it's also determining this success on this one single applicant window is maybe not the right success window.

We're thinking that we're going to convince the entire world's underserved regions to become innovative in domain names in a very tight time span. I don't think that's particularly realistic either, right? So maybe we've set the expectations wrong because it's also not just about understanding what is successful, it's also understanding what's the goal, right? And we need to ask both questions, right? Maybe this wasn't the right goal post. Maybe we should have measured this over two or three next round cycles and then have an idea of actually achieving what we want to do. Are we

driving innovation? Are we driving business case awareness about how to build this?

I mean, I think there's many questions in this and I think maybe we are being slightly myopic in focusing on just the number of applicants we have today as opposed to what do we have in 10 years, which maybe might be a better outcome.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Kurtis. Well, we're running out of time. Sorry? Okay. We're running out of time and the second bullet has kind of already been covered, right, Jonathan?

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yes.

LEON SANCHEZ

And so, that leads us to the third bullet point, which is the ALAC is asking, we would like to briefly revisit the Board's 13 October 2025 rejection of the ALAC advice on string change replacement mechanism for ASP applicants to remedy what we believe may be some ill-advised conclusions which will impede the success of the ASP in the next round. And for that, I have Becky.

BECKY BURR

Well, I think we would like to hear what you have to say about it, but part of this is a listening exercise. We did look at the advice very carefully. We do always consider the advice from the ALAC very

carefully, and for the reasons expressed in our letter. We did not think that there was a policy basis for changing the decision that the Board made to provide one alternate string to be determined, to be selected at the time of the application and then the timing for choosing to flip over to that.

We had a lot of advice, not only from ALAC, but also from GAC on this subject, and we've been talking about it for a very long time. Coming up with the string replacement approach that we came up with and then worked with the GNSO Council to build out as appropriate policy using the GNSO processes was important. But as I said, we think that the changes that ALAC suggested in this took us out of the scope of what we could do. Not only within the timeframe that we're working in, but just from a policy development perspective.

So, we really appreciate the advice and input. We did take it very seriously, but ultimately concluded that we needed to stick with what was in the language that we had settled on before and that's in the applicant guidebook.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks Becky. Alan?

ALAN BARRETT

Thanks. I think a big part of this was the timing. The suggestion to change the way string replacements are handled came very late in

the process. Although it wasn't accepted this time, maybe for some future round we could have more flexibility around that.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Alan. So, we've exhausted the time allocated for this session. I want to thank the ALAC and the A-Large community for sharing your thoughts, for bringing in these questions and fostering this dialogue and this discussion with the Board. Thank you again, and I'm going back to you, Tripti, to close the session.

TRIPTI SINHA

Thank you, Leon. And thank you indeed, as Leon said, this was a very rich exchange, a good conversation. So have a good rest of your meeting, and we'll see you at the next one. Thank you. Wait. One more thing, one more thing before you leave, I conclude all the meetings with a big thank you to our three departing Board members. It's hard to believe they're leaving so every meeting, I reinforce that. So, Maarten, Becky, and Chris Chapman, a big thanks to them. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]