

Project Overview for the Grant Program RFI

Request for Information

12 April 2023



1 Introduction

1.1 About this Document

This document provides an overview of the Request for Information (RFI) for the ICANN Grant Program. It provides background and pertinent information regarding the requirements for the respondents. The RFI itself is comprised of this as well as other documents that are hosted in the ICANN sourcing tool (SciQuest/Jaggaer). Indications of interest are to be received by emailing The-Grant-Program-RFI@icann.org. Responses should be electronically submitted by 5 May 2023 at 23:59 UTC using ICANN's sourcing tool, access to which may be requested via the same email address as above.

ICANN will review the initial indications of interest via this Public Request for Information (RFI) process and will issue a subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP) with necessary details. Additional information regarding this two-stage selection process is outlined in the Project Objective section below.

1.2 About the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' (ICANN's) mission is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. To reach another person on the Internet, you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world.

See www.icann.org for more information.

2 Scope

2.1 Project Objective

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ("ICANN") will evaluate vendor(s) for the provision of the services specified in this Request for Information (RFI) for the ICANN Grant Program. Through the Grant Program, proceeds from the auctions of last resort in the 2012 New gTLD Program¹ will be distributed. This program is being designed with best practices at the forefront, yet because this is a new program for ICANN, there is a need for external vendors with a proven track record of expertise in the grant-making field to support this work. This RFI will be conducted with the objective of maximizing the benefit for the program,

¹ For more on the origins on Auctions of Last Resort and the 2021 New gTLD Program, see Section 4.3 of the [New gTLD Program Applicant Guidebook](#)

while offering vendors a fair and equitable opportunity to participate. Elements such as cost of services and experience will be considered in the selection of vendor(s).

The program will operate in a series of grant cycles until the proceeds are depleted. For each cycle an allocated portion of available proceeds will be made available for grants. Each cycle includes, at minimum: development (or confirmation) of application materials; receipt of applications; validation of applications/applicants meeting eligibility criteria; evaluation of application by an Independent Application Assessment Panel; recommendation of a slate of applications to the ICANN Board of Directors; Board consideration of slate; contracting and disbursement of grants; auditing and reporting on grants as appropriate; and evaluation of cycle to determine if future modifications are needed.

ICANN org is looking for vendor(s) that may be able to offer services in some or all of the following areas: assembling and managing Independent Application Assessment Panel, conducting eligibility checks of applications received, offering/managing components of grant management software to handle applications (throughout the lifecycle of applications) as well as possible inquiries from/activities of the applicant, to audit and report on granted applications, and/or to conduct process/cycle evaluations for future improvements, as needed.

This event is a Request for Information (RFI), which will be followed by a separate Request for Proposal (RFP), using the same sourcing tool. The RFI is open/public i.e. anyone may provide a response. The goal of the RFI is to identify competent providers that can provide services for some or all areas mentioned above. Thereafter, a separate open/public Request for Proposal (RFP) will be conducted to perform more comprehensive evaluations. Evaluations from bids received during the RFP will ideally result in the selection of a provider or providers.

Note that participation in this RFI does not automatically ensure selection to the RFP stage.

2.2 Background

The ICANN Grant Program is based on the recommendations in the [Final Report](#) of the Cross-Community Working Group on New gTLD Auction Proceeds, as [adopted](#) by the ICANN Board in its 12 June 2022 resolutions.

The implementation of the ICANN Grant Program follows the directions set out in the [ICANN Board Scorecard](#) and aligns with the ICANN Board's May 2018 [Board Principles](#) on the disbursement of the auction proceeds.

This RFI will be limited to certain functionalities defined during the engagement with the selected vendors.

2.3 Scope of Work

The service requested in this RFI is for the evaluation of vendors and their proposed solutions.

We expect the vendor(s) to demonstrate the ability to deliver on one or more of the following:

1. Components of grant management software to act as 1) the unique channel through which applications are uploaded/updated/submitted and the final report of an application is submitted 2) a repository for applications for the lifecycle of applications and beyond, 3) the primary channel for communication between ICANN org & applicants, and 4) a conduit for auditing and reporting on granted application. More details on this requirement can be found **under section 4 of this document**.
2. Assemble the Independent Application Assessment Panel based on the objectives of the ICANN Grant Program (**as highlighted in section 4 of this document**), and the criteria as defined by ICANN org.
3. Manage/oversee the work of the Independent Application Assessment Panel and ensure compliance with Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA)/Conflicts of Interest (CoI), etc., as developed in cooperation with ICANN.

3 High Level Selection Criteria

The decision to select a provider as an outcome of this RFI will be based on, but not limited to, the following selection criteria:

1. Capabilities to deliver/manage components of grant management software
2. Technical environment & enterprise architecture standards
3. Approach to infrastructure and security
4. Documented expertise in grant programs
5. High levels of responsiveness to internal and external needs
6. High-level/Ballpark pricing offered
7. Mitigation of any conflicts of interest
8. Value added services

4 High Level Business Requirements

The provider must be able to adhere to the complete list of business requirements as listed in SciQuest/Jaggaer. A summary of the key business requirements is listed below:

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1. Ability to communicate (verbally and in writing) in English.
 2. Availability to participate in the meetings in person or via conference call/remote participation.

Grant Management Software Requirements

1. Demonstrated ability to provide within the grant management software a helpdesk channel for communication between ICANN org & applicants.
2. Ability to enter and submit more than one complete application per user account.
3. Ability to develop custom user interfaces for externally facing web properties (e.g., Applicant portal).
4. Ability to save, make changes and return to form before the deadline for submission of application(s).
5. Ability to upload documents to the grant management software platform.
6. Ability to extend out of the box software with configurable off-the-shelf components for critical features (e.g., eligibility checks, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), etc).
7. Ability to generate status reports, to get an overview of all the tasks being performed in multiple processes.
8. Ability to work within agreed upon Service Level Agreement (SLA).
9. Ability to incorporate the principles of privacy and security by design into their work, to help ensuring that privacy and security are considered throughout the project lifecycle, and that personal data is processed in a secure and compliant manner.

Independent Panel Requirements

1. Demonstrated ability to manage evaluation processes of international projects.
2. Demonstrated expertise in assembling and managing independent assessment Panel at international level.
3. Ability to deliver assessment according to set timeframe.
4. Demonstrated ability to develop work methods, evaluation/assessment approaches and reporting based on specific objectives and criteria.

Eligibility check Requirements

1. Ability to perform eligibility checks related to any U.S. sanctions or other applicable trade laws and regulations.
2. Ability to verify if subjects/organizations are recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or equivalent.
3. Ability to perform reputational review and background check to ensure no previous financial mismanagement or other issues that could pose a reputational risk.
4. A demonstrated understanding of and commitment to ICANN's requirements for transparency and accountability. See: <https://www.icann.org/resources/accountability>.

5 RFI Timeline

The following dates have been established as milestones for this RFI. ICANN reserves the right to modify or change this timeline at any time as necessary.

Activity	Estimated Dates
RFI published	12 April 2023
Participants to indicate interest in submitting RFI proposal	21 April 2023 by 23:59 UTC
Participants submit any questions to ICANN	24 April 2023 by 23:59 UTC
ICANN responds to participant questions	27 April 2023
Participant responses due by	5 May 2023 by 23:59 UTC
Evaluation of responses	Thru May 2023
Follow-on RFP process starts	5 June 2023

6 Terms and Conditions

General Terms and Conditions

1. Submission of a proposal shall constitute each respondent's acknowledgment and acceptance of all the specifications, requirements and terms and conditions in this RFI.
2. All costs of preparing and submitting its proposal, responding to or providing any other assistance to ICANN in connection with this RFI will be borne by the respondent.
3. All submitted proposals including any supporting materials or documentation will become the property of ICANN. If respondent's proposal contains any proprietary information that should not be disclosed or used by ICANN other than for the purposes of evaluating the proposal, that information should be marked with appropriate confidentiality markings.
4. As a requirement for the vendor, we expect that you will comply with all relevant data protection laws and regulations and will have policies and procedures in place to protect the privacy of any personal information that you collect or process on our behalf. You must respect data subjects' right to control their personal information and ensure that their data is kept secure and used only for the purposes for which it was provided. You must never sell, rent, or share personal data you process on our behalf with third parties. We expect that you will take all necessary steps to ensure the security and confidentiality of any personal data that you process on our behalf, including implementing appropriate technical and organizational measures to prevent unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. Compliance with these requirements will be a key consideration in our selection of a vendor.

Discrepancies, Omissions and Additional Information

1. Respondent is responsible for examining this RFI and all addenda. Failure to do so will be at the sole risk of respondent. Should respondent find discrepancies, omissions, unclear or ambiguous intent or meaning, or should any question arise concerning this RFI, respondent must notify ICANN of such findings immediately in writing via e-mail no

later than ten (10) days prior to the deadline for bid submissions. Should such matters remain unresolved by ICANN, in writing, prior to respondent's preparation of its proposal, such matters must be addressed in respondent's proposal.

2. ICANN is not responsible for oral statements made by its employees, agents, or representatives concerning this RFI. If respondent requires additional information, respondent must request that the issuer of this RFI furnish such information in writing.
3. A respondent's proposal is presumed to represent its best efforts to respond to the RFI. Any significant inconsistency, if unexplained, raises a fundamental issue of the respondent's understanding of the nature and scope of the work required and of its ability to perform the contract as proposed and may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The burden of proof as to cost credibility rests with the respondent.
4. If necessary, supplemental information to this RFI will be provided to all prospective respondents receiving this RFI. All supplemental information issued by ICANN will form part of this RFI. ICANN is not responsible for any failure by prospective respondents to receive supplemental information.

Assessment and Award

1. ICANN reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw this RFI, make no award, to waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity and to disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.
2. ICANN may request a respondent to provide further information or documentation to support respondent's proposal and its ability to provide the products and/or services contemplated by this RFI.
3. ICANN is not obliged to accept the lowest priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.
4. ICANN will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in this RFI, responses to questions related to those requirements, any further issued clarifications (if any) and consideration of any other issues or evidence relevant to the respondent's ability to successfully provide and implement the products and/or services contemplated by this RFI and in the best interests of ICANN.
5. ICANN reserves the right to enter into contractual negotiations and if necessary, modify any terms and conditions of a final contract with the respondent whose proposal offers the best value to ICANN.

