

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

gTLD

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Implementation Status Update

25 February 2026 | 15:00-16:00 UTC



NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

01

Welcome

Agenda

01 Welcome

02 Program Implementation Status

- ✓ Overall Program
- ✓ Base Registry Program

03 Program Processing Status

- ✓ 2026 Round Processing Readiness
 - Launch Readiness & Governance Processes
 - Operating Model for Processing Phase
 - 2026 Round Vendor Selection
 - TLD Application Management System
- ✓ Applicant Support Program
- ✓ Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program

04 Applicant Readiness & What to Expect at ICANN85

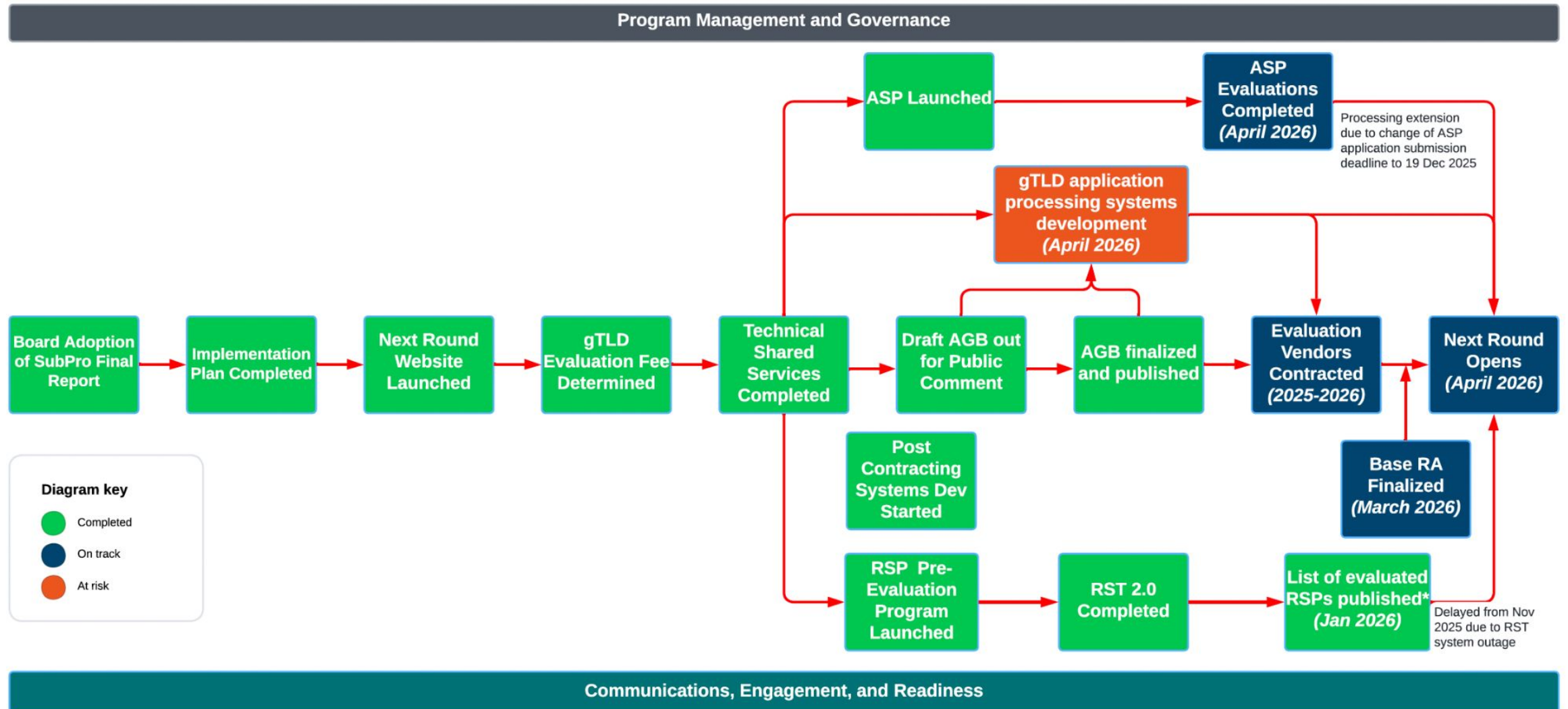
05 Q & A

02

Program Implementation Status

Overall Program

Program High-Level Critical Path



Key Dates

The [2026 Applicant Guidebook](#) was published on 16 December 2025.

The **opening of the 2026 Round** of the new gTLD Program has been set for **30 April 2026**. This date is reflected in the Applicant Guidebook.

The Application Window will remain open for **15 weeks**, thus **closing on 12 August 2026**.

Subject to the total numbers of applications received, Reveal Day may occur prior to ICANN87.

Overall Program Status – As of 31 January 2026

The overall program continues in yellow status due to the risk to the opening of the round due to significant work required on GAP to complete process, system, and security testing. Additionally, the development of the operating model for processing is behind schedule which is reflected in Program Management. RSP and RST are still yellow, but have made significant strides with resolution of critical RST system issues and publication of the list of evaluated RSPs. The Systems and Services Scaling & Enhancements project is still yellow due to resource constraints and delayed planning of key projects.

Project	Overall	Scope	Schedule	Resources	Budget
Overall Program					
WS1 – Policy Implementation - Complete					
gTLD Application Processing Project (GAP)*					
Applicant Support Program (ASP)					
Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program (RSP)					
Registry Service Testing (RST)					
Base Registry Agreement*					
Name Collision					
System & Services Scaling and Enhancements (SSSE)**					
Engagement & Communications					
Website Project					
Readiness Team					
Program Management					

* Essential for opening of the application window in April 2026

** Previously known as Post Contracting

Legend	High Risk / Blocker	Medium Risk	Low Risk/On-Track
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Trending	Positive Trend	Negative Trend	Holding Status
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Base Registry Agreement

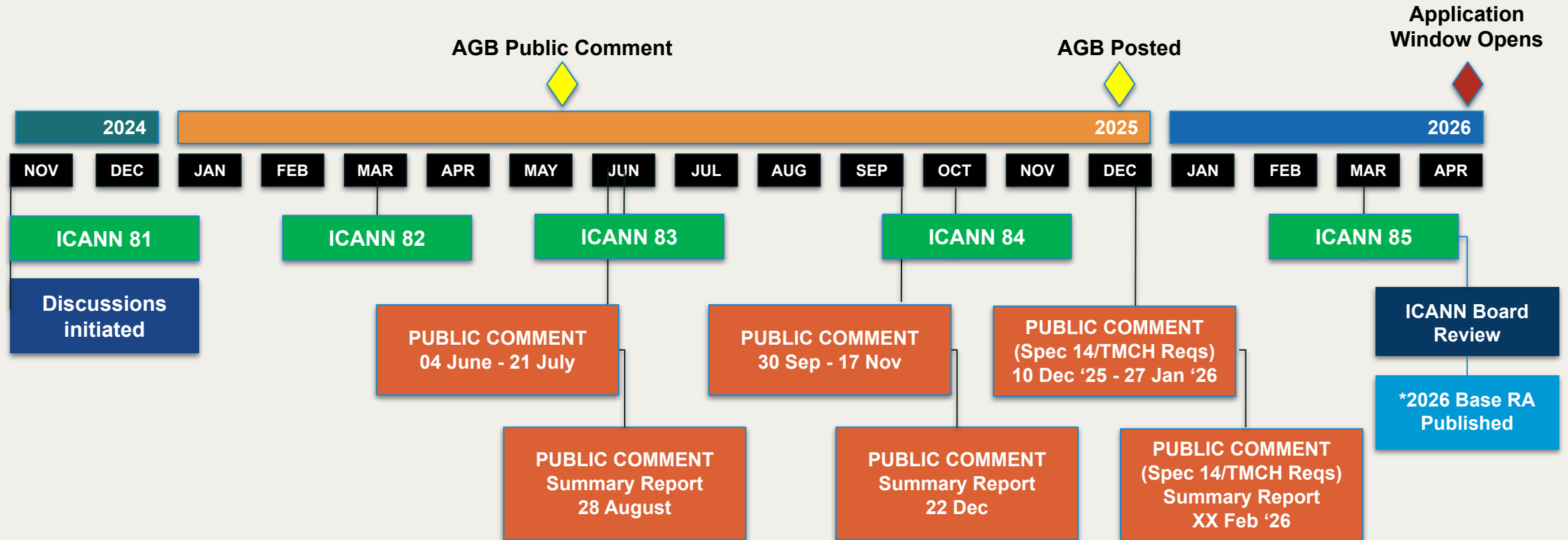
2026 Base RA: Public Comments

- **First Public Comment proceeding** [complete]
 - Requested community feedback on substantive changes proposed for the 2026 Base RA.
 - *4 June 2025 - 21 July 2025*: [Proceeding](#) open for comment submissions.
 - *28 August 2025*: Published the [summary and analysis report](#).
- **Second Public Comment proceeding** [complete]
 - Requested community feedback on incremental changes to the 2026 Base RA compared to the first Public Comment for additional feedback.
 - *30 September - 17 November 2025*: [Proceeding](#) open for comment submissions.
 - *22 December 2025*: Published the [summary and analysis report](#).

2026 Base RA: Public Comments (cont'd)

- Public Comment proceeding to **Specification 14** (Variant TLDs) [complete]
 - Requested community feedback on Specification 14 following the ICANN Board's [action](#) on IDN EPDP Phase 1 Recommendations 7.4 and 7.5
 - *10 December 2025 - 27 January 2026*: [Proceeding](#) open for comment submissions
 - *12 February 2026*: Published the summary and analysis [report](#)
- Public Comment proceeding on the **Trademark Clearinghouse Requirements** ("TMCH Requirements") [complete]
 - Requested community feedback on the TMCH Requirements that implement RPM Phase 1 PDP recommendations; TMCH Requirements are linked to in Specification 7 of the 2026 Base RA
 - *18 December 2025 - 27 January 2026*: [Proceeding](#) open for comment submissions
 - *17 February 2026*: Published the summary and analysis [report](#)

2026 Base RA: Timeline



- ICANN is submitting the draft 2026 Base RA to the ICANN Board of Directors for consideration in advance of ICANN85.
- The Draft 2026 Base RA is available on the New gTLD Program: Next Round Base Registry Agreement [webpage](#)

**Assuming the ICANN Board approves the 2026 Base RA*

03

Program

Processing Status

2026 Round Processing Readiness

Launch Readiness and Governance Processes

Purpose: Governance processes to ensure operational, organizational, and technical readiness for launch.

- **Operational Readiness** – Ensure processes and procedures are well established to support the delivery of 2026 Round services.
- **Organization Readiness** - Ensure employees, contractors, and vendors are prepared to deliver services.
- **Technical Readiness** - Ensure systems are ready and operational to support delivery of services.

Assessment of readiness will be measured against objective criteria at multiple points leading up to launch of the program. Examples of criteria include resources hired and trained, systems have completed testing with expected results, and vendors are trained to begin delivery of services.



Overview of Launch Gates

Stage Gates (2 in January & February)

- **Purpose:** Assessment of readiness risk across the following areas: Project Management & Governance, Operational Readiness, Organizational Readiness, and Technical Readiness
- **Criteria Based:** Identification of criteria for go-live through a series of evaluation questions which gauge the readiness in each of these areas
- **Action Planning:** Action plans will be developed for all criteria which score at risk (red or yellow)

Go / No-Go CheckPoints (3 are planned in March & April)

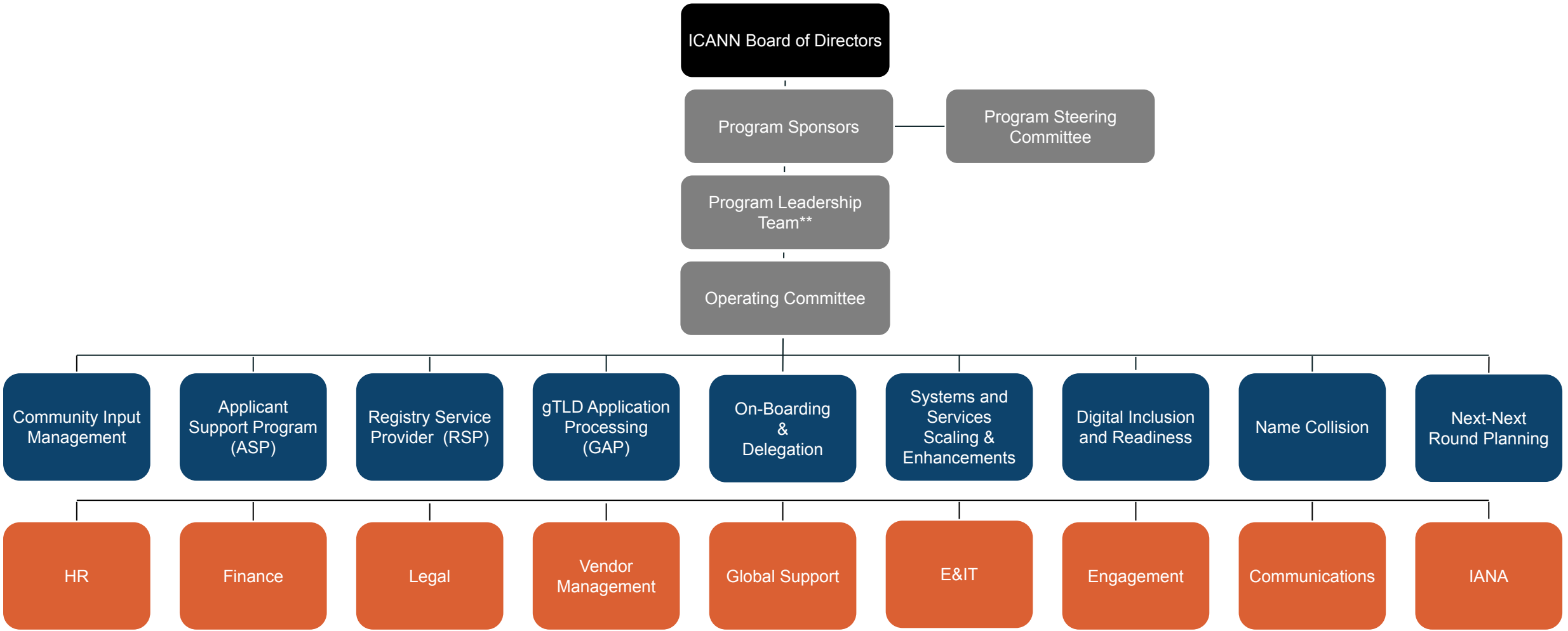
- **Purpose:** Monitoring that launch plans are on track and identification of any issues which may delay launch
- **Issue Resolution & Escalation:** Heightened focus on rapid issue resolution & escalation
- **Continued Risk Evaluation:** Continued risk assessment leading up to launch and commitment to launch date

Full Schedule of Gates

- Jan/Feb 2026 - Opening of Round to String Confirmation
- T-3 Months - Prioritization Draw to String Evaluation
- T-3 Months - Applicant and Application Evaluation
- T-3 Months - Contracting, On-boarding, and Delegation

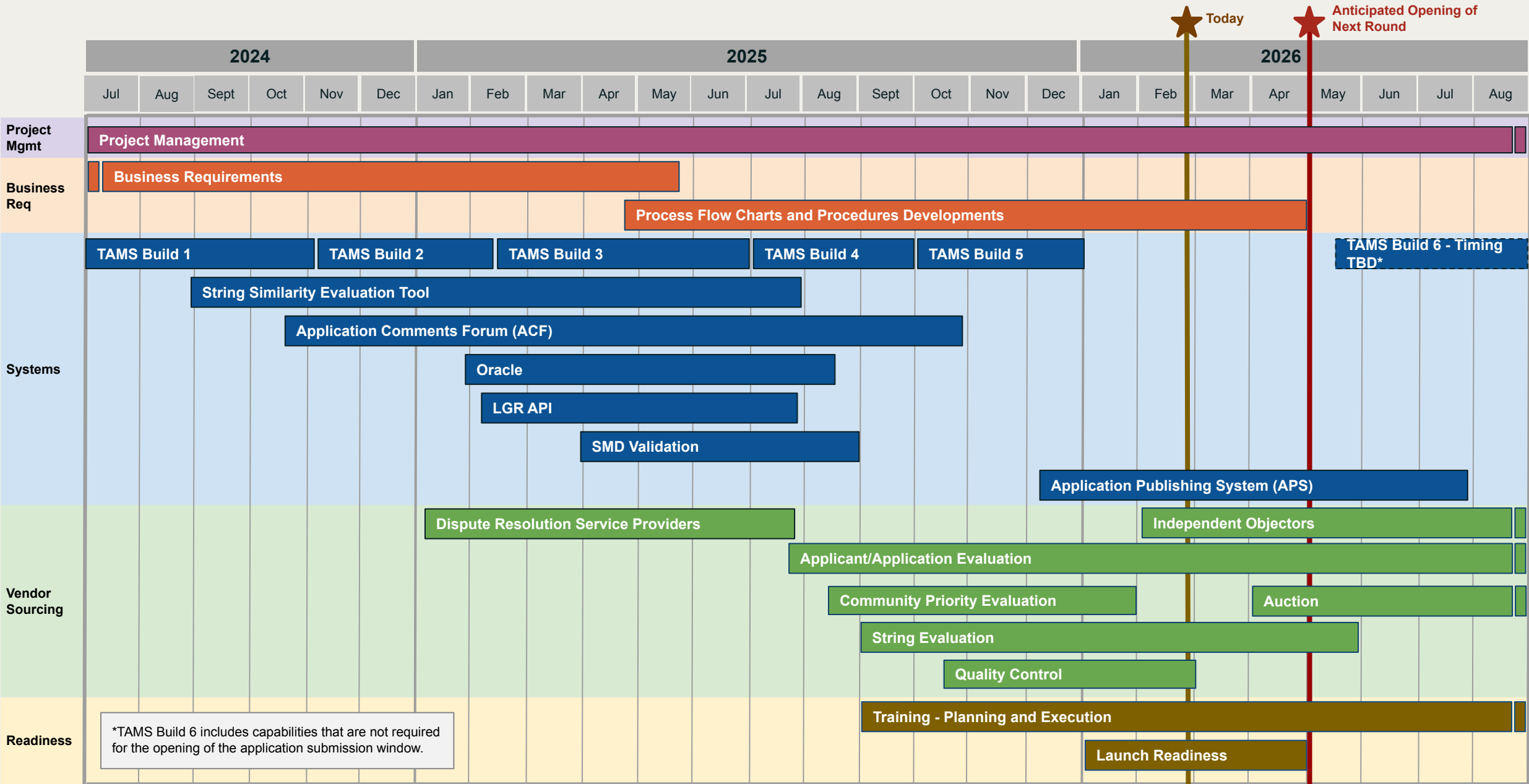
2026 Round Operating Model

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Processing Phase Program Structure

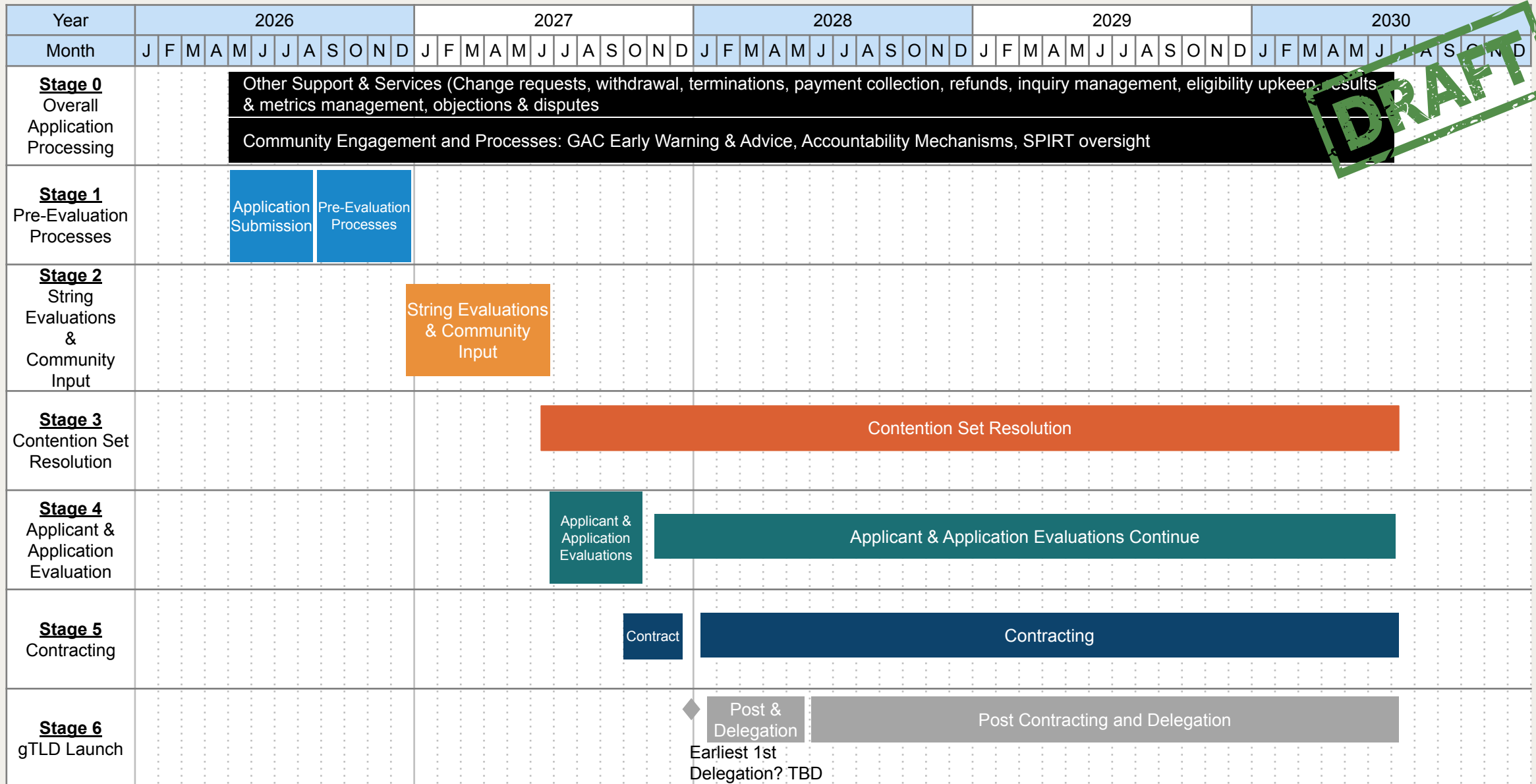


Org	Program Mgmt. / Governance	Next Round Program Teams	Supporting Functions
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** Also responsible for remaining applications from previous rounds



High-Level Processing Phase Timeline



2026 Round Vendor Selection

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

See <https://newgtldprogram.icann.org/en/resources/sourcingt timeline> for further info

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	Requirements/Vendor Selection Criteria	Vendor Selection Process	Vendor Identification	Negotiations	Contracting
Background Screening	RFP closed for responses	Evaluation in process	Pending	Pending	Q2 2026
Trademark Database	Contract renewal	Contract renewal	Contract renewal	Complete	Complete - Q3 2025
Quality Control	RFP closed for responses	Evaluation in process	Pending	Pending	Q2 2026
Dispute Resolution Providers	RFP complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete - Q3 2025
CPE	RFP complete	Complete	Complete	Contracting in process	In process
Safeguard Assessment	RFP in process	RFP in process	Pending	Pending	Q2 2026
String Similarity	RFP closed for responses	Evaluation in process	Pending	Pending	Q2 2026
Variant Strings	RFP closed for responses	Evaluation in process	Pending	Pending	Q2 2026
Name Collision: Temp Delegation	RFP open for responses	Pending	Pending	Pending	Q2/3 2026
Financial Capability	RFP in development (Q2 launch)	Pending	Pending	Pending	Q2/3 2026
Geographic Names & Reserved Names Panels	RFP open for responses	Pending	Pending	Pending	Q2/3 2026
Independent Objector	Expression of Interest (EOI) in development (March launch)	Pending	Pending	Pending	Q2/3 2026
Name Collision: High Risk Name ID	RFP in development (April launch)	Pending	Pending	Pending	Q2/3 2026
Name Collision: High Risk String Mitigation	RFP in development (July launch)	Pending	Pending	Pending	Q3/4 2026
Auction	RFP in development (Q2 launch)	Pending	Pending	Pending	Q2/3 2026

Vendor Selection Readiness

[2026 Round Bidder Conference Webinar](#) - provides prospective bidders with an overview of ICANN's business needs for the 2026 Round, including why panels and panelists are required, the types of service areas where vendor support is needed, and estimated timelines for when work will begin.

[ICANN New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Sourcing Timeline](#) - outlines when 2026 Round Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are planned to be issued for qualified vendors to support key evaluation areas for the applications of the 2026 Round.



2026 Round Technical Readiness

System Readiness

Completed

- LGR-API (DNS Stability) Tool
- SMD Validation Service
- Oracle Integration
- String Similarity Tool
- Name Collision Observatory

In Progress*

- TLD Application Management System (TAMS)
- Application Publication System (APS)
- Application Comment Forum (ACF)
- Naming Services Portal (NSp)
- Temporary Delegation Management System

*All system functionalities required at the time of opening the round are developed. Any development in progress is for processes taking place later in the Program timeline.

TLD Application Management System (TAMS)

▶ TAMS

The secure online system that is one-stop shop for applicants, ICANN, and evaluation panels to manage new gTLD applications from submission to signing a Registry Agreement.

▶ Core Functionality

Applicants

- Application submission
- Submit and respond to inquiries
- Respond to Clarifying Questions
- Respond to application comments
- Submit Change Requests
- Monitor application status and progress
- Monitor payment and refund status

ICANN

- Process applications (e.g. Contention Set management, process Change Requests, update application status, process evaluation and publish evaluation result report, contracting, etc.)
- Provide invoicing information to ICANN's finance system
- Communicate with applicants and panelists
- Track Program related activities per application (e.g. GAC Advice, High-Risk string, Accountability Mechanism)
- Reporting and statistic gathering

Evaluation Panelists

- Submit conflict of interest attestation
- Receive application information to perform evaluations
- Provide evaluation determinations

Ensuring TAMS Is Thoroughly Tested and Secure

Our testing and security approach combines industry best practices with the built-in strengths of the Appian low-code platform to ensure systems are functionally complete, resilient, and secure before release.

► Breadth of Coverage

What we test:

- End-to-End Business Workflows
- User Roles & Access Scenarios
- Data, Documents & Integrations
- Rules, Configuration & Exceptions
- Operational & Non-Functional Needs (performance, auditability, resiliency)

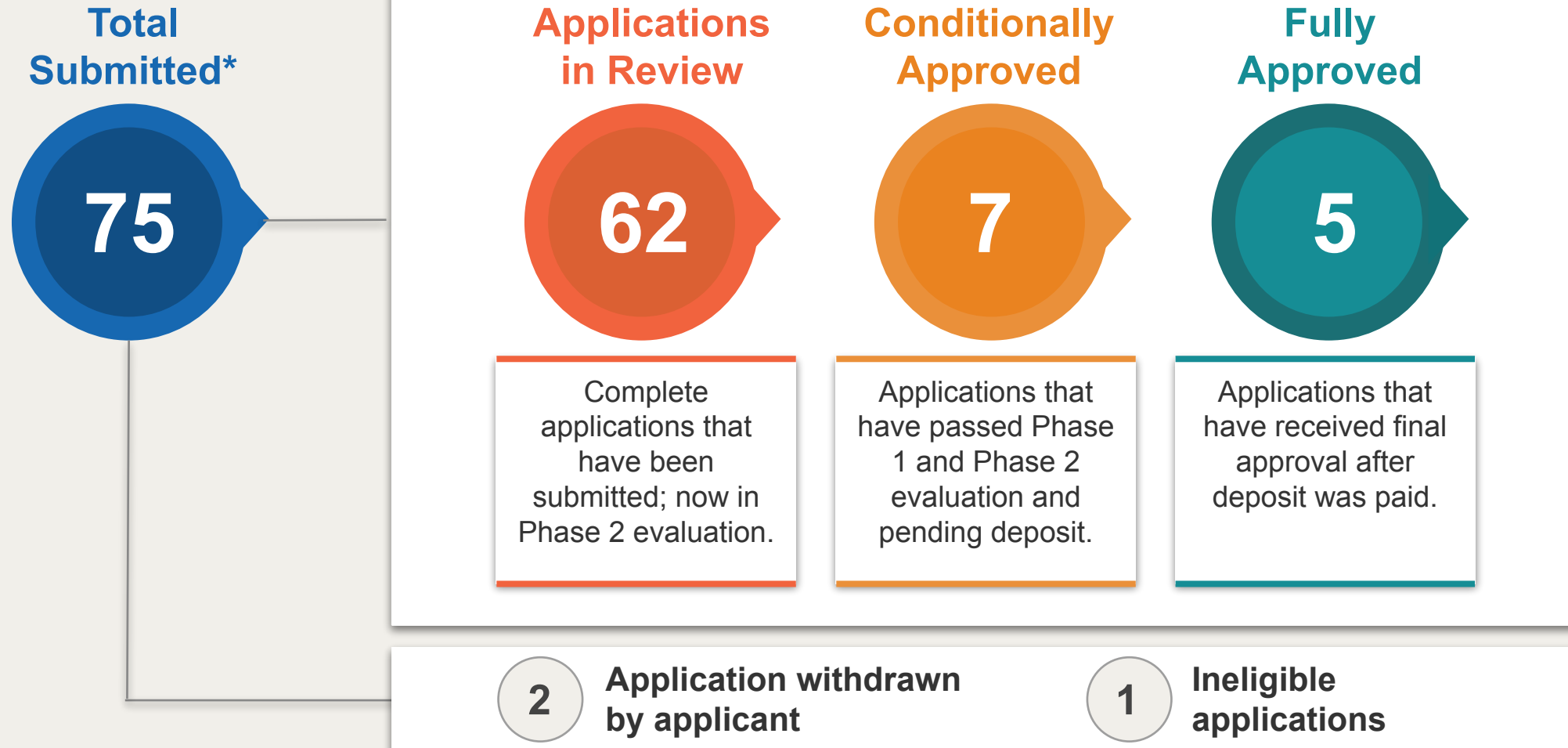
► Depth of Coverage

How thoroughly we test:

- Acceptance Criteria
- Clear, testable definitions of “done”
- Quality Assurance (QA)
- End-to-end and regression testing
- User Acceptance Testing (UAT)
- Business validation of real-world scenarios
- Security & Penetration Testing
- Independent security review and remediation

Applicant Support Program

ASP Application Status (as of 19 February 2026)



**Total does not include withdrawn applications*

ASP Regional Activity Update (19 February 2026)

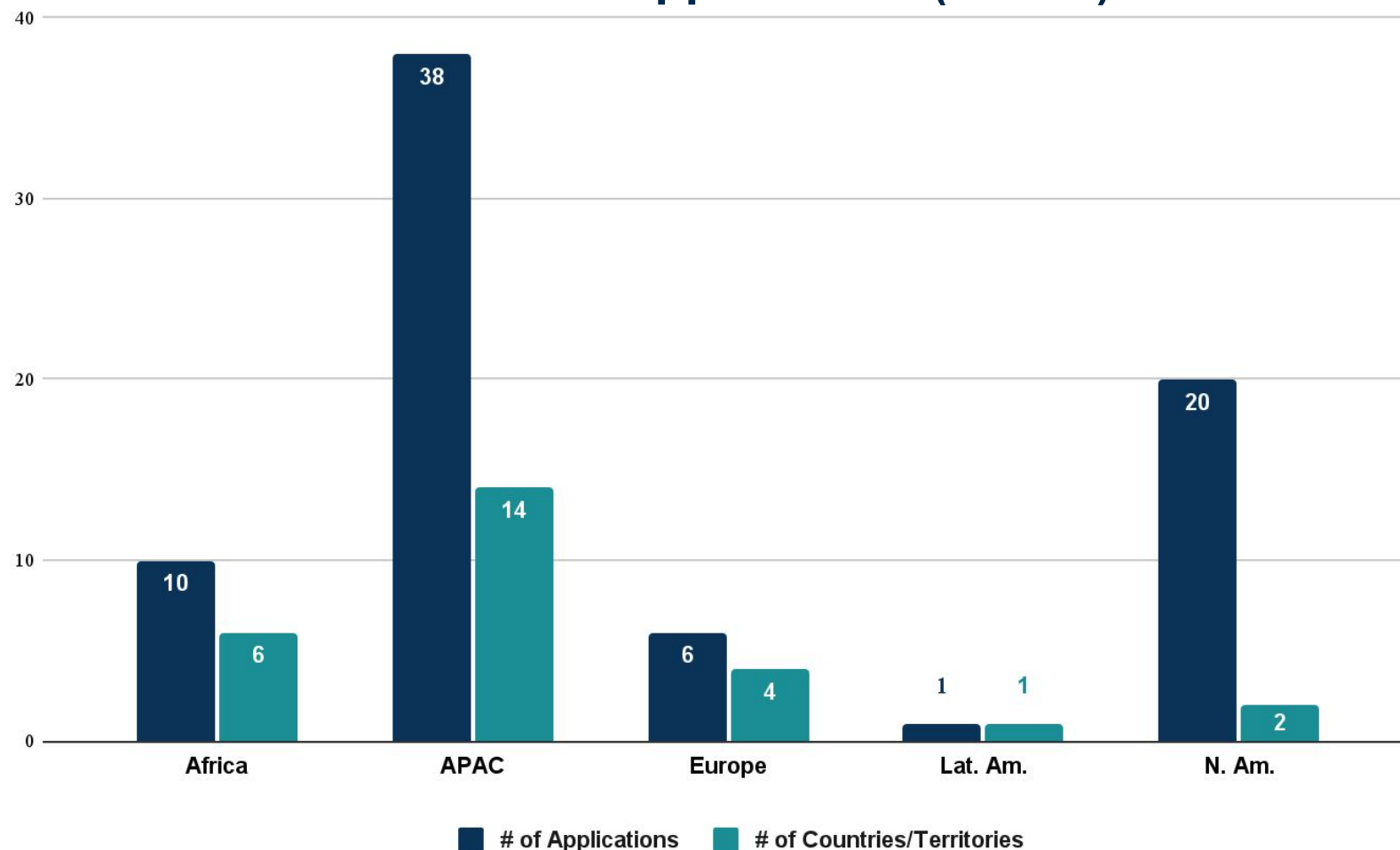
BY THE NUMBERS

75 TOTAL ACTIVE
APPLICATIONS
SUBMITTED

5 REGIONS

27 COUNTRIES/
TERRITORIES

Submitted Applications (Active)



Visit [ASP Program Statistics](#) for additional metrics, updated on the 19th of each month.

Additional ASP Updates

ASP Capacity Development Program

- In the lead up to the close of the ASP application submission window, ASP applicants received daily email messages that included helpful information, reminders, and FAQs
- The team held weekly office hours for ASP applicants to raise questions; these were [recorded and available on the website](#)
- ASP applicants are encouraged to attend ICANN meetings and provided with a curated list of ICANN85 sessions.
- ASP published the [Supported Applicant Toolkit](#)

Application Processing

- Ramping up internal resources and implementing process efficiencies for application processing following the close of the [extended ASP submission period](#) on 19 December 2025.
- Preparing a request to the Board for additional funding should the number of qualified applicants exceed 45.

Pro Bono Service Providers and Mentors

- Updated [pro bono service provider and mentor sheet](#) to organize by type of service offered.
- Held update webinar for pro bono service providers now that the ASP application submission period has closed.

Continuous Monitoring & Evaluation

- The ASP Awareness, Outreach, Communication, and Engagement survey is complete, but had a low response rate.
- The ASP team is looking to increase the number of respondents to the ASP System Survey, sent via email.

Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program

RSP Program - List of Evaluated RSPs



- The initial list of evaluated RSPs was published on 30 January and it is currently being updated on a daily basis.
- This comprehensive list provides the most up-to-date information on the status of RSP applicants:
 - <https://newgtldprogram.icann.org/en/application-rounds/round2/rsp/rsp-applications>
- The published list of evaluated RSPs includes applicants that have:
 - cleared both technical screening and technical testing.
 - cleared technical screening, but are still in the process of clearing technical testing.
- ICANN org plans to publish the RSP, Internationalized Domain Name Services, and additional Registry Services applications to the List of Evaluated RSPs in early March 2026.

RSP Program Status as of 30 January 2026

- The latest public statistics for the RSP program, current as of 30 January 2026, are available at:

<https://newgtldprogram.icann.org/en/application-rounds/round2/rsp/program-statistics>



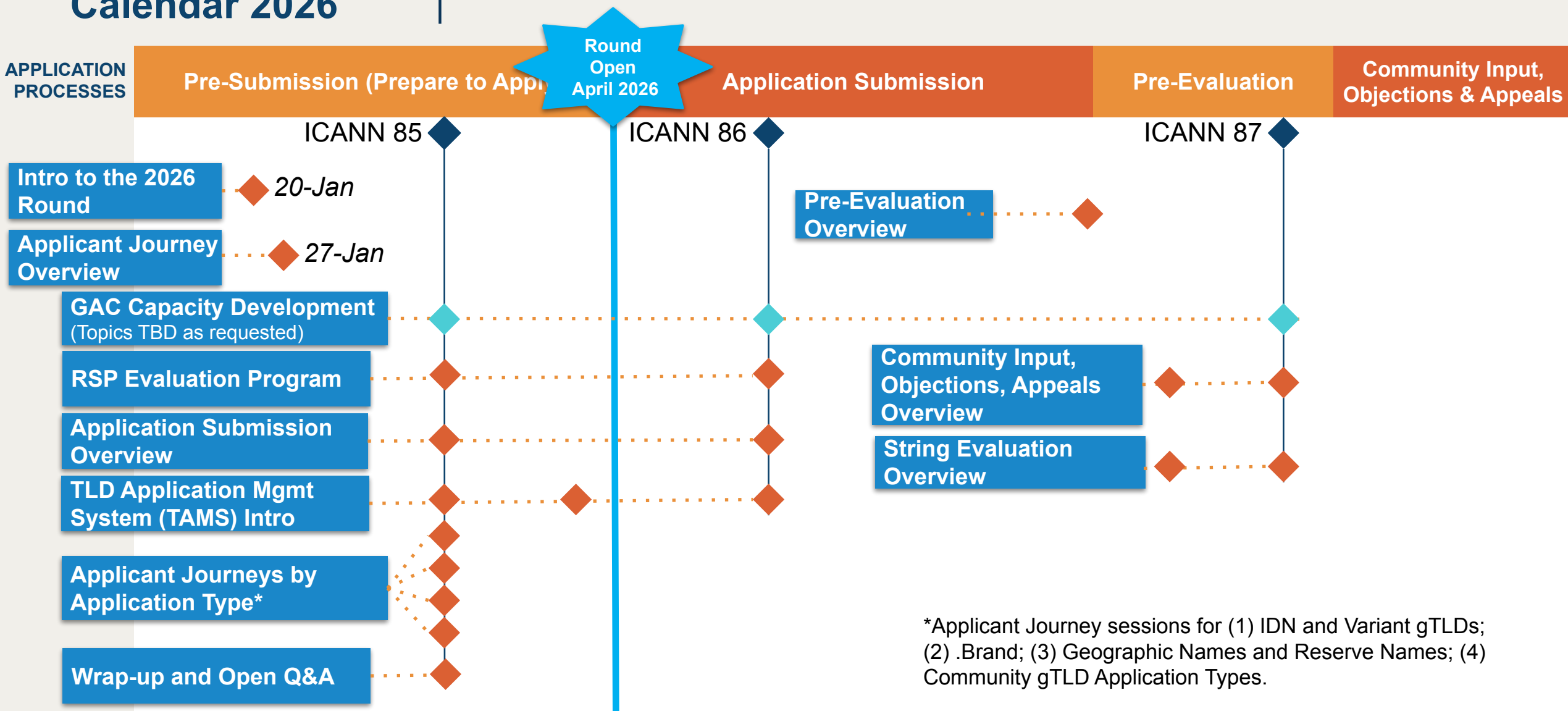
04

Applicant Readiness & What to Expect at ICANN85

Readiness Calendar 2026

Readiness webinars will be provided for potential Applicants and ICANN Community members throughout 2026 with delivery at ICANN Meetings when possible.

APPLICATION PROCESSES



Virtual Webinars:
January 2026

Foundational readiness webinars were offered virtually in January 2026. Recordings and materials on [2026 Round website webinars and presentations page](#).

	20-January 08:00 UTC	27-January 16:00 UTC
TOPIC	Introduction to the 2026 Round	2026 Round Applicant Journey Overview
AUDIENCE	All prospective gTLD applicants.	All prospective gTLD applicants.
DESCRIPTION	This webinar provides interested parties with foundational information about the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round . The course is designed to equip those who are unfamiliar with the program to understand everything from generic top-level domains, to the purpose of each stage of the applicant journey. A webinar recording will be published after the event.	This webinar provides an end-to-end overview of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round application process . The course creates context for ICANN community members and applicants who wish to understand the requirements of the application process, and the role(s) different groups play throughout. A webinar recording will be published after the event.

ICANN85 Plenary Sessions: March 2026

ICANN85 kicks-off an additional readiness series offering in-person engagement and virtual participation. All readiness webinars are open to potential new gTLD Applicants and ICANN Community Members and will include time for Q&A.

	Monday, 9-March 13:15 - 14:30*	Tuesday, 10-March 13:15 - 14:30
TOPIC	Application Submission Overview	TLD Application Management System (TAMS) Introduction & Demo
AUDIENCE	All prospective gTLD applicants.	All prospective gTLD applicants.
DESCRIPTION	Detailed information for prospective applicants related to preparing to submit an application , as well as a view of the application submission experience .	An introduction to the TLD Application Management System used by 2026 round applicants to submit or change an application. Includes demonstrations of basic navigation, and organization and application submission steps .

**All times local Mumbai time.*

ICANN85 Sessions: March 2026

ICANN85 kicks-off an additional readiness series offering in-person engagement and virtual participation. All readiness webinars are open to potential new gTLD Applicants and ICANN Community Members and will include time for Q&A.

TOPIC	7 OR 8 March 16:30-17:30*	7 OR 8 March 16:30-17:30	MON 9-March 16:30-17:30	TUE 10-March 16:30-17:30	WED 11-March 16:30-17:30	THU 12-March 09:00-10:00
	Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation Program	IDN and Variant Applicant Journeys with Q&A	.Brand Applicant Journey with Q&A	Geographic Names and Reserved Name Applicant Journeys with Q&A	Community Applicant Journey with Q&A	Wrap up and Open Q&A
AUDIENCE	Prospective applicants to the RSP Program	Prospective IDN and Variant gTLD applicants	Prospective .brand gTLD applicants	Prospective geographic names and reserved names gTLD applicants	Prospective community gTLD applicants	All prospective gTLD applicants
DESCRIPTION	Presentation on the Registry Service Provider evaluation program including information about the opening of the RSP program's second submission period, concurrent with the opening of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round application window.	View of the unique IDN and Variant Applicant journeys. Focuses on question sets, conditional evaluations and fees, processing priority and other processes unique to the IDN and variant gTLD applications.	View of the unique .Brand Applicant journey. Focuses on question sets, conditional evaluations and fees, brand string replacement and other processes unique to .Brand gTLD applications.	View of the unique Geographic Name and Reserved Name applicant journeys. Focuses on question sets, conditional evaluations and fees, and other processes unique to geographic name and reserved name gTLD applications.	View of the unique Community Applicant journey. Focuses on question sets, conditional evaluations and fees, Community Priority Evaluation and other processes unique to Community gTLD applications.	Address questions not answered in previous sessions, new questions, and what applicants can expect between now and the opening of the gTLD application window plus other topics that may impact applicants.

**All times local
Mumbai time.*

Where to Direct Questions

To ensure fairness, transparency, and equal access to information for all participants, please direct questions through one of the following channels.

General Questions about the New gTLD Program or 2026 Round

- Open public forums (e.g., ICANN meetings, presentations, webinars)
- Email to ICANN Global Support at globalsupport@icann.org

gTLD Application-specific questions

- Through the TLD Application Management System (TAMS) (inquiry functionality available following application submission)

Note: ICANN staff members have been directed not to field questions from individual applicants – whether by email, social media messaging, or in-person – in the interest of fairness, transparency, and equal access for all program participants.

05

Q & A

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