Overview of Work Necessary to Complete Program Development

Next Round work streams for Program Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization as called for in Board Resolution 2023.03.16.07

15 June 2023

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Executive Summary

On 16 March 2023, the ICANN Board of Directors passed resolutions 2023.03.16.04 – 2023.03.16.15 regarding the Final Report on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process. As part of these resolutions, the Board directed ICANN org to, prior to providing a full implementation plan by 1 August 2023, "provide, by the last day of the ICANN77 Public Meeting (15 June 2023), relevant information regarding the work necessary to complete the Program Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization streams," i.e., the work to take place after Policy Implementation. This document provides this information, including an overview of the implementation streams that require completion before opening the next application round of the New gTLD Program.

ICANN org has made some general assumptions regarding the working model for the Next Round, detailed in Appendix B. This model is an evolution of the model presented in the Operational Design Assessment (ODA). The working model assumes that:

- All Board-approved recommendations are within the scope of implementation and pending recommendations must be addressed before opening the Next Round.
- There will be no application submission limits, and demand is estimated at a level comparable to the last round (i.e., 2,000 applications).
- An estimated 10 itemized system services will require software development.
- Costs will be managed with a pre-established ceiling for development and that development cost will be tracked before and after receipt of application fees.
- The implementation requires completion of nine primary projects: New gTLD Program Foundations, Application Submission and Processing, Application Evaluation, Dispute Resolution, Contention Resolution, Contracting, Post-Contracting, the Applicant Support Program, and the Registry Service Provider Pre-Evaluation Program.

ICANN org estimates that the work involved in implementing the Next Round will take three years to complete if the policy-related work is not further expedited. That is, the current estimate is two years to complete the Applicant Guidebook (AGB) according to the policy recommendations, and one year for completing the operational work according to the Guidebook. To break this out, the Policy Implementation stream–which includes updates to the AGB–is estimated to require two years for completion, followed by several months for public comment on and Board consideration of the AGB. If mechanisms to expedite the updates to the AGB can be identified and executed, then the time frame may be shortened accordingly.

This document is focused on Program Development, which includes taking the process requirements developed during Policy Implementation and turning them into documented processes, systems and tools[1], and procedures that can be administered by trained,

[1] "Systems" generally refer to large-scale mechanisms that administer multiple services in support of the application lifecycle, e.g., a "TLD Application Management System." A "tool" generally refers to a small-scale mechanism that assists an individual in carrying out a particular process step, e.g., spreadsheets with calculations and macros.

operational resources. Considerable work related to Program Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization (collectively “Program Development”) can be done in parallel with the development of the AGB. Thus, each Program Development stream will be part of all of the nine primary projects, as well as other required work outside of the 9 primary projects. These will be managed following a project management framework aligned with that prescribed by the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) guide.

It should be noted that while this work can partially be completed in parallel, it can only be finalized upon completion of the AGB. The work that cannot be completed in parallel–such as developing internal procedures and finalizing any systems or tools–is estimated to conclude one year after the Policy Implementation work stream has been completed. That is, completion of Program Development work hinges on the completion of the AGB. Should the AGB be completed sooner than the two years outlined above, then the Next Round could open earlier. Should it be completed later than the two years outlined above, then the Next Round would open later. Any delays to the Policy Implementation work stream have the potential to cascade delays across all work streams.

Over the course of the next few months, ICANN org—upon receipt of the other deliverables called for by the Board in its resolution in March 2023—will continue to develop the full implementation plan by 1 August 2023, including detailed milestones and timeline for the work streams described above, based on information available.

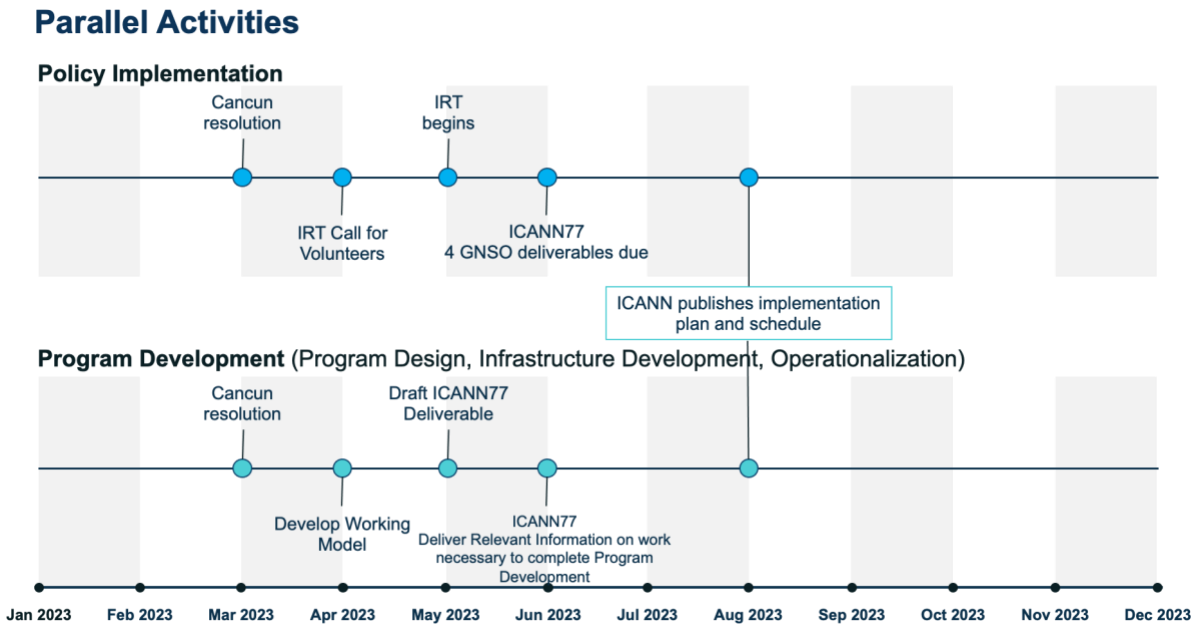
Objective of this Document

This document provides the “relevant information regarding the work necessary to complete the Program Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization streams” as requested by the Board in its 16 March 2023 resolution. The document details the major requirements, actions, and milestones for each of these streams of work and provides a potential timeline for completion of this work, based on available information. The document also provides an overview of the program structure, as well as dependencies that must be resolved in order for work to be completed.

This document acts as a precursor to the 1 August 2023 deliverable requested by the Board, informs that deliverable, which is a fully detailed implementation plan (including cost and budgetary considerations) based on information available, and timeline to launch of the Next Round.

The timeline in Figure 1 below shows the concurrent ongoing work leading up to the 1 August deliverable.

Figure 1. Parallel Work Leading up to 1 August 2023 Deliverable



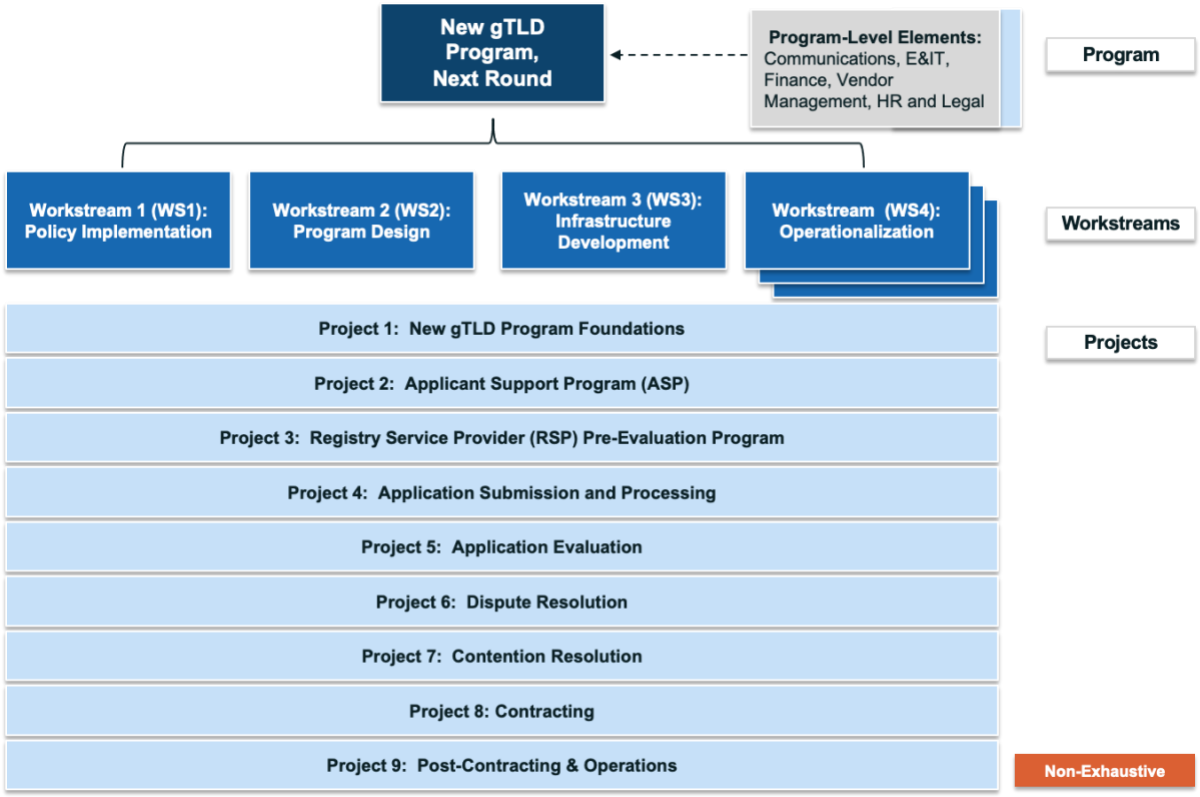
Implementation of Board-approved policy recommendations enables actions to be taken in the three remaining implementation streams. As Policy Implementation takes place, other implementation streams, where possible, will conduct work in parallel. Though work on the four implementation streams can be conducted concurrently, there are some matters of implementation that are dependent on the completion of the AGB, as described below in the Program Development section.

Program Structure[2]

ICANN org has organized the Next Round implementation work into four interdependent implementation work streams, nine primary projects, and seven program elements, as shown in Figure 2 below. Each of these aspects of the structure is explained further in this section.

[2] For more information on the governance structure, please see the ODA: https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/subpro-oda-12dec22-en.pdf (p. 83-89).

Figure 2. Program Structure



Work Streams (WS)

In the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Operational Design Assessment (ODA), ICANN org identified four implementation stages of work, which were then structured as Implementation Work Streams during the Implementation phase planning. The work captured within these work streams will require completion before opening the next application round of the New gTLD Program. As the implementation work progresses, the structure may evolve to include additional work streams, as warranted.

- **Policy Implementation (WS1)**: Development of the AGB.
- **Program Design (WS2)**: Development of the internal processes and structure with respect to the application lifecycle.[3]
- **Infrastructure Development (WS3)**: Development of the systems and tools in support of the application lifecycle.
- **Operationalization (WS4)**: Preparation to operate the program prior to the opening of the application submission period. This includes capacity development to support the application lifecycle.

See more on the work streams in the Program Development section.

[3] The application lifecycle is the overall process by which an application to operate a top-level domain (TLD) is submitted, evaluated, contracted, and delegated to the DNS root zone. This can also include processes for applications that are not approved, withdrawn and/or do not make it to contracting and delegation.

Primary Projects
Along with the workstreams in Figure 2, ICANN org has further organized the work into nine primary projects. These primary projects generally map to the AGB modules for the Next Round. Each project will move through each of the four work streams outlined above.

Project 1: New gTLD Program Foundations [4]
Project 2: Applicant Support Program (ASP)
Project 3: Registry Service Provider (RSP) Pre-Evaluation Program
Project 4: Application Submission and Processing
Project 5: Application Evaluation
Project 6: Dispute Resolution
Project 7: Contention Resolution
Project 8 Contracting
Project 9: Post-Contracting & Operations

Program-Level Elements
While all functions of ICANN org will play various support roles during the program implementation phase, five sets of functional activities will perform significant cross-cutting roles in supporting the implementation work across projects and work streams. These select functions have been defined as the Program-Level Elements:

- Communications
  - Communications outreach, strategy, and plan; public relations and social media campaigns; language services
- Engineering and Information Technology (E&IT)
  - Next Round systems
- Finance
  - Application Fees, Cost Model, Procurement[5], and Financial Reporting
- Human Resources:
  - Hiring, Facilities Management, and Training
- Governance/Legal
  - Required reviews and advisory activities

Dependencies

Each of the nine primary projects described in the Program Structure section has a number of dependencies. These dependencies may include pending recommendations as well as ongoing community work. As described in this section, progress and/or completion of a particular primary project is dependent upon the resolution of these dependencies. Such resolution may require collaboration between the ICANN Board, org, and/or ICANN community.

[4] Processes and activities that span multiple modules (e.g., Terms and Conditions, Application Change Request process, Program website)
[5] Vendor Management will be led by the Global Domains Division (GDS).

These dependencies are mapped to the primary projects in Table 1 below. For details on the issues related to each pending recommendation, see Appendix F.

Table 1. Dependencies and Pending Recommendations

Primary Project	Dependency and/or Pending Recommendations[6]
1. New gTLD Program Foundations	• Topic 3: Applications Assessed in Rounds (Affirm. 3.1, Recommendations 3.2, 3.5-3.7)
	• Topic 9: Registry Voluntary Commitments/Public Interest Commitments (Recommendations 9.1-9.2, 9.4, 9.8-9.10, 9.12-9.13, 9.15)
	• Topic 18: Terms & Conditions (Recommendations 18.1, 18.3-18.4)
	• Topic 23: Closed Generics • Board Facilitated Dialogue between GNSO, GAC, and ALAC[7]
	• Topic 30: GAC Consensus Advice and GAC Early Warning (Recommendation 30.4, 30.5-30.7)
2. Applicant Support Program	• Topic 17: Applicant Support (Recommendation 17.2) • GNSO Guidance Process (GGP)[8]
3. Registry Service Provider Pre-Evaluation Program	• Topic 6: Registry Service Provider Pre-Evaluation (Recommendation 6.8)
4. Application Submission and Processing	• Topic 16: Application Submission Period (Recommendation 16.1)
	• Topic 19: Application Queuing (Recommendation 19.3)
5. Application Evaluation	• Topic 22: Registrant Protections (Recommendation 22.7)
	• Topic 24: String Similarity Evaluation (Recommendations 24.3, 24.5)
	• Expedited Policy Development Process on Internationalized Domain Names[9]

[6] As noted in the Subsequent Procedures PDP Scorecard (https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/scorecard-subpro-pdp-board-action-16mar23-en.pdf).
[7] See: https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/policy/2022/correspondence/gnso-council-et-al-to-fouqaurt-08mar22-en.pdf.
[8] Initiation of the GNSO Guidance Process on Applicant Support. 25 August 2022. https://gnso.icann.org/en/council/resolutions/2020-current#202208.
[9] See: https://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/idn-epdp

	• Topic 26: Security and Stability (Recommendation 26.9)
	• Topic 29: Name Collisions (Recommendation 29.1; Name Collision Analysis Project[10])
6. Dispute Resolution	• Topic 31: Objections (Recommendations 31.16-31.17)
	• Topic 32: Limited Challenge/Appeal Mechanism (Recommendations 32.1-32.2, 32.10)
7. Contention Resolution	• Topic 34: Community Applications (Recommendation 34.12)
	• Topic 35: Auctions (Recommendations 35.3, 35.5)
8. Contracting	n/a
9. Post-Contracting & Operations	n/a

Each of these dependencies within the nine primary projects may have an effect on how and when the projects will be able to progress through the work streams described in the Program Structure section. Although work between work streams can in some cases be conducted in parallel, these dependencies will affect the ability for a project to be completed and, ultimately, progress from policy implementation to operationalization. These dependencies are taken into account in considering the working methods and estimated timelines in the Timeline section.

Program Development

Every process of the Next Round of the New gTLD Program must be developed from Final Report recommendations and incorporated into operational services. As noted above, this work takes place in four work streams[11]:

- Policy Implementation,
- Program Design,
- Infrastructure Development, and
- Operationalization.

The three work streams following Policy Implementation collectively make up the Program Development work. Program Development comprises the work of taking the process requirements developed during Policy Implementation and turning them into documented processes, developing the capability to deliver those processes through the creation of

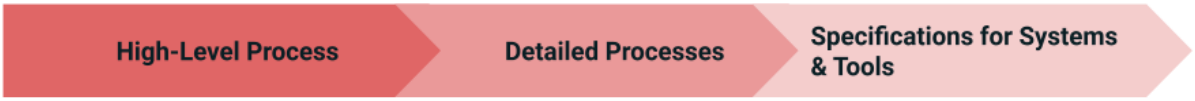
[10] See: https://community.icann.org/display/NCAP/NCAP+Discussion+Group
[11] See the Program Structure section for an overview of the work streams as they relate to the overall Program Structure for implementation of the Next Round.

systems and tools, and building the capacity to deliver those same processes through the development of procedures that can be administered by trained, operational resources. Completion of each work stream is dependent on completion of the prior work stream. These streams of work are described in more detail in this section.

To help illustrate the service development process, an example based on the work required to develop the Application Change Request process from Policy Implementation to Operationalization has been included in Appendix C.

Program Design (WS2)

Program Design centers on the development of program processes and designing the org structure to deliver those processes. Successful development of each process is dependent on a clear understanding of Final Report recommendations as well as the outcome of any pending recommendations (e.g., related to RVCs/PICs) or other ongoing community work (e.g., IDN EPDP).[12] The development of processes for the Next Round will be iterative, and will generally occur as outlined below. It should be noted that this work stream is subject to change depending on the outcomes of the policy development work stream.



As part of this work stream, ICANN org will first develop the high-level processes that are expected to appear in the AGB, working cross-functionally to set process requirements. High-Level Process designs are intended to be included in the AGB, similar, in level of detail, to the 2012 AGB. These process designs will provide applicants and the community an overview of the business processes that will be used for processing applications. This early step in Program Design will work in parallel with Policy Implementation (Guidebook drafting with the support of the Implementation Review Team) with the intent to include these high-level processes in the AGB.

Once the high-level processes have been created, ICANN org will create detailed process blueprints that incorporate internal stakeholder input and best practices. Process blueprints are critical to implementation as they specify the parameters within which a process is expected to be executed including estimates on number of transactions, processing times, need for vendor support, and other areas.

Finally, based on the process blueprints, ICANN org will develop business requirements and specifications for system and tool development. This will result in specifications that will create clarity on what systems and tools are intended to do and will define their overall capabilities.

Since ICANN76, ICANN org has updated the inventory of necessary internal processes. ICANN org expects to develop or update more than seventy (70) processes as part of the

[12] See the Dependencies section.

program. Based on the initial assessment of the level of effort, this work will require several dedicated resources and is expected to take approximately six months.

Infrastructure Development (WS3)

Infrastructure Development is focused on building the systems and tools to deliver the processes created in Program Design. This includes, for example, systems to support the application system, Registry System Testing (RST), the Program website capabilities, the Applicant Support Program, and the Registry Service Provider (RSP) Pre-evaluation Program. The latter two programs are expected to launch in advance of the application submission period and are therefore scheduled during the early part of development. There will also be a large number of processes that are expected to be supported manually and will require tools and artifacts to build such capability.

As noted above, for infrastructure development to fully commence, ICANN org must complete business process designs and subsequent business requirements for each of the program processes.[13] While awaiting full program requirements, however, ICANN org is able to begin working concurrently on capacity development to ensure that the right platform(s) are selected and development resources are identified. To this end, ICANN org has begun development of a limited set of expected functionalities to showcase the capabilities of various technology and vendor options that may be useful for full program development.

After ICANN org has developed the detailed blueprints and specifications in the Program Design work stream, ICANN org will develop the systems and tools to support the Next Round processes in the Infrastructure Development work stream. If possible, ICANN org will reuse capabilities developed during the platform evaluation. For any required capabilities not developed as part of the scope of the systems build, ICANN org expects to develop a set of tools and/or manual processes to support the Next Round.

This stream of work consists of three parts before rollout: design of the systems and tools, development, and testing. After testing and validation, the systems will be iteratively rolled out as prioritized by program requirements. Separately, ICANN org will roll out any tools needed to support manual processes.

It should be noted that the timing and features of the systems and tools developed in this work stream are subject to change should the outcomes of the Policy Implementation work stream result in changes or clarifications in the AGB that impact the process requirements and system specifications.

[13] See the Program Structure section for more information on the program processes and primary projects.

As mentioned above, ICANN org has already begun work on capacity development in reviewing several platforms and vendors. The intent is to work together with the Program Design work stream and incorporate business process requirements into Infrastructure Development as those requirements become available. While the bulk of development is expected to take place once the majority of process designs are completed, ICANN org intends to begin work on various aspects of the systems and tools as early as feasible (e.g., prioritizing ASP/RSP systems as outlined in the Timeline section).

In addition to developing the capabilities for Program Design, ICANN org has captured in its timeline estimates the scaling-up of systems noted in Figure 6 and Figure 7 below, which will require upgrades to existing systems to support the increased number of new gTLDs expected. Those projects will be planned and managed concurrently with the rest of the specific functionalities to be developed.

Operationalization (WS4)

Operationalization is the last step in implementation. This work stream creates services built from the processes and capabilities (systems and tools) developed in the prior work streams. It builds the capacity to deliver those services by building procedures, hiring and training operational staff, and performing testing to ensure the services operate as intended. Because this work is dependent on the outputs of the prior processes, much of the work cannot start until processes and systems are developed.

The work during this phase concerns the creation of internal procedures (i.e., those followed by ICANN org staff in carrying out a process), including the development of quality assurance methods. Additionally, ICANN org will determine the resources required for each process and begin the hiring and training of staff, and in some cases the procurement of vendors. Finally, ICANN org will perform a pilot or operational test on all services.

While some of this work, such as the development of procedures and training materials, can start in parallel with the activities in the other work streams, a number of these tasks require completion of the other work streams (e.g. publication of the AGB, approved processes, and available systems) to complete the operationalization of the program. ICANN org estimates this work to take approximately 18 months, with a year of that work occurring after completion of the AGB.

Given that much of the data needed to estimate the cost and time of this work stream will not be available until outputs from prior work streams become available, the estimates included in the 1 August implementation plan will draw heavily on ICANN org experiences in preparing for and operating the 2012 round of the New gTLD Program.

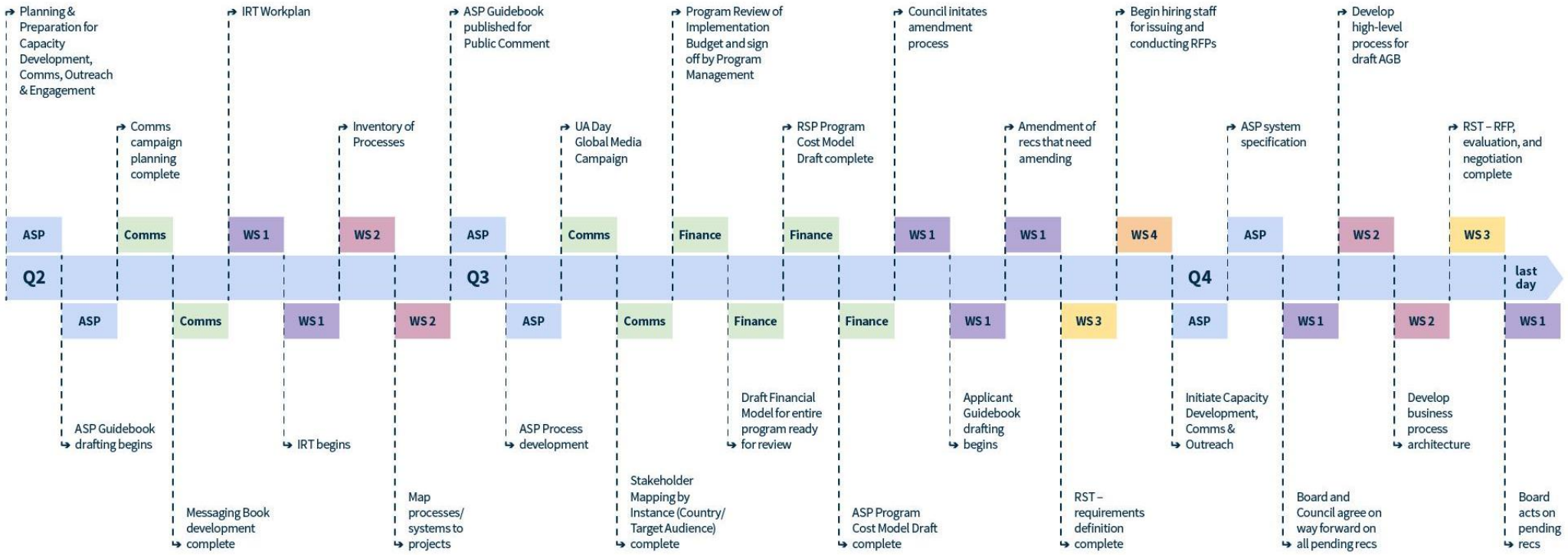
Timeline

ICANN org is currently estimating that implementation of the working model will take three years to complete. Estimates are subject to receipt of the expected inputs on timing for resolving open issues related to pending recommendations and community work (e.g., dialogue on Closed Generics) and the completion of the AGB. In Figures 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, ICANN org provides a tentative timeline for when this work will be carried out, including key milestones, based on currently available information.

(Continue to next page for timelines)

Figure 3. Draft Estimated Next Round Timeline 2023[14]

2023



[14]Acronyms listed include: Universal Acceptance (UA) Day, Request for Proposals (RFP)

Figure 4. Draft Estimated Next Round Timeline 2024 (Q1-Q2)

2024

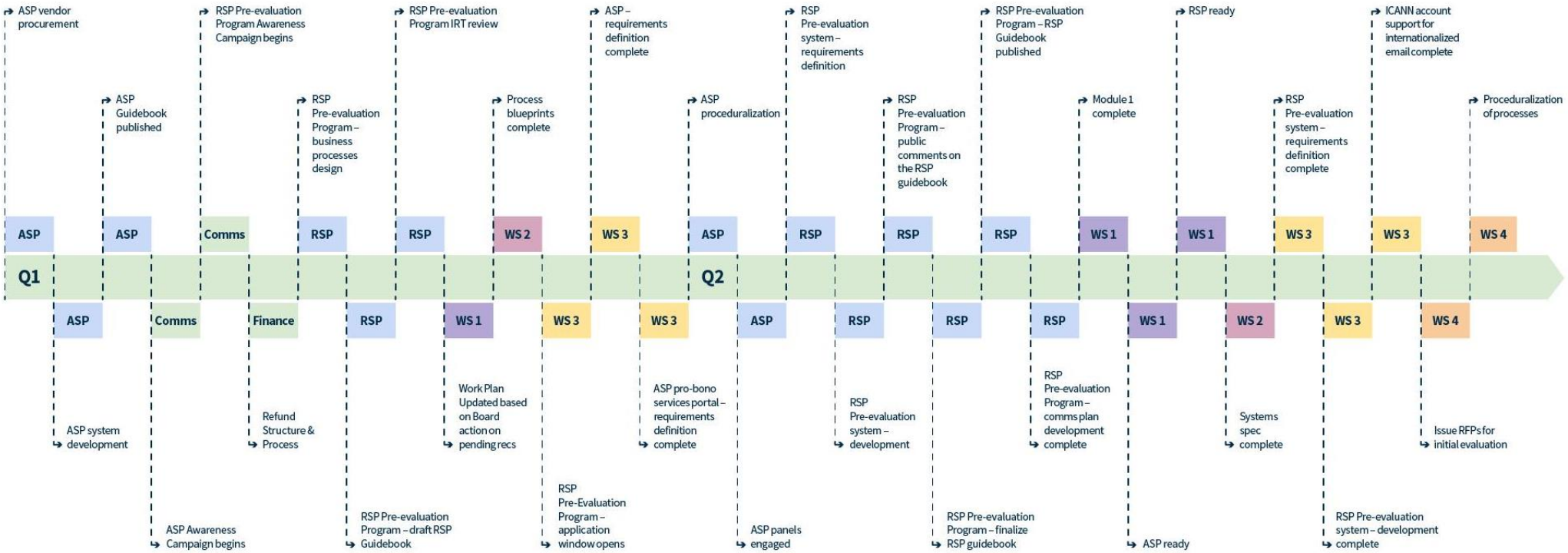


Figure 5. Draft Estimated Next Round Timeline 2024 (Q3-Q4)

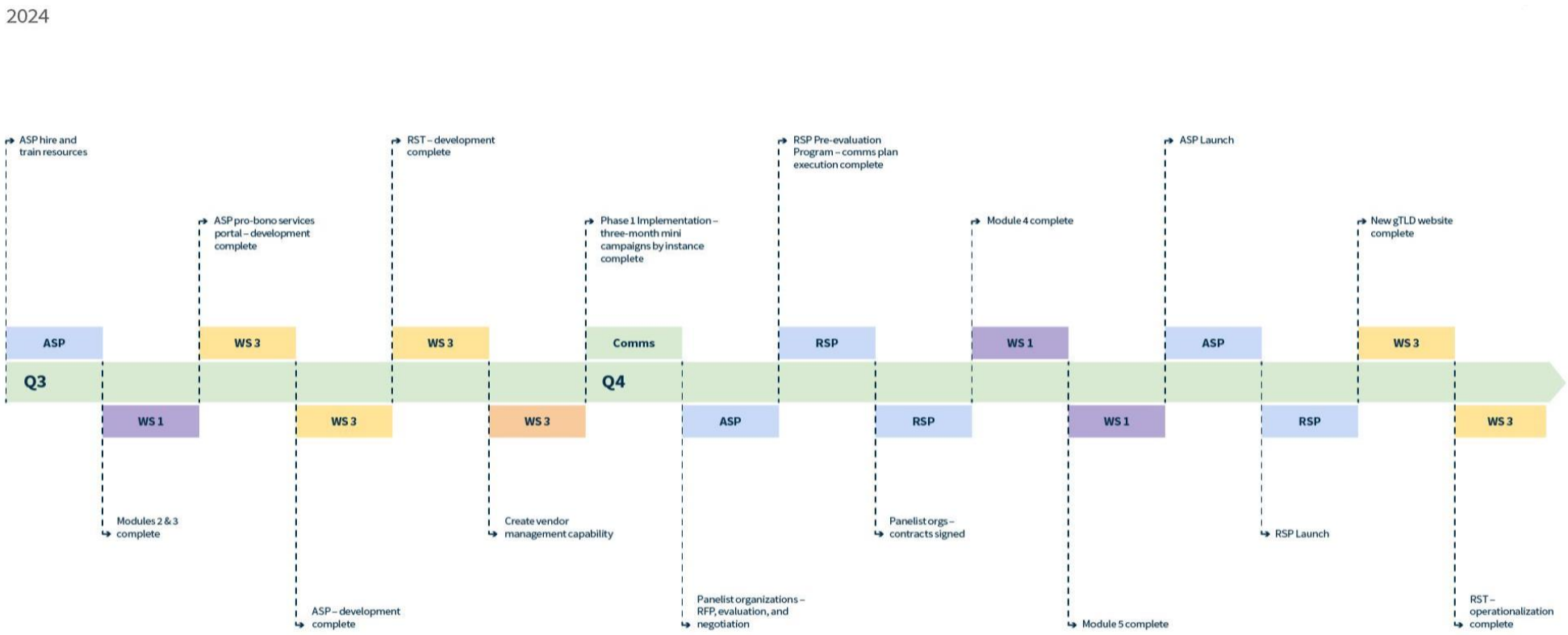
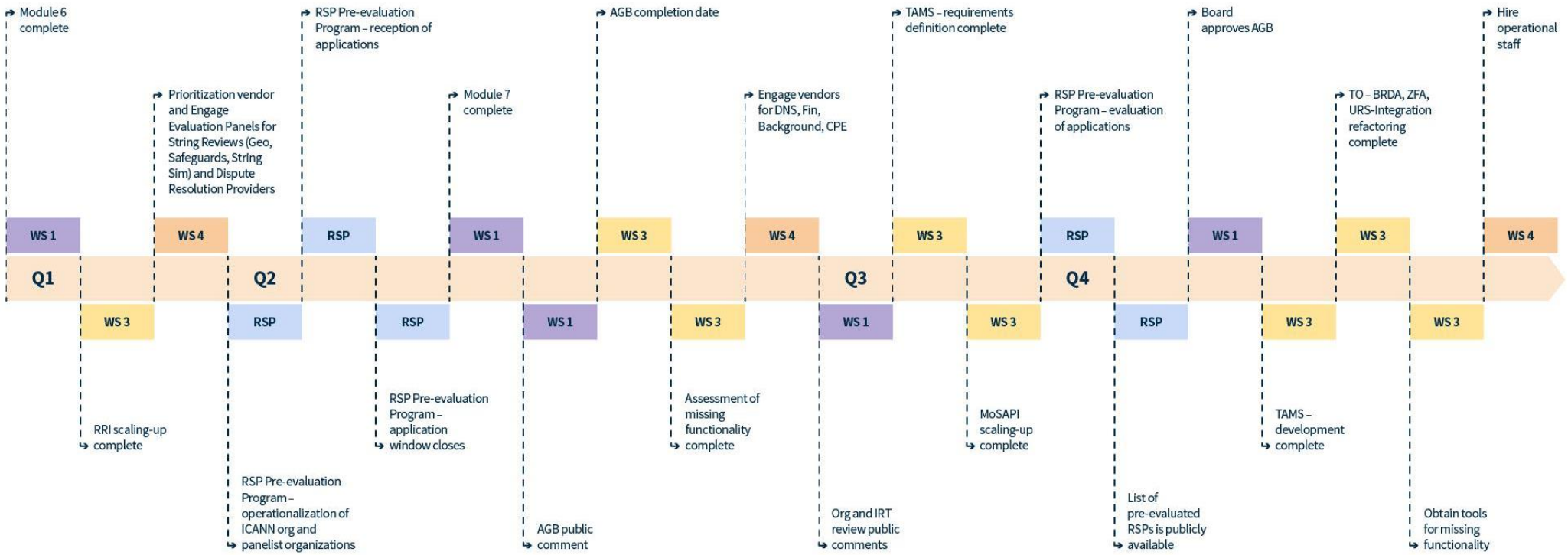


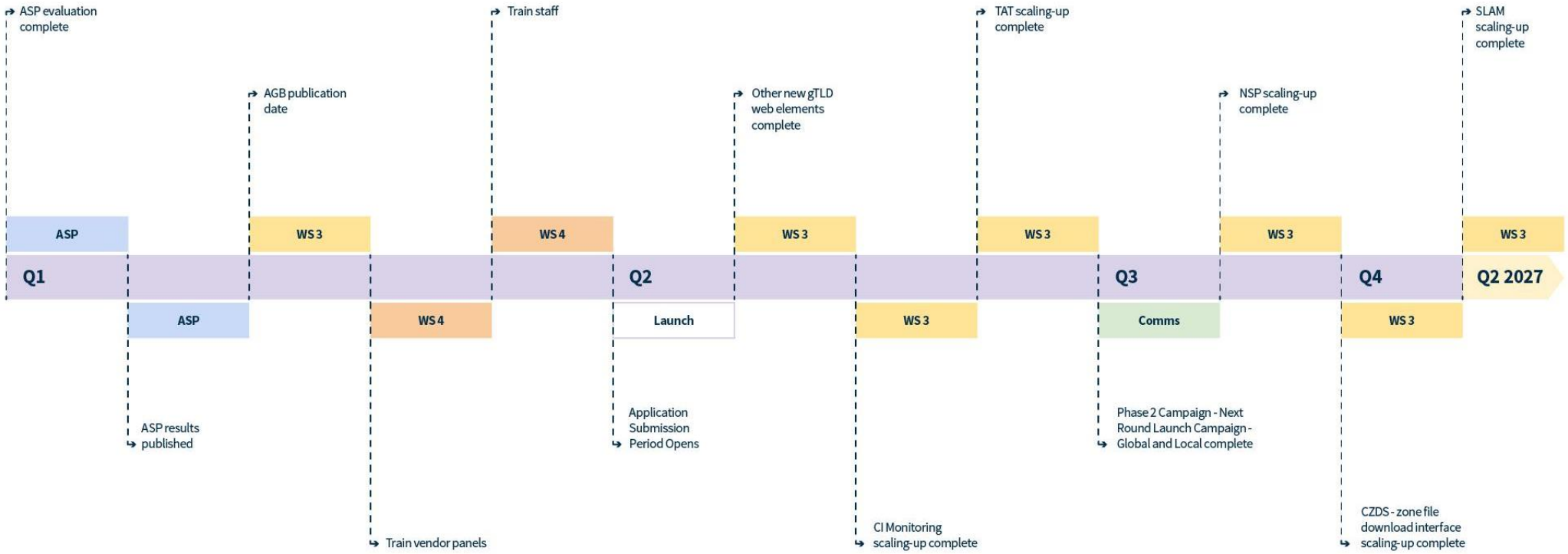
Figure 6. Draft Estimated Next Round Timeline 2025[15]



[15] Acronyms/Abbreviations listed include: Financial (Fin), Community Priority Evaluation (CPE), TLD Application Management System (TAMS), Technical Onboarding (TO), Bulk Registration Data Access (BRDA), Zone File Access (ZFA), Uniform Rapid Suspension (URS), Registration Reporting Interfaces (RRI), Monitoring System API (MoSAPPI)

Figure 7. Draft Estimated Next Round Timeline 2026-2027[16]

2026-2027



[16] Acronyms listed include: Secure file server (TAT), Naming Services portal (NSP), SLA Monitoring System (SLAM), Controlled Interruption (CI) Monitoring, Centralized Zone Data Service (CZDS)

Next Steps

With the inputs from the ICANN community, as called for in the Board resolution, ICANN org will work to develop a full implementation plan by 1 August 2023. ICANN org expects that the implementation plan will include detailed information regarding the milestones that need to be met and by when, prior to opening the next application round of the New gTLD Program, as well as cost and budget implications for carrying out the work, building on the information provided in the Timeline section above. The implementation timeline will be further detailed to include all nine primary projects as well as the program element projects, project milestones and dependencies.

As noted in the Board's March 2023 resolution, the delivery of the full implementation plan by 1 August 2023 and the successful completion of all four implementation streams to open the next round of new gTLDs will require the collective commitment, considerable resources, and effort from the ICANN Board, the ICANN community, and ICANN org. The information provided here represents ICANN org's best estimate, based on current information. As additional information becomes available as to the outcomes on pending policy recommendations and the possible optimization of processes, the org will continue to support these efforts and update the relevant plans as required.

Appendix A: Background

The New gTLD Program is an initiative organized by ICANN to expand the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS). The New gTLD Program was first launched in 2012, resulting in more than 1,000 new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) being added to the DNS. On 17 December 2015, the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council initiated a Policy Development Process and chartered the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Working Group (SubPro PDP WG). The SubPro PDP WG was tasked with determining what, if any, changes should be made to the New gTLD Program.

On 1 February 2021, the SubPro PDP WG published its Final Report on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process (Final Report), which contained more than 300 outputs for the ICANN Board to consider. On 12 December 2022, ICANN org transmitted the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Operational Design Assessment (ODA) to the Board. The ODA contained an analysis to inform the Board's consideration of whether the Final Report outputs are in the best interest of the ICANN org and ICANN community.

On 16 March 2023, the Board took action on the Final Report outputs and provided guidance on how to proceed. The Board approved resolutions 2023.03.16.04 – 2023.03.16.15. The resolutions adopted a number of Final Report outputs, detailed in the Board's 16 March 2023 Scorecard, and outlined the next steps required to open the next application round of the New gTLD Program.

The resolutions noted there are four separate yet interdependent implementation streams—Policy Implementation, Program Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization—that require completion before opening the next application round of the New gTLD Program. In addition to the work included in the aforementioned implementation streams, the Board requested that ICANN org deliver an implementation plan to the Board no later than 1 August 2023. The Board stated that the implementation plan required the satisfactory completion of the following four deliverables by the last day of the ICANN77 Public Meeting (15 June 2023):

1. A plan and timeline as agreed upon by the ICANN Board and the GNSO Council for consideration and resolution of all outputs contained in Section B of the Scorecard;
2. A working methodology and Implementation Review Team (IRT) work plan and timeline as agreed upon by ICANN org and the GNSO Council;
3. A GNSO Council project plan and timeline for policy work, or an alternate path, on how to handle closed generics for the Next Round of new gTLDs; and
4. A project plan from the GNSO Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) Working Group (WG) identifying all charter questions that will impact the next Applicant Guidebook, along with considerations to ensure a consistent solution on IDN Variant TLDs with the ccPDP4 on IDN ccTLDs (in accordance with prior Board Resolution 2019.03.14.09), and a timeline by when the IDNs EPDP WG will deliver relevant recommendations to the GNSO Council.

The Board emphasized that the completion of these deliverables and implementation streams requires significant commitment, resources, and efforts by the ICANN Board, ICANN org, and community. The Board encouraged all parties to work together efficiently and constructively in order to move forward in completing the implementation work before opening the next application round of the New gTLD Program.

Appendix B: Working Model and Assumptions

This section describes the working model on which the plans and estimates in this document are based. The expected high-level business process view of the activities associated with accepting and handling new gTLD applications is shown in Appendix D: Business Process Design.

Because the volume of applications is unknown, and there are elements still pending action, this section documents where ICANN org has made planning assumptions, for the purpose of a common working model used by all parts of the team. This working model may further evolve based on additional decisions or information.

1. **What is the scope of recommendations to be implemented under this model?**

   The working model includes all of the Board-approved Final Report outputs to date. Where outputs are in a pending status, the org has used the working assumptions described in number 6 below.

2. **What is the end-to-end implementation time under this model?**

   ICANN org estimates three years will be required for Policy Implementation and Program Design.

   - The Policy Implementation stream, which includes updates to AGB, is estimated to require two years for completion from the start of the IRT, followed by several months for public comments on and Board consideration of the Guidebook.
   - Program Development, which comprises Process Design, Infrastructure Development, and Operationalization, is estimated to conclude one year after the AGB is completed. Though Program Development is expected to progress in parallel with Policy Implementation, there are aspects of the New gTLD Program that cannot be completed until the AGB is complete.

   The completion of Program Development work hinges on the completion of the AGB– should this occur sooner than the two years outlined above, then the Next Round could open earlier; should this occur later than the two years outlined above, then the Next Round could open later.

   This two-year estimate is also contingent upon the resolution of outstanding issues like PICs/RVCs, and completion of ongoing discussions including closed generics, and the GNSO IDN EPDP, subject to receipt of estimated timelines from the GNSO Council as per the 16 March Board resolution. Should the resolution of those issues take longer than anticipated, this will have an effect on when the AGB can be completed and, ultimately, when the Next Round would launch.

This model is shaped by the 2007 GNSO Recommendation 1 on the introduction of new gTLDs, as affirmed by the GNSO Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group in its Affirmation 27.1:

> ICANN must implement a process that allows the introduction of new top-level domains. The evaluation and selection procedures for new gTLD registries should respect the principles of fairness, transparency, and non-discrimination. All applicants for a new gTLD registry should therefore be evaluated against transparent and predictable criteria, fully available to the applicants prior to the initiation of the process. Normally, therefore, no subsequent additional selection criteria should be used in the selection process.

The model accordingly calculates that the complete process, criteria, fees, and other relevant information are included in the AGB and available to applicants before they apply. The Operational Design Assessment described some possible alternative models that might reduce the wait-time to open the Next Round by developing some program components after launch; these are not reflected in the working model, as they would not provide the transparency and predictability sought in the Final Report.

3. **What are the application submission limits under this model? What assumptions about demand underpin this model?**

In accordance with Affirmation 5.1[17], there are no application submission limits under this model. However, the program's processing capacity and schedule will be determined according to the volume of applications received. The working model assumes application volume will be similar to the 2012 round, with ICANN org receiving approximately 2,000 applications and delegating roughly 1,200 gTLDs.

4. **What systems and tools are assumed to be developed under this model?**

ICANN org will build systems and tools[18] to support the capabilities needed to implement the application lifecycle's processes and dependency services. Resources for the program's systems and tools will be focused on areas with high-volume and high-visibility covering applicants requesting applicant support, managing their TLD applications; RSP applicants going through pre-evaluation, and downstream processes for ICANN org staff to manage applications from initial processing through contracting. For a more detailed breakdown of those systems

[17] Affirmation 5.1: In the 2012 application round, no limits were placed on the number of applications in total or from any particular entity. The Working Group is not recommending any changes to this practice and therefore affirms the existing implementation.

[18] "Systems" generally refer to large-scale mechanisms that administer multiple services in support of the application lifecycle, e.g., a "TLD Application Management System." A "tool" generally refers to a small-scale mechanism that assists an individual in carrying out a particular process step, e.g., spreadsheets with calculations and macros.

and dependency projects, please refer to the Timeline section, which outlines the high level schedule planned.

5. **How will costs be managed under this model?**

   Costs will be managed with a pre-established ceiling for development. Development costs will be tracked before and after receiving application fees.

6. **What assumptions are being made regarding pending recommendations under this model?**
   With the understanding that these outcomes could change, as these pending recommendations are still under discussion, the following assumptions have been made regarding pending recommendations for planning purposes:

   - **Topic 3 (Applications Assessed in Rounds):** The model assumes that ICANN org holds one application round based on the Final Report recommendations and then prepares for a steady state program. (This is pending Board and community action on recommendations and path forward.)
   - **Topic 6 (RSP Pre-Evaluation):** The model assumes that the RSP Pre-Evaluation recommendations are implemented and that the costs are subject to the cost-recovery principle of the New gTLD Program.
   - **Topic 9 (RVCs/PICs) | Topic 24 (String Similarity) | Topic 31 (Objections)**: The model assumes that recommendations related to RVCs/PICs will be accepted and that the ICANN Bylaws have been amended to address concerns noted by the Board in its Scorecard.
   - **Topic 9 (GAC Safeguards)**: The model assumes that safeguard assessments will be conducted via a panel.
   - **Topic 16 (Application Submission Period):** The model assumes that the application submission period is between 12 and 15 weeks, as recommended in the Final Report.
   - **Topic 17 (Applicant Support)**: The model assumes the Applicant Support Program will include considerations to be provided as part of the GNSO Guidance Process.
   - **Topic 18 (Terms and Conditions)**: The model assumes that an updated version of the Terms and Conditions from the 2012 round, which includes the covenant not to sue, will continue to be used.
   - **Topic 19 (Application Queuing):** The model assumes that applications are queued according to the formula recommended in the Final Report.
   - **Topic 22 (Registrant Protections):** The model assumes that the requirements for a Continued Operational Instrument or successor mechanism are in place for all applicants, and that the mechanism could include different requirements for different TLD types.
   - **Topic 26 (Security and Stability):** The model assumes that emojis in domain names are prohibited per technical standards.

- **Topic 29 (Name Collisions)**: The model assumes that the current Name Collision Management Framework, which was approved in July 2014, remains in use.
- **Topic 30 (GAC Consensus Advice & Early Warnings):** The model assumes that the Early Warning mechanism remains in place and that the GAC may provide advice on applications in line with its remit in the ICANN Bylaws.
- **Topic 32 (Limited Challenge/Appeal Mechanisms)**: The model assumes a new appeals mechanism will be implemented for two of the five categories recommended in the Final Report.
- **Topic 34 (Community Applications):** The model assumes that Community Priority Evaluation, where it occurs, is performed by a service provider.
- **Topic 35 (Auctions)**: The model assumes auctions of last resort will take place with a statement of bona fide intent and a transparency disclosure as noted in the accepted recommendations on auctions.

Appendix C: Example of Service Development Lifecycle

Table 2 below provides an overview of the service development lifecycle, using the example of the Application Change Request (ACR) process. The table follows the development of the service from Policy Implementation (Work Stream 1) through Operationalization (Work Stream 4).

Table 2. Service Development Lifecycle Example

Service Development Lifecycle Example Application Change Request (ACR)				
Step	**Action**	**Work Stream**	**Step Details**	**Est. Level of Effort**
1	Document ACR process requirements.	Policy Implementation	Document requirements from Final Report outputs, 2012 Applicant Guidebook (AGB), Program Implementation Review Report (PIRR), prior round. Note requirement changes from previous processes, such as newly allowed change request types.	9 work weeks over 3-6 months
2	Clarify any ambiguity or confusion on requirements.	Policy Implementation	Work with IRT to clarify Final Report outputs or open policy questions. This should be minimal as the org provided questions and clarifications to the GNSO during the Operational Design Phase.	
3	Develop and document processes.	Program Design	Develop high-level business processes for documentation in the AGB.	3 work weeks over two months
4	Identify business requirements and develop process blueprints.	Program Design	Determine ICANN org's business rules or requirements across all aspects of the New gTLD Program, as changes to an application may impact other processes, such as re-evaluation, re-opening of the objection window, or placing a contention set on hold. Use business rules or requirements from policy language to develop detailed process blueprints that can be used for system and tool specifications.	
5	Develop systems and tools specifications.	Program Design	Develop requirements for necessary systems and tools to accommodate business rules or requirements, e.g., a system that allows for changes to applications and that also takes into account potential effects across all processes.	

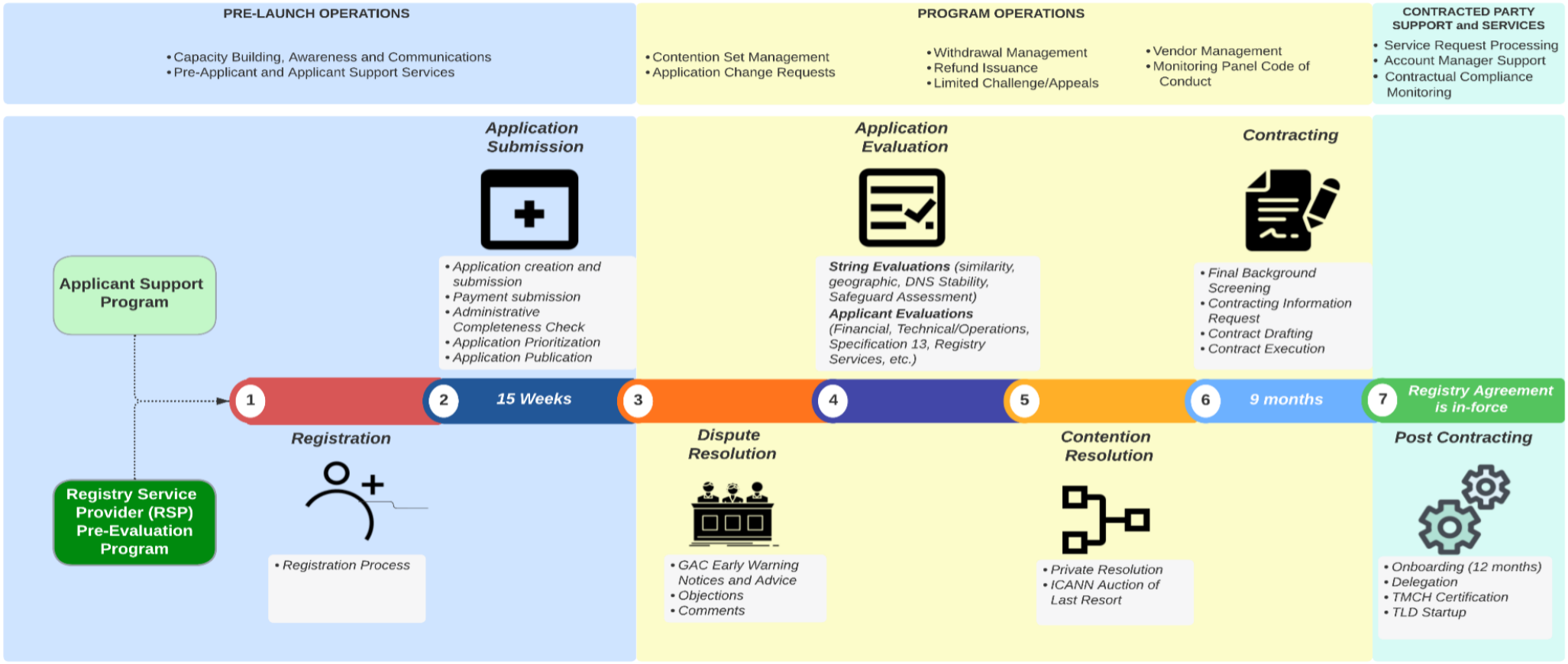
6	Draft technical specifications for systems and Tools.	Infrastructure Development	Identify requirements and specifications for systems and tools including functionality to track changes, notification of changes to interested parties and ACR comment period.	The ACR process is one of many that will be supported by a new application system. The estimated level of effort to develop this system is yet to be determined.
7	Develop systems and Tools.	Infrastructure Development	Develop ACR capabilities in all relevant systems including criteria evaluation, approval tracking, data change management, and reporting. Test and validate ACR capabilities.	
8	Roll out systems.	Infrastructure Development	Roll out ACR capabilities for launch of the Next Round.	
9	Create business process procedures and establish services.	Operationalization	Development of step-by-step procedures for staff to perform all allowable types of ACR. Document changes to other processes and services as a result of a successful ACR. Create public documentation explaining the ACR process including submission of a change request, the approval process, and expected service times. ACR processes need to be built into other processes and services (e.g., application data management).	Operationalization of all processes is expected to take approximately 18 months to complete and will be done once Process Design and Infrastructure development work streams are complete.[19]
10	Hire and train staff.	Operationalization	Building operational capability to support ACR once the application submission period begins.	
11	Pilot	Operationalization	Begin internal pilot-testing with hired/trained staff.	

[19] See Timeline.

Appendix D: Business Process Design

The figure below provides a high-level overview of the expected application process through the processes of the Next Round. This figure is based on the information provided in the Business Process Design of the ODA.[20]

Figure 8. Application Lifecycle



[20] See: https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/subpro-oda-12dec22-en.pdf (pages 195-241).

Appendix E: Applicant Support and Registry Service Provider Pre-Evaluation Programs

The Applicant Support and Registry Service Provider Pre-Evaluation programs–two of the primary projects described above–will need to be developed and implemented prior to the opening of the application submission period. ICANN org expects to apply learnings from the development of these programs to the development of the other processes and services of the Next Round. Additional detail on these programs has been included below.

Applicant Support Program (ASP)

The working model estimates that potential applicants will be able to apply for fee reduction support approximately 18 months before the New gTLD Program application submission period opens. The ASP application is separate from the New gTLD Program application and requires information about the applicant organization as well as financial need and public interest criteria. As such, the communications, awareness-raising, outreach, and engagement efforts related to ASP (and RSP, below) will need to commence at least six months prior to ASP opening, or 24 months prior to the new gTLD application window opening.

Qualified applicants are expected to be eligible for reduced ICANN fees related to the New gTLD Program, a curated list of pro bono and/or reduced-cost service providers to assist with the development of applications and related content such as registry policies, and a bid credit or multiplier if the supported applicant participates in an ICANN Auction of Last Resort. Applicants seeking support will be notified whether they qualify prior to the New gTLD application submission period opening, so that they have time to secure funding to apply for a gTLD.

ICANN org expects to open the application submission period for Applicant Support in advance of the gTLD application submission period to allow time for ICANN org to identify the number of applicants requesting support and time to consider how to allocate financial support[21] (e.g., high demand for Applicant Support may inform further budget allocations and/or seeking additional pro bono providers).[22] This would also prevent applicants from paying a gTLD application fee before they know whether they qualify for support. The Support Applicant Review Panel (SARP) will evaluate ASP applications.[23] ICANN org

[21] See Implementation Guidance 17.10: "The dedicated Implementation Review Team should consider how to allocate financial support in the case that available funding cannot provide fee reductions to all applicants that meet the scoring requirement threshold."

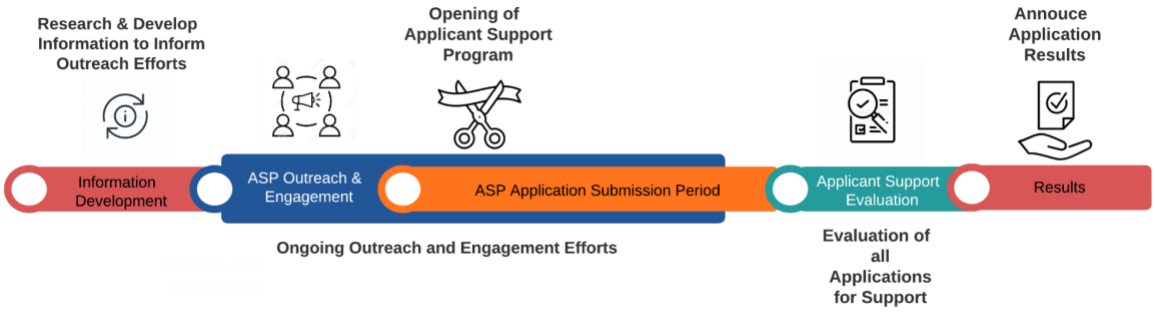
[22] This also relates to GNSO Guidance Process Task 6 that states: "Recommend a methodology for allocating financial support where there is inadequate funding for all qualified applicants."

[23] Final Report footnote 102: The detailed description of this recommendation in the PIRR states: "Regarding execution of the program, in this round, the SARP was an independent panel that defined

envisions the SARP be convened as an independently contracted third party that conducts the review and evaluation of applications for support, based upon criteria developed from policy analysis and preliminary research of similar global procedures.

Figure 9 shows the potential flow of the Applicant Support Program.

Figure 9. Applicant Support Program Milestones



Registry Service Provider Pre-Evaluation Program[24]

The RSP application submission period is expected to open for 60 days, beginning approximately 18 months before the gTLD application submission period. In support of consistency and transparency, ICANN org expects to publish a list of all pre-approved RSPs at one time.

During the application process, each RSP applicant must specify one or more services for which they seek to become pre-approved. The RSP applicant must provide all applicable information, submit the application, and pay applicable fees promptly. For each service, the RSP applicant must supply responses to applicable questions and those responses will be evaluated against established criteria. RSP applicants that do not receive a passing score for their responses to all questions for a particular service will not proceed to technical testing for that service.

RSP applicants need to pass technical tests to demonstrate their capabilities for each service they are applying to support. An RSP applicant must pass all applicable technical tests to be pre-approved for that service. If an RSP applicant does not pass both the evaluation and testing for at least one service, they will not appear on the pre-approved RSP list for the round.

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its own processes, procedures, and final reports. The SARP's work was performed earlier than the other New gTLD Program evaluation panels, and based on lessons learned from the implementation of other panels, ICANN should consider whether additional guidance should be provided to the SARP regarding publication of their processes, final report format, and documentation of rationale."

[24] See Appendix 15 of the Operational Design Assessment (ODA): https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/subpro-oda-12dec22-en.pdf (p. 319-330).

Appendix F: Pending Recommendation Details

Table 3. Details of Issues related to Pending Recommendations

Primary Project	Pending Recommendations	Issue Synopsis[25]
1. New gTLD Program Foundations	• Topic 3: Applications Assessed in Rounds (Affirm. 3.1, Recommendations 3.2, 3.5-3.7)	As noted in the ODA, "ICANN org considered that assessing applications in rounds and establishing criteria for starting subsequent rounds requires deliberation of what it means to close a round and possibly, the implications of simultaneous rounds for both applicants and ICANN org."[26]
	• Topic 9: RVCs/PICs (Recommendations 9.1-9.2, 9.4, 9.8-9.10, 9.12-9.13, 9.15)	(9.1) The Board remains concerned, as previously communicated as part of its comment on the Draft Final Report, about the risk of challenges related to ICANN's ability to enter into and enforce PICs/RVCs in accordance with its mission, due to limitations in the Bylaws Section 1.1. (9.2) The Board is concerned that a waiver to Specification 11, sections 3(a) and 3(b) could lead to DNS abuse for second-level registrations in a single-registrant TLD going undeterred, unobserved and therefore unmitigated. The Board is also concerned that a waiver to Specification 11, sections 3(a) and 3(b) could require a change to the RA's Specification 13, which would introduce significant implementation efforts to harmonize current 2012 agreements with future rounds if ICANN org elected to leverage the current agreement for the future rounds. (9.2)

[25] As noted in the Subsequent Procedures PDP Scorecard (https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/scorecard-subpro-pdp-board-action-16mar23-en.pdf).
[26] New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Operational Design Assessment, pp. 142-143 (https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/subpro-oda-12dec22-en.pdf).

	● Topic 18: Terms and Conditions (Recommendations 18.1, 18.3-18.4)	(18.1) The Board remains concerned, as previously communicated as part of its comment on the Draft Final Report, about whether this recommendation unduly restricts ICANN's discretion to reject an application in circumstances that fall outside the specific grounds set out in the recommendation. (18.3) The Board remains concerned, as previously communicated as part of its comment on the Draft Final Report, that dissatisfied applicants or objectors might argue, based on this policy recommendation, that the covenant not to sue is not valid because they did not like the way the appeals/challenge mechanism was built or operated. Anything that could weaken the covenant not to sue might preclude the ability to offer the program due to an unreasonable risk of lawsuits. (18.4) The Board is concerned that the way the recommendation is worded could lead to gaming because of the subjective nature of the terms "substantive" and "material."
	● Topic 30: GAC Consensus Advice and GAC Early Warning (Recommendation 30.4, 30.5-30.7)	(30.4) The Board will consult with GNSO Council and GAC before resolving on this recommendation. The GAC has publicly expressed its view on the removal of the "presumption" language from the AGB. See page 8 of Governmental Advisory Committee Comment on Subsequent Rounds for New gTLDs Draft Final Report Public Comment Proceeding. (30.5) The Board will consult with GNSO Council and GAC before resolving on this recommendation. The GAC has publicly expressed its negative view on

		Implementation Guidance 30.2[27], which concerns the limitation of "the timing of GAC Consensus Advice on future categories of TLDs and particular applications, oriented to disincentivizing any such Advice being submitted after the finalization and publication of the next Applicant Guidebook". It is the view of ICANN org that this has repercussions on Recommendation 30.5 as well. See page 7 of Governmental Advisory Committee Comment on Subsequent Rounds for New gTLDs Draft Final Report Public Comment Proceeding. (30.6) The Board will consult with GNSO Council and GAC before resolving on this recommendation. The GAC has publicly expressed its view on the need to update the language of the recommendation as follows: "[...] how the applicant may potentially address the GAC member's concerns to the extent feasible". See page 7 of Governmental Advisory Committee Comment on Subsequent Rounds for New gTLDs Draft Final Report Public Comment Proceeding.
2. Applicant Support Program	● Topic 17: Applicant Support (Recommendation 17.2)	(17.2) The Board remains concerned, as previously voiced as part of its comment on the Draft Final Report, over the open-ended nature of these fees as affirmative payments of costs beyond application fees could raise fiduciary concerns for the Board. Note, this concern does not extend to facilitation of pro bono services.
3. Registry Service Provider Pre-	● Topic 6: Registry Service Provider Pre-	(6.8) The Board is concerned about the recommended roles and

[27] Implementation Guidance 30.2: To the extent that the GAC provides GAC Consensus Advice (as defined in the ICANN Bylaws) in the future on categories of TLDs, the GAC should provide this Advice prior to the finalization and publication of the next Applicant Guidebook. In the event that GAC Consensus Advice is issued after the finalization and publication of the Applicant Guidebook and whether the GAC Consensus Advice applies to categories, groups or classes of applications or string types, or to a particular string, the ICANN Board should take into account the circumstances resulting in such timing and the possible detrimental effect of such timing in determining whether to accept or override such GAC Consensus Advice as provided in the Bylaws.

Evaluation Program	Evaluation	responsibilities during the implementation process. Per Consensus Policy Implementation Framework (CPIF) and the IRT Principles & Guidelines ICANN org leads implementation efforts. Therefore, the costs of the program should be established by ICANN org during implementation in consultation with the IRT.
4. Application Submission and Processing	• Topic 16: Application Submission Period (Recommendation 16.1)	(16.1) The Board is concerned that the time period provided in this recommendation could be too limiting for future rounds.
	• Topic 19: Application Queuing (Recommendation 19.3)	(19.3) The Board is concerned that the precise number of applications per batch could be too limiting for future rounds as the recommendation prescribes a batch size that might not align with future system capabilities.
5. Application Evaluation	• Topic 22: Registrant Protections (Recommendation 22.7)	(22.7) The Board is concerned that an exemption from a Continued Operations Instrument requirement for Specification 9 applications would have a negative financial impact on ICANN since there would be no fund to draw from if such a registry went into EBERO. Further, not moving a Brand TLD into EBERO might have a security and stability impact, especially if Brands allocate second-level TLDs to customers, such as a car manufacturer providing a second-level registration for their cars.
	• Topic 24: String Similarity Evaluation (Recommendations 24.3, 24.5)	(24.3, 24.5) The Board remains concerned, as previously voiced as part of its comment on the Draft Final Report, over the wording in sections (a) and (c) of this Recommendation as they stipulate “intended use” of a gTLD, which implies that ICANN will have to enforce the “intended use” post-delegation, which could be challenged as acting outside its mission.

	• Topic 26: Security and Stability	(26.9) The Board is concerned that this recommendation could be argued to fall outside ICANN's mission which states, per the Bylaws (Section 1.1.(i)): "... Coordinates the allocation and assignment of names in the root zone of the Domain Name System ("DNS") and coordinates the development and implementation of policies concerning the registration of second-level [emphasis added] domain names in generic top-level domains ("gTLDs"). In this role, ICANN's scope is to coordinate the development and implementation of policies… [.]"
	• Topic 29: Name Collisions (Recommendation 29.1)	(29.1) The Board has concerns around the potential impact of Name Collision Analysis Project on this recommendation and believes it is prudent to wait until after the release of the Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) 2 57 Study before resolving on this recommendation.
6. Dispute Resolution	• Topic 31: Objections (Recommendations 31.16-31.17	See issues related to Topic 9
	• Topic 32: Limited Challenge/Appeal Mechanism (Recommendations 32.1-32.2, 32.10)	(32.1) The Board is concerned regarding this recommendation as set out in Operational Design Assessment, at topic 32 (pp. 169-176). In sum, it is not clear that a challenge/appeal mechanism applicable to Initial/Extended Evaluation decisions made by ICANN or third-party providers or challenges concerning conflict of interest of panelists could be designed in a way that does not cause excessive, unnecessary costs or delays in the application process.
7. Contention Resolution	• Topic 34: Community Applications (Recommendation 34.12)	(34.12) The Board is concerned that this recommendation may require ICANN to publish for public comment confidential information, such as terms of a contract with a

		third party, including, e.g., fees and payments.
	• Topic 35: Auctions (Recommendations 35.3, 35.5	(35.3) The Board is concerned that this recommendation contains a reference to private auctions. Since there is no policy on private auctions, this reference may create confusion during implementation and operationalization of the program. (35.5) The Board is concerned that this recommendation contains a reference to private auctions. Since there is no policy on private auctions, this reference may create confusion during implementation and operationalization of the program.
8. Contracting	n/a	n/a
9. Post-Contracting & Operations	n/a	n/a

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