
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – 2026 Round: 2026 Round Wrap Up and Open Q & A
Thursday, March 12, 2026 – 9:00 to 10:00 IST

KRISTY BUCKLEY

Hello and welcome to the 2026 Round Wrap-Up and Question & Answer Session. My name is Kristy Buckley 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, the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

Please observe the guidelines to participate in this session and I will also post them in the chat for your reference. Only questions posted in the Q&A pod will be read aloud during the session as time permits and will be directed by the chair of the session. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand in the Zoom or otherwise as directed. When speaking, please state your name for the record and speak clearly at a moderate pace. I will now hand the floor over to Marika Konings.

MARIKA KONINGS

Hello everyone, good morning and congratulations, you've all made it until Thursday, the last day of the meeting and the last of our sessions of this week. So, this is our wrap-up, and we've made this as a kind of open Q&A session because we really wanted to make sure that we had an opportunity to address any and all

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questions that we weren't able to answer this week or things that you may have thought of as you listened to the different sessions.

So, this is really that opportunity to do so. Oh, which one is it? Oh okay. Just a reminder again, all the information we're presenting and sharing here is for informational purpose, the authoritative source for your application is the 2026 round Applicant Guidebook, so please make sure you review that material. And I said we have a lot of information and training materials that we have made available and will be making available, but it's really to support your efforts.

Always make sure that you review the Applicant Guidebook because that's really the source for anything that is needed and required from you as you fill out your application. Just wanted to highlight as well, because of course, we had a lot of sessions this week, but that was not the start of our readiness activities. We already have a number of webinars that those interested can review via our website.

So, there's the introduction to the 2026 round which should be of interest to anyone that's kind of new to the program and may not be familiar with what this is intended to do and what next steps are. And then we also have another session on the 2026 round applicant journey overview that's basically going through all the different application processing stages and milestones as well as a different application types there are. As you see here, this is the last session of this week.

We ran eight sessions throughout this week, and I really would strongly encourage anyone that wasn't able to attend or participate in these to review the recordings. There's a lot of really valuable information that was shared, also through the questions that were raised that the team did its best to answer throughout these meetings. So, again, if you're interested in either the overall process, you want to have a preview of what the applicant system looks like, or you fit within the specific boxes of a brand or a geo or community, please review those sessions.

Because again, I think we've shared a lot of information that should be helpful to applicants as you prepare. So, as I said, we're now at the wrap up and any open questions. You may see Kristy already active in the chat. There were a number of questions that we got throughout the week that we weren't able to answer, either because we needed to consult with some of our colleagues that might not be here or we needed a little bit more time to kind of think through what the response was or because we ran out of time in the session.

So, to kind of speed things up a bit and make sure we have sufficient time here to answer further questions, we're posting those answers in the chat. So, please have a look at those, and of course, if you have any follow-up questions to those, we're here to answer those as well. Oh, let me... it's here. There we go. All right. So, I think you can see it a little bit better now. So, what we thought would be helpful is we start off with a little bit of a recap.

I think there were a couple of themes that we hear throughout the week or some questions that kind of got repeated that we really want to make sure that everyone understands kind of what the response to those is. So, I think we're going to start there. Then we're going to pause and see what other questions you may have.

If we still have time left, we have some additional slides that take us through the website, which again may be helpful for those that are trying to orient themselves to make sure that you know where to look for and where you can find information, and then just a reminder on the applicant resources and next steps. Oh, I see already a hand up. Jim, please go ahead.

JIM PRENDERGAST

Sorry to get into you real quick. Jim Prendergast, for the record. You just mentioned if we have time, there's additional slides. Can those at least be posted to the meeting page?

MARIKA KONINGS

Yes. I think we'll post a full deck even if we don't get to it.

JIM PRENDERGAST

Already up. Thanks.

MARIKA KONINGS

Already there. Kristy's already ahead of you. Thank you. Vivek.

VIVEK GOYAL

Yeah. Thank you. I raised my hand and realized this question you may not be able to answer, but I'll still ask. We are working with DotBrand applicants in India, and one of the requirements in India is that to make any payments, especially to international companies, they need to be onboarded as a vendor in an SAP system or something similar and for that we need a contact in ICANN who can access an ICANN or email address. So, is that something you can help us with or point me in the right direction? We have tried the global support it was unhelpful.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks. I think that's a question we need to take back. because I think we need to better understand what is required for us to be able to assess whether that is something we're able to do. Obviously, we'll do everything in our power to facilitate payments by applicants. So, it would be helpful if you can maybe share kind of the specific of what exactly is required and why is that a local law requirement?

Is that just the specific client that wants it that way? Are there maybe other ways in which we can accommodate or provide information? So, I think if you're able to share that, we can then follow up and assess how we're maybe able to support that.

VIVEK GOYAL

I can connect with you after the call session.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yep, sounds good. Thank you. And of course, once we have a response to that, it's something we'll be able then as well to include in the FAQ so anyone else that may be facing that same situation will have the answer to that question. Jim, new hand or old hand? Old hand. Okay. So, I think we're now going into a recap although I think we did it on the previous slide as well. So, just to flag again that we're here at the... Oh, we may want to get that out of the way.

I think you just minimize it. Yeah, that's fine. So, just, again, an overview of all the sessions we ran this week. We started with the RSP evaluation program on Saturday, and then on Sunday, we dove into IDN and variant applicant journeys. Monday and Tuesday, we ran two plenaries. So, I think, again, especially those sessions for those that have a general interest in the New gTLD program, please review those sessions in the first one.

And we ran through the application submission process and the steps that are involved in that. And then the second plenary session provides a number of demos and introductions to the TLD applicant management system at TAMS. So, again for those interested in applying, it will be really helpful to familiarize yourself on what you can expect and that may also help to prepare you for the process. Then I think it was Tuesday afternoon, we did a brand applicant journey. I think it was already a Monday, actually.

Tuesday, we focused on geographic and reserved names. And then yesterday, we did community applicant journey and registry voluntary commitments. So, I think we already said this as well, the

recordings of all these sessions will be available on the schedule, but we'll also be posting these on the New gTLD program website or at least linking to them after this meeting so that's both the recordings as well as the slide decks so everyone has access to that information and the responses that we provided. Yep.

So, some of the themes are some of the elements that we wanted to highlight based on some feedback that we received or things that we heard. And so, we got some questions or comments like why didn't you do a live demo? Why did we only see videos? So, well, I think the answer is, demos come with a lot of risks and challenges because you need to do things on the spot.

And specifically in TAMS as well, of course, to run through it, it requires some restaging because after you submitted your org information, something needs to happen on the back end before you go into the next phase. And again, doing that live would have just taken a lot of time to kind of do that. We thought it was more valuable to be able to show you what it looks like, talk you through it, and then be able to answer any questions there are.

So, I think that's kind of the feedback on that. And we would welcome as well, and I think that's the last bullet here, like feedback on future materials or sessions. Are there specific aspects of TAMS that people want to have another look at so we can plan for a webinar or information materials? I think we already got several suggestions on what FAQs may include or should include.

So, obviously, we'll look as well at all the responses provided throughout this week where we can add that information because again, we really want to make sure that as much information as possible is out there to help applicants and assist you in the process. We had a lot of really good suggestions on, hey, what if you could set up the system in this way? Or what if you add this or make changes here?

And again, that's really valuable input, and we definitely encourage you to keep on providing that input. But as I said earlier this week as well, we need to also be very realistic about where we're at this point in time. I think as we already shared, all our focus at the moment is on testing, both security testing as well as functional testing, to make sure we iron out any kinks we may have and that we are confident that by the time we open the window, we have a secure and reliable system.

This means that we do not have the time and bandwidth to also focus on all kinds of new things, even though they might be really helpful. And again, there are many things that we have on our list where we're like, oh, it would be really nice if it could do that. But again, we had to make hard choices there as well and really saying what is critical here? What would prevent an applicant from proceeding in the process or prevent us from opening the window?

And that has been the priority for our work, and that will be the priority leading up until the 30th of April. But having said that, I think we also received some good suggestions on how we might be

able to provide that information or make workarounds for certain aspects. So, I think, again, if you have suggestions there, just because it's maybe not possible in TAMS, maybe there are other ways in which we can communicate to applicants or explain to applicants what something means or how something needs to be responded to.

I think those are all ways that, of course, are much easier to accommodate at this point in time than making further changes to the system. I also wanted to emphasize that the FAQs and readiness content materials, these are really tools to support you, and I think they're really helpful. There's not so much information as we have that we put in there. All the questions you bring to global support eventually find their way in those FAQs.

Because, again, we want to make sure that everyone has access to answers to questions applicants may have and where others may benefit from that information in their process. But the Applicant Guidebook is the authoritative source. So, make sure that you always refer back there and look at those materials. We also got quite a few questions, I think, early in the week on the selection of RSPs.

And I think there was some concern that what if applicants select an RSP from the list with whom they don't have any relationship? And how could that be perceived? What confusion might that cause? So, I kind of want to emphasize, because I think there was maybe a bit of misunderstanding there. The information on the

selection of an RSP is not part of the materials that is publicly posted.

So, just because an applicant selects an RSP, that doesn't mean that it's part of the public portion of the application. But having said that, I think we have, from our side, what we will do is part of the informational materials make clear to applicants that if you get to this question, you get a drop-down box where you can select an RSP, only select an RSP if you have an established relationship with the RSP.

Otherwise, you select, not chosen or will use an evaluated RSP, which I think is the default option if you don't have an RSP in place yet. You're then able to select that RSP at a later point in the evaluation process. Also, for RSPs, after everyone has made their selections, we're going back to RSP to say, hey, this is the list of applicants that have selected you as their RSP. Can you confirm that you have a relationship with them and you are able and willing to support them?

If the answer is no, we'll obviously go back to the applicant to say, hey, you selected RSP X, but RSP X doesn't know about you or is not able to support you. So, you will need to go and find another RSP that is able to support you. So, again, I think we want to probably have some more materials out on this topic. So, it's really clear to applicants as well they are responsible for establishing that relationship to be able then to select an RSP.

They shouldn't wait until the end to do that, ideally, because, again, if an RSP is not able to take them on, it may delay the process if they need to go and then identify another RSP. But I hope that at least addresses the concern that it's not information we're posting publicly. So, in case an RSP is selected and where there's no relationship, there might then be public questions around that. So, I'm hoping that that helps.

And I think then last but not least, I mentioned this already before, we do hope that these sessions were helpful to you. We definitely welcome any feedback on what could we have done better, different, more of so that will then also help us plan and prepare for what is to come next. We are definitely planning on keeping the flow of information going until we get to the 30th of April and the window opens.

So, again, if there are any specific suggestions or questions that you think we should be addressing in either future webinars or through FAQs or other means, we're definitely more happy to hear that. And I think I paused there. I think there are more questions have may come in, so Kristy, I don't know. I'm happy to hand it to someone else to start.

I see Vivek has his hand up as well. Yeah. So, we're opening it up now for any questions you may have either in response to what you saw in the chat or what you heard this week or anything we didn't get to before. So, I see hands going up, so please go ahead to Vivek.

VIVEK GOYAL

Thank you. One point, there's a requirement from the Indian government to provide certain documents when a payment is being made to an entity outside of India in other denominations in INR, and I was very pleasantly surprised that the documents were already available on the ICANN website. So, thank you guys for taking that up up-front.

My second question is a little longer question, so I'll pace it out. As a dot brand applicant, you have an opportunity to append a string at the end of your applied-for-string if you go into a contention set, and as per the AGB that string has to be part of your SMD file.

So, here's my question. If I do intend to make that change, is the appended string validated against my SMD file automatically or is that a manual verification and is there a chance for a discussion at that point with somebody before that change is made final?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

Yeah, thanks. And can I just clarify, you're asking if you decide to proceed through a branch string change, whether that SMD file is going to revalidate against your new appendage string?

VIVEK GOYAL

Yeah, so suppose somebody applies for Delta, but somebody else has also applied for Delta, Delta has an option to add airlines in

front of it. So, they can then make it .deltaairlines, right? But they can only make it Delta Airlines if airlines is in the SMD file.

So, my question is, is that once they make the change, is that change validated against the SMD file automatically? Or is there a possibility of having a discussion with somebody as to what we would like to change and what is possible or not? And the reason my question is this, as businesses grow, they apply for trademarks in multiple classes, so, I don't know what contention the business will face, and I'm waiting for an answer of how many SMD files we can upload.

So, what if the keyword that I would like, like if I have three keywords I would like to put in and they are in three separate SMD files, then if I cannot upload all three SMD files, then how do I decide which one to upload and which string of value I might need to append when it comes to auction? Have I made it clear or more confusing? I'm happy to repeat again.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

I think I do understand your question. Currently, the system allows for multiple SMD files to be uploaded. Five is what I understand today. The expectation with the brand string change is right. That term must be included in the goods and services section of the SMD, which is basically a representation of what that trademark is associated with.

My expectation is that as an applicant, if you're pursuing a brand string change, you're identifying one word or words within that SMD file that you're then requesting to append that original string. There's no additional validation, and my team can correct me if I'm wrong, from the SMD file perspective. But as brand evaluators, they would then assess if that word or words included in that SMD file. So, they'd confirm at that point.

VIVEK GOYAL

When you say you can upload up to five SMD files, you can upload up to five SMD files without having variants? Because as per what I saw earlier, it said if you have a variant, you can upload an SMD file for that variant, but if I have no variants, I have only one string, no variants, can I still upload five SMD files?

EDUARDO ALVAREZ

Yeah, so currently the system will allow you to upload up to five SMD files. So, that should cover the case. Now, whether that's required by the evaluation, I would not speak to that, but the system will allow you to do that.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks, team. Next in the queue, Hong-Fu. Yep.

HONG-FU MENG

Hi, this is Hong-Fu speaking for the record. I've got a question I want to ask regarding the DotBrands, specifically for applying IDN

and IDN variants. So, for example, if I have an SMD file with traditional Chinese IDN characters, and the simplified variant is available, can I use that same SMD file to apply for the variant, or do I also need an explicit SMD file that contains the simplified characters inside as well?

MARIKA KONINGS

We're telling almost ourselves too you see if we have an answer or if we need more time to.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

I'm sorry, we were having a little discussion, but the answer is yes.

HONG-FU MENG

Can I come from yes to what terms? Because I stated two different scenarios.

FRANCISCO ARIAS

This is Francisco. Yeah, you need an SMD for each of the strings. I think the example you were giving is you have a trademark in traditional Chinese, and so you have the SMD for that. And if you're interested on the variant that is simplified Chinese, you need to have a trademark and the corresponding SMD for that one too.

HONG-FU MENG

Well received. Thank you.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks for that question. Mohit.

MOHIT RAIZADA

Yeah. Hi, Mohit here. My question relates to the financial evaluation section for the standard profile. So, as per the AGP, this is question 2013 to 2019, I noticed that in question 213, 214, 216, in all three, you are uploading the most likely scenario template. And it's just that you are mentioning different details.

For example, in 214 you are documenting your RSP costs, and then in 216, you are talking about your funding options. But the template we are uploading is the same, it's just that in one in one template we are saying this is the cost, these are our comments. So, when we upload this document, do we need to delineate that this is 213, this is 214, or if we just upload the template, it is understood what it refers to?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

Yeah, the expectation is that when you're uploading that projections template, it's one time only, and so no need to differentiate between the various questions, it's going to ask for one time.

MOHIT RAIZADA

A quick follow-up. So, you're asking a lot of these questions regarding your projections for the costs and revenue, and all of

these are applicable only to the MLS. For the worst-case scenario, you only have one question. Does that mean you don't require that level of information for the worst-case scenario? Because there's only one question for the worst case, that's 219.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

Let me get back to you on that. Let me just check.

MOHIT RAIZADA

Sure. Thank you.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks. Next in queue, please take your hands down if you've already spoken. Craig.

CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Thanks, Marika. Craig Schwartz for the record. So, in the community TLD applicant journey session yesterday, and I put this in the Q&A, but it seems like we have time just to talk about it out loud. I seem to recall reading or hearing a reference about needing to commit to operate the TLD for, it was either three years or five years. Did I read something wrong or is that correct? Can someone clarify?

JARED ERWIN

Yeah. Hi, this is Jared. Hi, Craig. Thanks. And we did respond to your question in the pod. It just came through, so maybe you

haven't seen yet. So, we think this is a reference that you're making to applicants, supported applicants. There is a stipulation for those applicants in the registry agreement to operate for a certain number of years.

That isn't a requirement for community TLDs, but I did note in my response as well that the requirement as it relates to community TLDs is that once you submit an application as a community TLD, that cannot be changed. So, that is the stipulation there, but there's no operating number of years. Yeah.

CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Thanks. And as soon as you said applicant support, it reminded me of that, so I appreciate it.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks, Craig. Ashley.

ASHLEY ROBERTS

Thank you. Ashley Roberts. So, this is a question about the personal information that's required for directors, officers, and shareholders. So, for example, question 104. For the information that those individuals have to provide, one of the items says address. I just wanted to clarify what is meant by that. To me, that would mean street address. But I know that previously it's only been the city and country of residence that's been required for those individuals.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER Yeah, thanks, Ashley. So, in this case, we're referring to business address, right? There is a question, though, about country code of residence, which we expect is the country code of residence, if that's different than business address.

ASHLEY ROBERTS Thank you. So, it would be country code of business, country code of residence, address of the business, locality of the business. Yeah, it's not totally clear from how it's written here.

MARIKA KONINGS And maybe it's something we can clarify as well through an FAQ to really make clear what is expected from applicants.

ASHLEY ROBERTS Okay. So, yeah, as long as it's not the street address of residence of the individual then.

MARIKA KONINGS Correct. Great, thank you. Next in queue we have Segunfunmi.

SEGUNFUNMI OLAJIDE Yes, Segunfunmi Olajide for the record. I represent Eric Consulting. We are an ASP pro bono service provider, and some of the

applicants that we provided pro bono services for seems to be concerned about timeline as to when are they getting feedbacks.

Since the day they submitted the application, no feedback, and then they're worried or concerned about timeline. The second side to it is what's the possibility of probably sending an email to them so they know that the application is still being considered or they are out of it already. I appreciate it.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks. That's a really good suggestion, and I'm sure Kristy can take that back to the team just to note. And the team there is of course working as fast as they can through the number of applications, but because we received so many applications at the end, that of course, has created a bit of a backlog. It's something we communicated as well to the broader community with the extension that was put in place in a month that has pushed things out.

But the team is really diligently working through that. And Kristy, I don't know if you want to add anything about making sure that applicants know that we haven't forgotten about them. We're obviously doing the work that's needed to take them through the evaluation and hopefully be able to complete those.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

That's right. Thank you very much for the question. So, the application probably still says in review in the system, right? We

encourage applicants to feel free to send an inquiry in the system just to say, how are things going, any updates? Or to global support, the applicant councilor will get back to them. As Marika mentioned, we did receive over 80% of all ASP applications in the last month.

And we have onboarded additional resources on our team as well as the SARP vendor evaluator team. And we're driving to get as many evaluations done before the opening. But we did note when the community asked us to extend the deadline for the Applicant Support Program applications, that this was a risk that we would be still processing applications by the time the round opened.

We did anticipate this in the ASP handbook, and there is some language in there about if ASP applicants are still awaiting their evaluation results by the time the window opens, they can still proceed with submitting their gTLD application without payment and their application will be put on hold until payment is received.

So, they're still able to do that, though we may encourage them to wait until they receive their evaluation results because there's still a good window of time with when the window is open to be able to submit. We're working as fast as we can. So, thank you for that.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks, Kristy. And maybe this is also a good point to make a reminder for those planning to apply, please do not wait until the last minute. If you encounter issues, it may then be really difficult

to help you with those. Same goes for payment. Don't wait until the last minute to pay. If your payment is not received within seven days after the close of the application window, your application will not proceed. So, please do not wait until the last minute. Next in queue, Elaine, please go ahead.

ELAINE PRUIS

Good morning. It's Elaine Pruis from Verisign. So, I'd like some clarification on the selection of the RSP. I understand many registry service providers have gone through the pre-evaluation program, and those who have passed have been published. So, any of those registry service providers could be selected by an applicant as part of the application process, which the application window closes August 12th.

For those registry service providers who plan on participating in the evaluation at the same time as the application window is open, their evaluation, obviously, will not be completed by August 12th. And there is a fair bit of uncertainty about when an applicant who does not elect to select a pre-evaluated RSP must select an RSP. So, when the pre-evaluation program was first being developed and there's an option to choose an RSP later, it was said that you can select your RSP up until the day you contract, which completely makes sense because what does it matter?

Then there was discussion about, no, it needs to be done before the string evaluation begins. And then this week, we heard in an RSP session that you need to have selected your RSP before the

application evaluation begins. So, could you please clarify and provide reason for the timing of when an applicant must select at the very last moment the RSP they plan on using.

FRANCISCO ARIAS

Hi Elaine, this is Francisco. So, the timing for the last chance that an applicant has, a gTLD applicant has to select their RSP or RSPs is just before the start of applicant application evaluation. That's when the information will be needed so that it can be evaluated as part of those evaluations. So, that's the reason why the information is needed at that time. I hope that makes sense.

ELAINE PRUIS

Sorry, Francisco, it doesn't make sense to me. If an RSP is evaluated separately from an application, how are those two integrated? What difference does it make if an RSP selects, or sorry, an applicant selects RSP before their application is evaluated or during the application evaluation?

GEORGE SARKISYAN

Maybe I can just add some more information. So, if you're not able to select the RSPs at the time of when we begin the applicant application evaluation, it's necessary so that we can actually complete that phase of the work, which the next step would be pretty much contracting.

So, for us to be able to complete that phase, we're checking also that there is an RSP provided. Now, that doesn't mean if you enter

applicant application evaluation, or in this case, the application, and you still haven't made the selection as part of that selection review for RSPs that we're doing, we might still ask and give you that time that would be allotted for, let's say, clarifying questions.

And I think it's still eligible for extended evaluation. So, you're still buying time to be able to complete by the end of that to then complete applicant application evaluations, which again, the next step would be to begin contracting.

ELAINE PRUIS

Okay. So, I think I just heard two things. One is you have to select your RRSP before application evaluation, or you can ask for extended evaluation, which allows you to select your RSP up until contracting. When does application evaluation begin? Is that August 13th? Is that after contention sets are determined? What's that actual milestone, please?

GEORGE SARKISYAN

Good question. If I can just say, ideally, we want everybody to have selected by the time that application begins the application evaluation so that it doesn't take longer than necessary if you're trying to proceed through the application evaluation process quickly.

But if not, then yes, you can use it all the way through that up to extended evaluation and complete it at that point. And it'll be dependent on, I guess, whether you're in contention or not, or if

there isn't any issue and your next step is to begin applicant application evaluation. That could be different for every application.

JARED ERWIN

George, sorry. Thanks. Sorry to interrupt. I think, Elaine, perhaps there's a misunderstanding of the term application evaluation versus application processing. So, when we say application evaluation, we're referring to the stage of the application process, as George was just saying, that occurs after contention resolution.

So, these are the things listed in module seven of the AGB. This is where the geonames review happens, this is where name collision appears another evaluation, brand TLDs, that's where all of those evaluation process, sorry, application evaluations occur. This is not a reference to processing in a general sense, because you just mentioned August 13th.

That is not what we're referring to. So, I don't know if we have an exact date that application evaluation begins, of course, that's dependent on numerous factors, but that would occur sometime probably late 2027 is our estimate. I hope that helps a little bit.

ELAINE PRUIS

Yeah, Jared, that's super helpful, the difference between an intake of an application and when the actual evaluation begins, it's a significant amount of time. So, that's very helpful. If I could just ask if you all would put this in a FAQ or write an advisory or

somehow make it super clear somewhere what that milestone, what that cutoff is, I would really appreciate it. Thank you.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks. Helpful exchanges here and then hopefully some clarification. Vivek, please go ahead.

VIVEK GOYAL

I'm happy to yield to Jeff. I've asked too many questions. Happy for Jeff to go first.

MARIKA KONINGS

Okay, thanks. Jeff, I see you also referencing questions in the Q&A pod, but we actually don't see any of you unless you're the anonymous participant.

JEFF NEUMAN

I am, because I didn't know that was the default that got selected if I didn't uncheck it. So, yes, this is Jeff Neuman. Haven't talked to you guys. Miss you, guys. Wish I was there. And I know you guys do too, right? Okay. So, it's following up on Elaine. So, let's say I am applying as an RSP, Neuman's RSP, and I have 10 applicants that are going to use me, but I am still in the RSP evaluation process.

Is there or will there be, number one, for Neuman's RSP, is there going to be a new handbook that comes out that tells us everything like the cost schedule and everything else like there was for the pre-

evaluation program, to let us know how long that evaluation will take? And then the next questions are for my 10 applicants. Let's say my 10 applicants are choosing me, but I'm not yet evaluated. Neuman's RSP is taking whatever time.

What do my 10 applicants put as their option in the application itself? And then what is the applicant's journey from that point in terms of choosing Neuman's RSP that is still going through that evaluation process? So, it's following up on Elaine's. It's just very unclear what happens or what choices will be available.

FRANCISCO ARIAS

This is Francisco. I can take the question on the handbook, the RSP handbook. There is no plan to publish a new RSP handbook. The evaluation in this second window for RSPs is going to follow the same process. The timeline for the second window is the same as the gTLD application window. So, from 30 April to 12 August. The cost is the same as in the initial window. And regarding the timeline for evaluation is covered by the service level targets described in the RSP handbook. I don't have the RSP handbook in front of me right now. But in one of the sections is described how much time do we take to do those evaluations. Thanks.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks, Francisco. And thanks, Jeff. And yeah, we miss you here. It's been very quiet in the sessions.

JEFF NEUMAN

Okay. What about my questions on the applicants? So, that was Neuman's RSP, but there are 10 applicants that are choosing to go with Neuman's RSP, what do they select in the application process and what does their journey look like?

MARIKA KONINGS

So, my understanding is that in the drop down they will have an ability to say I will choose an evaluated RSP without giving a name, and then the process described previously when we get to or if they want to do that before, as soon as you've been evaluated, but at the latest, by the time we get to applicant application evaluations, the team will reach out and say, hey, you haven't selected your RSP. Can you please confirm which RSP you are working with? And at that point, they will then confirm the RSP.

JEFF NEUMAN

Okay. But if that RSP is still going through evaluation, they can't choose them?

MARIKA KONINGS

Correct. And I think that's where the option of extended evaluation comes up if more time is needed for that selection to be made.

JEFF NEUMAN

Sorry. And that extended evaluation comes with an extra fee?

MARIKA KONINGS

No.

JEFF NEUMAN

Okay.

MARIKA KONINGS

All right. Vivek, back to you.

VIVEK GOYAL

Jeff, I'll be very disappointed if you're launching one and I can't pick your name during the application. So, please hurry up, man. I mean, get in there. My question is based on what was said earlier that you should receive payment within seven days of the application round closes. What does that mean?

And that is the reason I asked a question that how long does it take after the payment is reaching your bank to payment reflected on the system? So, as per Indian timelines where we are sitting here, the application closes on 13th of August. So, let's say 20th of August is the last date by when you should receive the payment. What triggers that word that we have received it?

MARIKA KONINGS

We will need to have it in our bank account by that date. So, basically, we will start, of course, already before reconciliation, looking what payments come in, to which applicants they belong. So, at the latest, seven days after the close of the application

window, the fee will need to be in ICANN's account to be able to continue.

And again, we understand that it may take longer when you pay from certain countries or certain hurdles that payments need to go through. So, therefore, again, please pay early to avoid any issues or any delays.

VIVEK GOYAL

I really understand it, and no matter what we do, we expect people to come in at the very last moment to apply. And international payments were painful earlier. Now they are even more painful given the political situation. I would request if it's possible for ICANN to provide a contact that can help provide either documentation or support or track where the money is rooted, is it stuck with our international transfer agent, your international transfer agent.

Sometimes the names don't match, so they keep the payment on hold. Somebody we can reach out to help with these things because these things need to be resolved in minutes not wait for GDD to come back, oh, the global support to come back. So, request there. Thank you.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks. And I think we discussed this in one of the previous sessions, once an applicant has submitted their application, the query feature will become available to them so they can ask direct

questions to staff through the system. So, I think that is a great way to kind of say, hey, I made payments, it's already two weeks, I still haven't seen anything. Can you let me know if there's a problem?

So, then we can make sure we route that to the right people internally to review and see what may be needed or where things stand. And appreciate the call out as well on the documentation, because indeed it's a question we had received already previously that certain things are needed. So, we tried indeed to be proactive.

But again, if there are other things that are helpful, it would be great to hear, because I said, whatever we can make publicly available and that helps others, we're more than happy to do so, obviously.

VIVEK GOYAL

The documents need to be updated. They were 2025, you need a 26 version.

MARIKA KONINGS

That's a good point. Thank you. We'll work on that. Ashley.

ASHLEY ROBERTS

Thank you. Ashley Roberts. So, this is a question about application change requests. So, in the Applicant Guidebook, there's a table which outlines all the different types of change requests you can do and the processes for each of them. One of the types outlined in the table is changes to the name of the applying entity, but there's

a note to that that says this refers to a simple name change of the applying entity only.

It does not apply to changes of the applying entity itself, such as the case of the application being assigned from a parent entity to a subsidiary. So, does that mean that it's not possible to do a change request from one group company to another? I'm just thinking, your application, it could take two, even three years from when you submit it to when the processing is complete, so, things could change in that time.

JUSTIN HO

No, thanks for the question. This is Justin. I think in general, the application must remain in the same organizational structure. So, we would not allow the entity or the application to move to a wholly different organizational structure, if that makes sense.

ASHLEY ROBERTS

But if it was, so, let's say the original applicant entity was a subsidiary and then you wanted to change it to the parent, is that allowed? Because based on this, it doesn't sound like that is permitted or it's not explicitly permitted at least.

JUSTIN HO

One moment, please. We'll confirm internally and make sure it's reflected in FAQs specifically about the question moving ownership

of the application within your organizational structure. Is that correct?

ASHLEY ROBERTS

Yeah.

JUSTIN HO

Okay, thank you. Cool.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks. Maxim, please go ahead.

MAXIM ALZOBA

Maxim Alzoba, for the record. I have a question. ICANN Org has only one bank and one bank account for incoming payments. Is it possible to, I'd say, extend, to have additional banks? The reason I'm asking is that these days, banks change their policies just quite fast. For example, they may say, okay, we don't transfer payments related to this particular country. That's it, it's a dead end. And it may happen in the middle of the application window when you decided that you participate, you devote time, money, efforts, and then suddenly your bank says, no, we don't like you.

I'm not saying about country issued restrictions, I'm talking about the particular bank's policies. Is it possible to make world safer for applicants by having another bank from the United States just to

be sure that the whole program doesn't collapse because the particular bank dislikes some part of the world. Thanks.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks, Maxim. I think that's a question we'll need to take back to our finance team to see what options there are, what limitations we have. So, I think this is one we need to get back to you on. Ashley is that an old hand? Elaine, please go ahead.

ELAINE PRUIS

Thank you. It's Elaine Pruis from Verisign. Ashley asked a question earlier that reminded me I wanted clarification, so, the question about providing addresses for directors, you've confirmed that there should be business addresses and not personal residence addresses. I'm also wondering the question about birthdays. Is it sufficient to provide the year or do we have to provide a month, the date, and the year?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

Yeah, thanks, Elaine. System will collect the year of birth.

MARIKA KONINGS

Okay, thank you. Jim.

JIM PRENDERGAST

Yeah, thanks. Jim Prendergast for the record. So, not a question, but maybe a suggestion. This has been awesome, this session. I'm

learning from other people's questions. Do you have planned future sessions like this, say, a month from now, maybe a month into the application window when people finally do get into TAMs and things come up? I think that would be extremely valuable.

MARIKA KONINGS

We can definitely plan for further sessions, and it's really great to hear that this is helpful. The one caveat I would put, because I think once the application window opens, I think we will be more hesitant to do this because, again, people are already submitting their applications. If we're providing information where then people go like, oh, but you didn't tell me this, now I want to kind of go back.

I think we may need to draw a line to say if you still have questions, then you will need to go through global support or inquiry system to get your responses, because again, we don't want to be unfair either to those that are already in there submitting their applications and obviously refer to all the materials that are available.

JIM PRENDERGAST

Okay. Well, maybe I could see some of that, I see your concern with that, but I'm also concerned with people who are finally getting into TAMs and getting their hands on it and discovering issues with the application system itself. So, maybe limit it to the functionality and features within the system.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, and appreciate that. And definitely, we expect people to flag if they encounter issues. And again, global support is the avenue for that. Obviously, we'll be closely monitoring if there are issues that applicants encounter that may block them from proceeding or even if it's suggestions on what we may change for future iterations. But yeah, there definitely will be a channel, and we'll need to see indeed is an open session like that helpful or do we just get indeed information in through global support or the query system?

So, I think that's something we need to review how we can best set that up, and I said, avoid that we're being unfair to some of those that may have already gone through it and submitted versus others that are still trying to get information or updates. Mohit, please go ahead.

MOHIT RAIZADA

Hi, Mohit here from LdotR. I had a very similar question to Jim, so that's good to know. I want to understand a few more things. So, during, I think, yesterday or day before session, you showed us certain training videos for the TAMS. Just want to understand, will you be releasing more of them? And secondly, would you also be providing us with a document that just deals on the with how to use stamps, like a detailed documentation. That's it. Thanks.

KRISTY BUCKLEY

Great question. This is Kristy Buckley for the record. So, the videos that you saw during the demonstration today, unfortunately they won't show up through the PDF that's posted on ICANN85, but we will work to get those available on the website. In terms of additional videos, we could certainly consider and take that back.

So, let me get back to you on that. And then in terms of the system guide, that is something that the team is working together on. So, those of you that are participating in ASP or RSP, you might recall that there were system user guides for both of those, and it'll be the same for TAMS. It'll be system user guides for TAMS available. Thanks.

MARIKA KONINGS

Thanks, Kristy. Jeff.

JEFF NEUMAN

Yeah, thanks. So, it's Jeff Neuman again. The last round, global support was suboptimal, I should say. It took weeks to get anything back from global support, if you got something back at all, other than a ticket saying we've received your request. What efforts are you all making and what service levels are you imposing on global support to actually respond with an answer within a certain timeframe?

And then the last time also, what was helpful is that advisories came out every so often from ICANN. And are you planning on doing those kinds of advisories on a regular basis where you don't

have to attribute who asked the question, but certainly, answering those questions so everyone can see them, I think is something that's incredibly important.

And the fact that you're not opening up the TAMS beforehand is going to lead to a ton of questions when it opens. So, I completely agree with Jim that you should plan on in advance having a session for as long as it takes, a week or so after TAMS opens. Nobody will have submitted by that point, I guarantee it. So that you can then answer questions, make it available and do a write up on it. But this is going to happen. Thanks.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks, Jeff, for the comments and suggestion. I think on global support, we discussed that a little bit earlier this week as well. And the team is really staffing up. One of the things I did note, obviously, they're building up their knowledge base. So, they're relying heavily, especially in this part of the process, on input from SMEs, which are the same SMEs that are here around the table and that are preparing for the 30th of April.

So, we do ask for your patience as we work through that. But I think where we are ramping up the support there, as well as the knowledge that the team has. And again, through these questions, of course, we're able to kind of quicker repeat responses to the same questions. Having said that, obviously, we're also getting in questions that are really complicated.

So, there are at times where we need to pull different teams together and kind of talk through it and think through it. So, in certain cases, it may just be that it's indeed a question that we hadn't encountered before and just requires input from various directions to be able to come with a response. So, again, I do appreciate that the patients are there.

I think the advisories you're referring to, I think is what we're currently already doing through the FAQs. So, I think it's maybe an important reminder as well. These FAQs are not static. We keep on updating them as we get questions in, because as you said, it's really helpful for all applicants do benefit from questions that we receive. And obviously, if there's any information in there that's specific to the asker or an application, we will generalize the question.

But again, please have a look at the FAQs, regularly look through those. If you have specific suggestions for areas, and again, we've received, I think, quite some suggestions throughout the week already on where further information will be helpful, let us know. And I think that's the tool that we'll be using. Obviously, if there are other ways in which we need to put information out, we'll do that as well, but I think that the FAQs is what we're hoping to use as the basis of the latest information and responses to questions.

I think, are we a minute out of time. We're actually already out of time. I still see hands up. You can come and find us we're still for a few minutes in the room, but I would definitely like to encourage

you all to um reach out to global support with any further questions you may have. Again, we take them through the system, and we're then able to share those with everyone. Jeff, also really appreciated your suggestion of maybe immediately after TAMS opening, doing a session in that week before anyone has kind of submitted.

Maybe that's a helpful way. Then we also have, of course, the materials for TAMS. So, the expectation is, of course, that people have done their homework, read the materials, are able to access, and then maybe we can have another Q&A. If there's still open issues, we will take that back as a suggestion to see if and how we can implement that.

So, I think with that, I would like to really thank everyone for being here, being interactive with us, supporting us through all this period. There's still a lot of work to come. So, we hope to continue counting on your support as well as feedback as we go through this together. So, for that, thanks, everyone, and have a good rest of your day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]