



# 82 | COMMUNITY FORUM



**NEW gTLD PROGRAM: RSP EVALUATION PROGRAM**

# New gTLD Program: Next Round

Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation  
Program  
Registry System Testing (RST) Version 2.0

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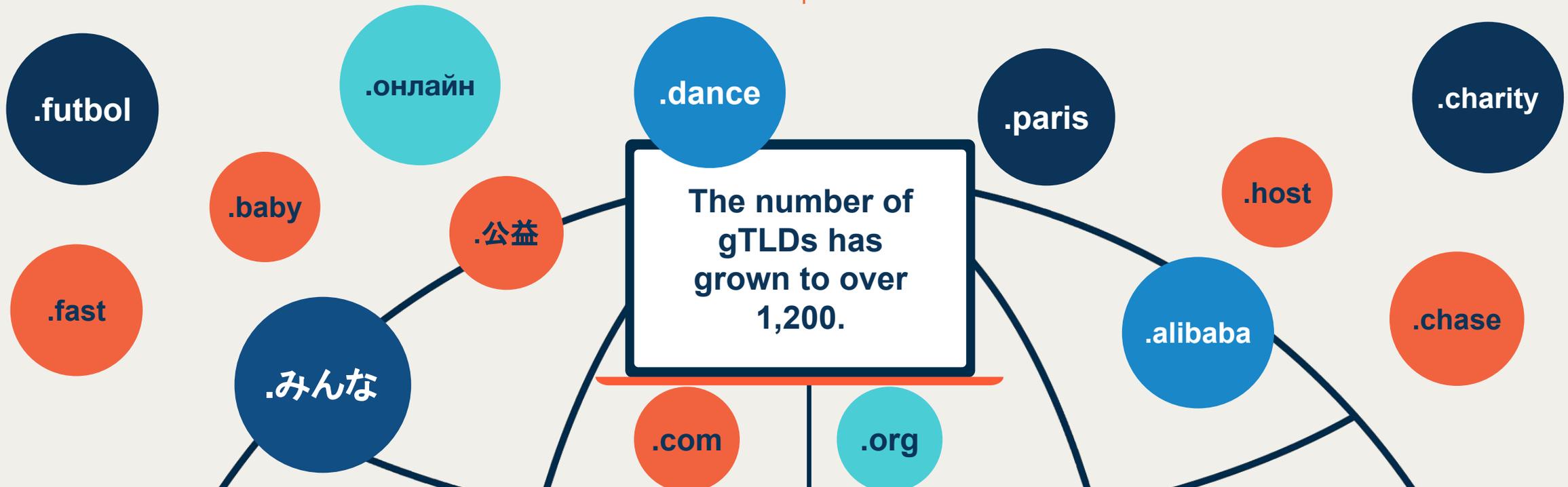
# Agenda

- **Welcome**
- **New gTLD Program: Next Round**
- **RSP Evaluation Program**
  - **FAQs**
- **Technical Testing (RST v2.0)**
  - **FAQs**
- **Question and Answer**

# The New gTLD Program

The **New Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Program** is a community-driven initiative to enable the continued expansion of the Domain Name System.

Beginning in 2026, businesses, communities, governments, and other organizations can apply for new gTLDs tailored to fit their needs.



# About Registry Service Providers (RSPs)



Perform critical registry services on behalf of a Registry Operator (RO). This may be the same entity as the RO itself or may be a third party to whom the RO subcontracts those services.

## Domain Name System (DNS) Service

- Connects the IP address to the domain name to allow users to navigate the Internet.

## Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC)

- Allows the authentication of responses to domain name lookups.

# About RSPs



## Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP)

- Designed as replacement for WHOIS; Enables public access to domain name registration data.

## Extensible Provisioning Protocol (EPP)

- Allows for electronic communication between registrar and registry for provisioning domain name registrations.

RSPs may offer additional registry services to those required by default in the Registry Agreement.

# The RSP Evaluation Program



The evaluation of RSPs is an important aspect of ICANN's mission to help ensure a stable, secure, resilient Internet.

## The RSP Evaluation Program is intended to:

- Improve efficiency of gTLD evaluation.
- Ensure RSPs have proper technical qualifications for running a gTLD back-end.

*The program enables RSPs to be evaluated just once, no matter how many gTLD applicants they choose to support.*

# RSP Evaluation Program and New gTLD Program: Next Round Timeline



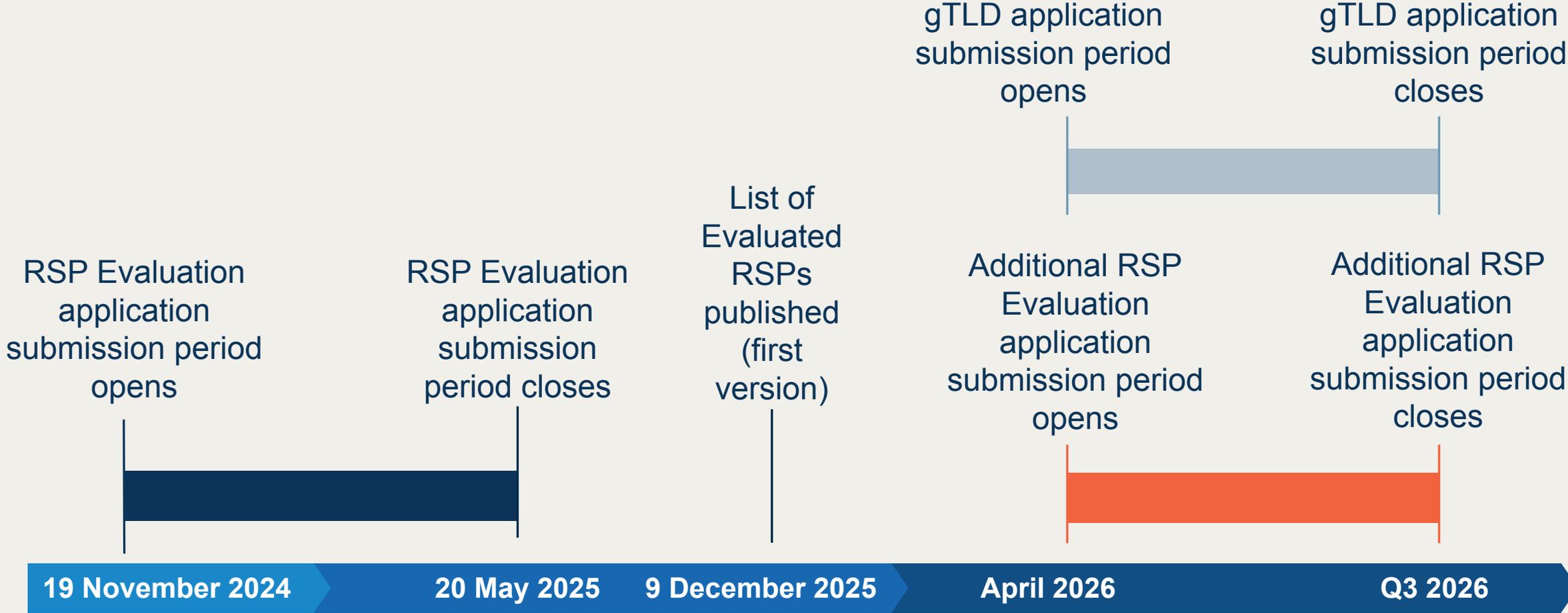
## RSP Evaluation Periods

- Pre-evaluation period opened 19 November 2024; closes **20 May 2025**.
- An additional evaluation period will open and close during the gTLD evaluation submission period.

## New gTLD Program: Next Round gTLD Evaluation Submission Period

- Opens April 2026; closes September 2026.

# RSP Evaluation Program and New gTLD Program: Next Round Timeline



Dates are subject to change.

# RSP Evaluation Program



## Types of RSPs:

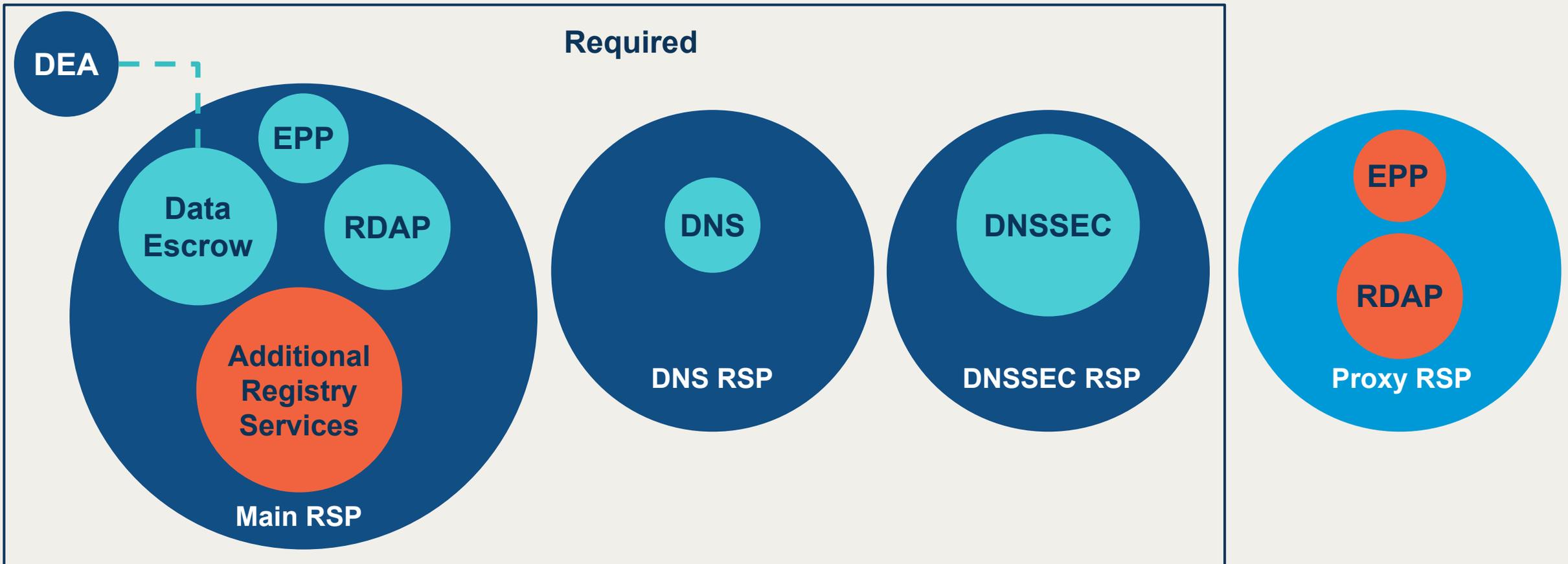
- **Main** (EPP, RDAP, Data Escrow)
- **DNS** (DNS Service)
- **DNSSEC** (DNSSEC Signing)
- **Proxy** (Registration Validation per Applicable Law with Proxy)

An RSP may be evaluated to offer one or more types of RSP service for a single fee.

A **Main** RSP may be evaluated for one or more additional registry services (including IDN tables).

# RSP Evaluation Program

Each gTLD applicant must identify at least one RSP for each critical registry service.



# RSP Evaluation - Technical Evaluation



- Technical evaluation is conducted by providing answers to a set of application questions via the RSP Portal.
- About the questions included in Appendix A of the RSP Handbook:
  - Each RSP application type has a specific set of questions.
  - Every question must be answered.
  - Questions are graded on a pass/fail basis requiring a 100% pass rate.
  - More than 50% of questions are a yes/no answer.
  - **All questions must have a pass grade to clear Technical Evaluation.**

## RSP Evaluation - Technical Evaluation



Evaluators will determine if answers provided are adequate.



Applicants will be able to clarify information upon request.

## RSP Evaluation - Additional Registry Services



- A Main RSP may offer a portfolio of pre-approved additional registry services, including Internationalized Domain Names support.
- New gTLD applicants must identify the additional registry service(s) they plan to use in their gTLD registry agreement from the menu offered by the RSP.

*Note: gTLD applicants are not required to utilize every service offered by the Main RSP.*

# RSP Evaluation - Additional Registry Services



## Paths to Additional Registry Services Evaluation:

1

[Fast-Track Registry Services](#) are automatically approved for all Main RSPs.

2

An RSP may also offer any registry service that they currently provide to a gTLD.

3

A process similar to the Registry Services Evaluation Policy process is available for all other registry services, including modification to current registry services.

*Note: Registration validation per jurisdiction with proxy requires the use of an evaluated Proxy RSP by the gTLD applicant.*

# RSP Evaluations - Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)



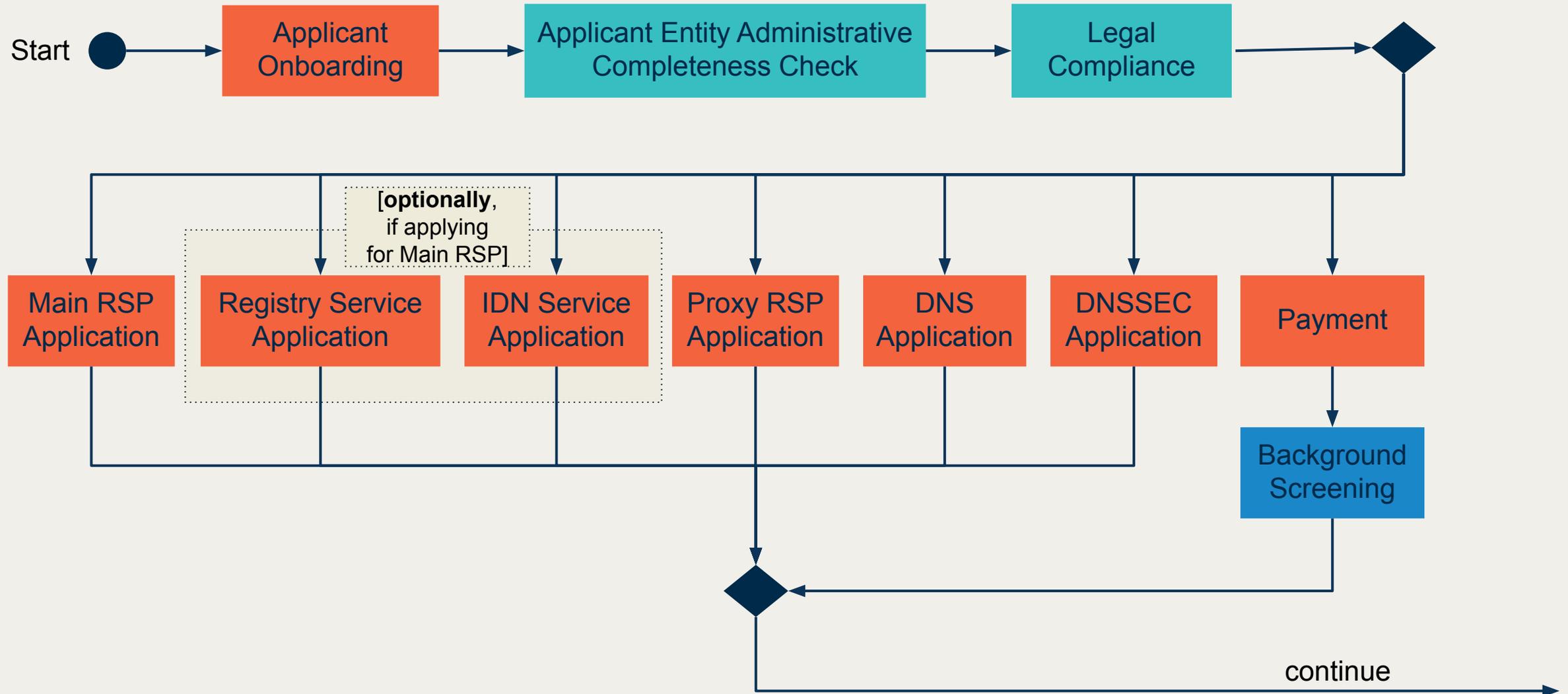
RSPs may be pre-approved to offer support for the following types of IDN services:

- 1 Non-variant TLDs with non-variant IDNs in the second-level.
- 2 Non-variant TLDs with variant IDNs in the second-level.
- 3 Variant TLDs with variant IDNs in the second-level.

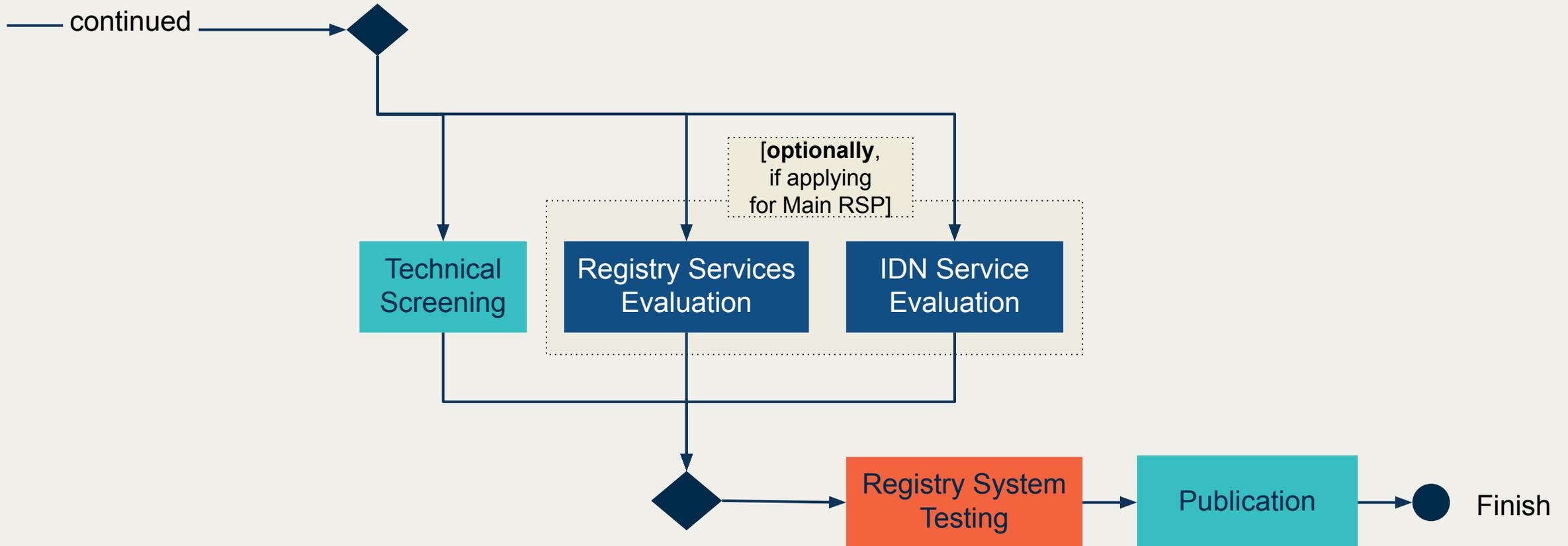
Evaluation will include criteria regarding IDN support in technical evaluation and technical tests.

All IDN tables (including those previously approved) will be reviewed during the RSP Evaluation with the exception of Second-Level Label Generation Rules with Full Variant Set, which will be automatically approved.

# RSP Evaluation Process Flow



# RSP Evaluation Process Flow (continued)



# RSPs and the New gTLD Program



Prior to and during the gTLD evaluation process, the following will be made available on the RSP website:

- Names and contact information of the Evaluated RSPs
- Pre-approved additional registry services including the service description
- Pre-approved IDN tables



Each evaluated RSP will receive a list of gTLD applicants that selected them.

ICANN org will share any additional registry services selected by the gTLD applicant with the Main RSP.

Each evaluated RSP must confirm which gTLD applications it has enough capacity for and will support.

gTLD applicants will be notified if the evaluated RSP they select is unwilling to provide RSP support.

# RSP Evaluation Fee



- Per policy requirements, the fee is set to recover costs based on currently known estimates:  
**Not to exceed US\$92,000.00**
- At the conclusion of the pre-evaluation phase, the fee will be adjusted to reflect the number of evaluated RSPs at that time.
- Evaluated RSPs will be refunded the difference should the number of evaluated RSPs increase based on the chart.

RSP Fee Schedule	
Number of Paid RSP Evaluations	Fee
0 - 49	US\$92,000
50 - 59	US\$77,000
60 and above	US\$68,500

## RSP Evaluation - Yes/No questions



**Could a ‘no’ answer be a failing score regardless of explanatory comments for some or all of the yes/no questions?**

Answering “No” to these questions is not an automatic fail.

If your answer to any yes/no questions in the application is “No”, the system automatically gives you the opportunity to provide explanatory comments.

These comments will be passed on to the evaluator for a final determination of a pass/fail score.

## RSP Evaluation - IDN LGRs



ICANN has published the [Second-level Label Generation Rules \(LGRs\)](#) and [RSP Full Variant Set LGRs](#). What is the difference?

ICANN org has published the Second-level Label Generation Rules (LGRs) called RSP Full Variant Set LGRs for RSP program to facilitate the evaluation of IDN tables.

The RSP Full Variant Set LGRs were programmatically generated from the already published Second-Level Reference Label Generation Rules and Common-LGR to include the complete set of cross-repertoire variants applicable to each language or script LGR.

These two LGR sets, i.e. RSP Full Variant Set LGRs and Second-Level Reference Label Generation Rules combined with Common-LGR, represent the same information.

## RSP Evaluation - IDN LGRs



ICANN has published the [Second-level Label Generation Rules \(LGRs\)](#) and [RSP Full Variant Set LGRs](#). What is the difference?

The RSP portal supports, when applying for a language or script for which an LGR exists in the RSP Full Variant set, specifying that a pre-publish LGR will be used.

IDN Table applications using pre-published LGRs from the RSP Full Variant are approved by default. This is the expedited process.

If the RSP Full Variant LGRs are not used, a manual process will be used for review which will take longer time.

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# Technical Testing

# RSP Evaluation - Technical Tests



- Will use Registry System Testing (RST) v2.0.
- RST v1.0:
  - Contains automated and manual evaluation components.
  - Registries interact by sending and receiving data through a case/ticket management system.
  - Skilled engineers were required to run the tests. As a result, the rate at which TLDs could be tested is limited.
- RST v2.0:
  - Automated testing will take place via use of an API.
  - Test plan specifics will be defined for each type of RSP.
    - More information: [RST-API Specification](#) and [Test Specifications](#)

## RSP Evaluation - Technical Tests



- Development began in September 2023.
- Hierarchical Structure, consisting of:
  - Test Plans
  - Test Suites
  - Test Case
    - Each test case is associated with one or more input parameters and can generate one or more error codes.

# RSP Evaluation - Technical Tests



- Scope significantly broader than RST v1.0.
- Tests elements of the critical functions in greater depth.
- Introduces support for testing the following:
  - RDAP
  - DNSSEC algorithm rollovers
  - Minimum RPMs (support for the TMCH and the EPP Launch Extension)

## RSP Evaluation - How does authentication works?



- Access to the the RST v2.0 - API is restricted to authorized users.
- Client access is authenticated using TLS with client authentication, meaning that the RST-API will authenticate the client using X.509 certificates in HTTPS.
- TLSA DNS resource records (see RFC 6698) are used to provide a mechanism to link the client certificate to be used.
- Once the application is ready for technical testing, the RSP portal will request the applicant to provide a hostname where the TLSA DNS RR used for authentication can be found.

## RST v2.0 Timeline



- **November 2024** - OT&E Environment Launched.
  - Limited coverage of test cases - Beta version.
- **February 2025** - OT&E Environment 100% coverage - Beta version.
- **31 March 2025** - OT&E Environment Planned Production-ready.
  - Support for the gTLD RDAP Profile 2024 pending.
- **End May 2025** - ICANN org Plans to Finalize QA/UAT.
  - Support for the gTLD RDAP Profile 2024 pending.
- **End Oct 2025** - Support for the gTLD RDAP Profile 2024 Available.

## RSP Evaluation - Which TLDs are used in technical testing?



**The following patterns are used for the testing TLDs:**

- Main: zz--[type]--[app id]
- DNS: zz--[type]--[app id]
- DNSSEC: zz--[type]--[app id]
- Proxy: zz--[type]--[app id]
- IDN Tables: zz--[type]--[app id]

## RSP Evaluation - What domain names are used to test IDN Tables?



**When using RSP Full Variant Set LGRs, domain names are generating using these test labels:**

**<https://github.com/icann/rst-idn-test-labels>**

**When using custom LGRs, the domain names are manually generated based on the LGR.**

## RSP Evaluation - Rights Protection Mechanism Testing



**Do I need to have access to the production environment of the TMDB for technical testing?**

RST v2.0 will be used to verify that the RSP applicant's platform is capable of supporting the RPMs.

You don't need to connect to the TMDB for purposes of the RSP program as testing material will be used. The testing material can be found here:

<https://newgtlds.icann.org/sites/default/files/new-smd-test-repository-22nov22-en.pdf>

The definition of the structure of the testing material can be found in Section 6 of RFC 9361, and the definition of an SMD can be found in RFC 7848.

## RSP Evaluation - Multiple modes of operation



**If my RSP platform supports multiple modes of operations, which mode should I configure for RST v2.0?**

When going through RST, the RSP applicant shall configure the RSP platform in a mode of operation that satisfies the requirements of the test cases.

## Next Steps, Timeline, and Key Dates



**19 November 2024** - RSP Pre-Evaluation Program Opened.

**20 May 2025** - RSP Pre-Evaluation Program Closes.

**9 December 2025** - ICANN org is expected to publish:

- Portions of the RSP Evaluation Program applications.
- RSP Evaluation Program applicants who have been successfully evaluated.

**April 2026** - Second RSP Evaluation Program period is projected to open for 12-15 weeks, concurrent with opening of New gTLD Program: Next Round submission period.

*Note: ICANN org will continuously publish public portions of submitted RSP applications after RSP evaluation and results based on service-level targets.*

## Resources



- Registry Service Provider [website](#)
- [Registry Service Provider Handbook](#)
- Registry Service Provider [FAQs](#)
- Registry Service Provider Portal [website](#)
- [List of Evaluated RSPs](#) (First version planned publishing: Dec 2025)
- [Registry System Testing](#) information
- General Inquiries: [globalsupport@icann.org](mailto:globalsupport@icann.org)
- Updates and News [website](#)



Q&A

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gTLD

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