



85 | COMMUNITY
FORUM



2026 Round Geographic and Reserved Names Applicant Journeys and Q&A

10 March 16:30-17:30

Welcome Message

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Readiness Content Disclaimer

The authoritative source for all information about New gTLD Program: 2026 Round rules, evaluations, restrictions, processes, and systems is the English version of the [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#). All New gTLD Program: 2026 Round readiness and training content is supplementary to the Applicant Guidebook, and has been developed to provide a high-level summary of key topic areas of interest to prospective applicants and the broader ICANN community. In case of discrepancy, the Applicant Guidebook prevails.



New to the gTLD Program?

ICANN85 attendees **who are new to the New gTLD Program** are encouraged to review the foundation webinars below to build knowledge of the program. The webinars provide context for ICANN85 sessions.

	Introduction the 2026 Round	2026 Round applicant Journey Overview
LINKS	Recording and Presentation	Recording and Presentation
AUDIENCE	All prospective gTLD applicants.	All prospective gTLD applicants.
DESCRIPTION	Foundational information for anyone interested in learning about the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round. The course is designed to equip those who are brand new to the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round to understand everything from generic top-level domains and strings, to the purpose of each stage of the applicant journey.	End-to-end view of 2026 Round application processing stages and milestones. The course creates context for ICANN Community stakeholders and applicants to understand the requirements of the application process, and the role(s) different groups play throughout.

New gTLD Program Sessions at [ICANN85](#)

New gTLD Program sessions at ICANN85 provide a **detailed view of the Application Submission process** and the **TLD Application Management System**, as well as sessions for **specific audiences (RSPs)** and **applicant types**. All times are in local time (IST).

ICANN85 SESSIONS

TOPICS:

AUDIENCE:

SAT 7 March
16:30-17:30

Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation Program

Prospective applicants to the RSP Program

SUN 8 March
16:30-17:30

IDN and Variant Applicant Journeys with Q&A

Prospective IDN and Variant gTLD applicants

MON 9 March
13:15-14:30

Application Submission Overview (PLENARY)

Prospective applicants to the New gTLD Program

MON 9-March
16:30-17:30

.Brand Applicant Journey with Q&A

Prospective .brand gTLD applicants

ICANN85 SESSIONS

TOPICS:

AUDIENCE:

TUES 10 March
13:15-14:30

TAMS Introduction & Demo (PLENARY)

Prospective applicants to the RSP Program

TUE 10-March
16:30-17:30

Geographic Names and Reserve Name Applicant Journeys

Prospective geographic names and reserved names gTLD applicants

WED 11-March
16:30-17:30

Community Applicant Journey with Q&A

Prospective community gTLD applicants

THU 12-March
09:00-10:00

Wrap up and Open Q&A

All prospective gTLD applicants

Agenda

01

Geographic Names Applicant Journey

Describes preparation, application questions, evaluations and fees, and contract requirements of a geographic names application.

02

Reserved Names Applicant Journey

Describes preparation, application questions, documents, evaluations, and fees required to apply for a reserved name.

03

Resources and Support

Resources and support available to interested parties and potential applicants.

Session Objectives:

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Understand the requirements of applying for a geographic name or a reserved name gTLD.
- Identify and prepare application question responses specific to geographic name and reserved name gTLDs.
- Know where related information can be found in the 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook to reference.



01

Application and String Types

✓ Application Types and definitions of Geographic Name and Reserved Name TLDs.

2026 Round Application Types

Application Type determines relevant preparation, application questions, conditional applications and fees, prioritization order, contention resolution options and contract requirement.

General Applications

.link

A general gTLD application does not fall into one of the specialized categories and is subject to a standard set of defined requirements

Specialized Application Types

.Brand

.nike

Community

.eco

Geographic Name

.paris

Reserved Name

.redcross

Variant

شبكة (gTLD)
شبكة (variant)

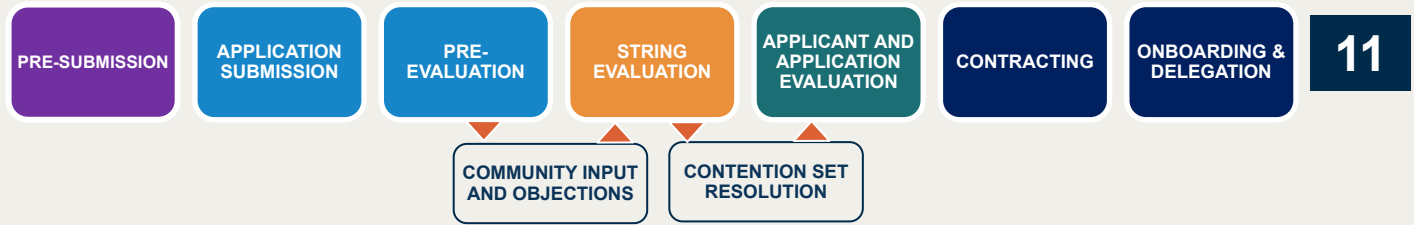
Internationalized Domain Name (IDN)

.例子 (.example)

02

Geographic Names Applicant Journey

✓ Describes unique preparation, application questions, evaluations and fees, and contract requirements of a geographic names gTLD.

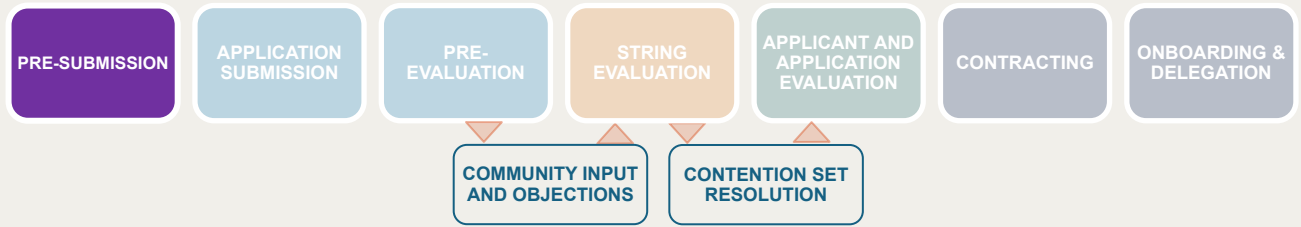


Geographic Names

A Geographic Name is a gTLD and its allocatable variant label(s) that meet any of these criteria:

- Capital city of any country or territory listed in the ISO 3166-1 standard (in any language).
- City or region where the **applicant declares that it intends to use** the gTLD for purposes associated with that name.
- An exact match of a sub-national place name such as a **county, province, or state** listed in the ISO 3166-2 standard.
- UNESCO region or appearing on the Geographic Regions section of the “Standard country or area codes for statistical use (M49)” found [here](#).

Applications for strings that are country or territory names will not be approved, as they are not available under the New gTLD Program: Next Round. A string is considered a country or territory name if it meets any of the criteria noted in Section 7.5.1 of the AGB.



Pre-Submission

Preparation

- Applicants for Geographic Names must secure the support or non-objection of the relevant governments or public authorities.

Documentation of support must:

- Be dated no more than four months from the opening of the New gTLD Program application submission period, otherwise a newer letter of support or non-objection will be required.
- Clearly express the support or non-objection of the relevant government or public authority to the specific application.
- Demonstrate the government or public entity's understanding of the string being requested and its intended use.

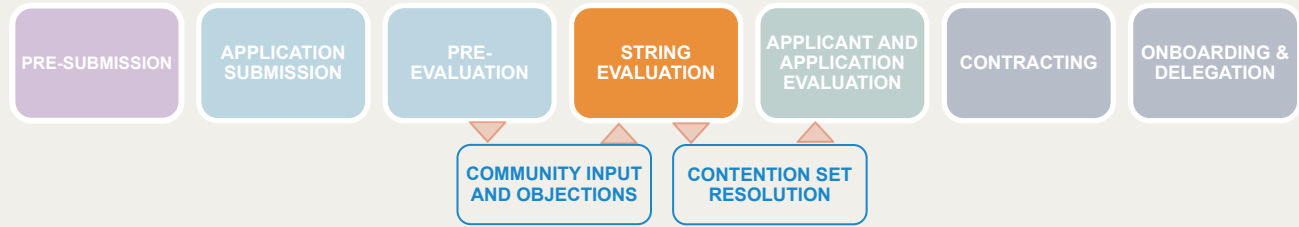
Application Submission

COMMUNITY INPUT
AND OBJECTIONS

CONTENTION SET
RESOLUTION

Application Questions

- Geographic Name applicants must complete AGB Appendix 1, Question Set 8, Questions 158-161.



String Evaluation

Geographic Names Identification

- During String Evaluation, a Geographic Names Panel, selected by ICANN, will **evaluate every string** to determine whether it is a protected geographic name.
- If the string is determined to be a geographic name, the application will require **Geographic Names Review** during the application evaluation.

Geographic Names Review

COMMUNITY INPUT
AND OBJECTIONSCONTENTION SET
RESOLUTION

What is it?

Verification and substantive review of application responses for geographic names. Occurs prior to Contention Resolution if required.

Fee:

Not to exceed USD 12,000



Required



Conditional



Optional

Application and String Type:



Standard



.Brand



Geographic



Community



Reserved



IDN



Variant

Eligible for Extended Evaluation?



Yes



No or N/A

Eligible for Challenge?



Yes



No or N/A

🎯 Scope of Evaluation (Criteria)

A Geographic Names Panel (GNP) reviews the inputs by the applicant, governments, and conducts its own research and analysis to confirm that the applicant has provided the required documentation, that the communication from that government or public authority is legitimate, and that it contains the required content.



What triggers it?

During String Evaluation, the GNP will evaluate every string to determine whether it is a protected geographic name.



What are the potential outcomes?

There are three potential outcomes of the evaluation:

- Eligible and continues in Program
- Not Eligible - lack of support by the relevant authority
- Eligible - In Contention – if multiple identical or confusingly similar strings pass.



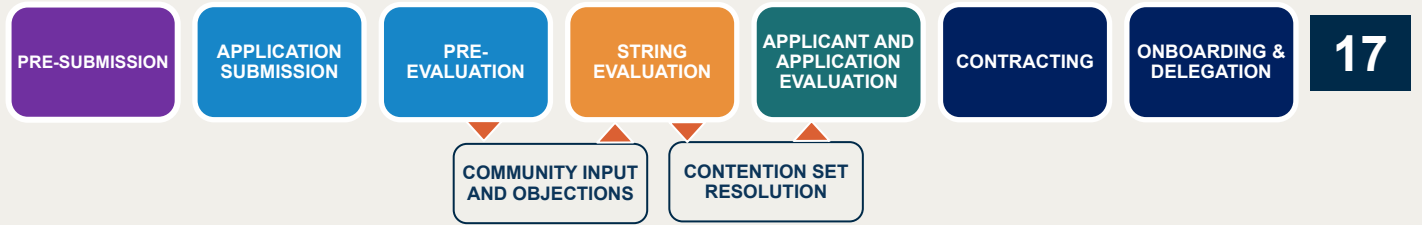
What else do you need to know?

Find more information in the [AGB Section 7.5 Geographic Names](#)

03

Reserved Name Applicant Journey

✓ Describes unique preparation, application questions, documents, evaluations, and fees required to apply for a reserved name gTLD.

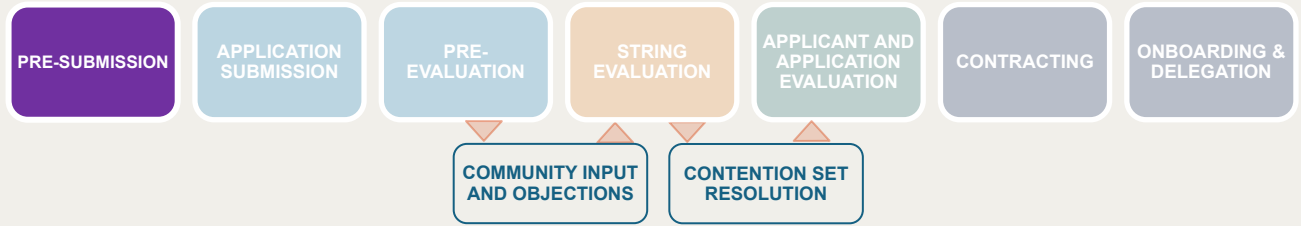


Reserved Names

Reserved Names are specific TLD strings set aside for certain International IGO-INGOs. Only the designated organization may apply for these strings, and eligibility must be verified through ICANN's exception process as described in the Applicant Guidebook.

ICANN maintains the Reserved Names list, compiled from various sources, which can be found [here](#).

Reserved Names are distinct from Blocked Names, which are not available for application.



Pre-Submission

Preparation

- Applicants for Reserved Names must document the support or non-objection of the relevant parent organization or authority.

Reserved Names Review

COMMUNITY INPUT
AND OBJECTIONSCONTENTION SET
RESOLUTION

What is it?

Exception process allowing applications for reserved names. Includes verification and substantive review supporting documentation to confirm they are the eligible entity to operate the reserved name

Fee:

N/A



Required



Conditional



Optional

Application and String Type:



Standard



.Brand



Geographic



Community



Reserved



IDN



Variant

Eligible for Extended Evaluation?



Yes



No or N/A

Eligible for Challenge?



Yes



No or N/A

🎯 Scope of Evaluation (Criteria)

A Reserved Names Panel review and verifies: 1) Certification of Incorporation and, if applicable, letter from parent organization and 2) Documentation of support or non-objection including a signed letter from the relevant public authority (if applicable).



What triggers it?

During application submission, an automated pre-submission string validation identifies the applied-for-string as a reserved name, on the ICANN reserved names list.



What are the potential outcomes?

There are two potential outcomes of the evaluation:

- Eligible and continues in Program
- Not Eligible due to lack of support by the relevant organization



What else do you need to know?

Find more information in [AGB Section 7.2.2 Reserved Names](#)

04

Resources and Next Steps

✓ Resources and support available to interested parties and potential applicants

Geographic Names and Reserved Names Resource Links

AGB Links for Geographic Names

- [7.5 Geographic Names](#)
- [Question Set 8, Questions 158-161](#)

AGB Links for Reserved Names

- [7.2.2 Reserved Names](#)
- [Question Set 9, Questions 162-163](#)
- [7.2.2.3 Reserved Names Review](#)

Other resources:

- [Application Types: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Topic Overview gTLD Application Types](#)

Key Applicant Resources

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook

- The authoritative document outlining the rules and procedures of the 2026 Round.

New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Website

- Source of 2026 Round news, announcements, information, and resources.

ICANN Learn

- eLearning courses to build knowledge of ICANN and the DNS Industry.

Applicant Readiness Pathway

- Curated learning resources organized by phases and learning outcomes (coming soon)

2026 Round FAQs

- Frequently asked questions, organized by category.

ICANN Global Support

- Dedicated ICANN team available to answer inquiries and provide support throughout the application process. globalsupport@icann.org

New gTLD Program Webinars

- Register for future webinars, or access recordings of past events.

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

Question and Answer



Q&A

Submit further questions to: globalsupport@icann.org

Where to Direct Questions

General Program Questions

- Open public forums (ICANN meetings, webinars)
- Refer to New gTLD Program resources, including the AGB
- Email: globalsupport@icann.org

Application-Specific Questions

- After an application has been submitted, applicants may use the **Create Inquiry** button in TAMS.



Important: 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.

Evaluation Survey

We kindly request you to take a few minutes to complete this brief feedback form.

A large, dark blue speech bubble with a white outline, pointing downwards. It is positioned on the right side of the slide. Inside the bubble, the word "Survey" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Survey

gTLD

Thank you for your participation.

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