



85 | COMMUNITY
FORUM



2026 Round Application Submission Overview

9 March 13:15-14:30

Welcome Message

Lars Hoffmann

VP, New gTLD Program Management
and Deputy Program Lead

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 New 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.

2026 Round 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 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

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

01

Introduction

Agenda

01

Welcome & Introduction

✓ Agenda and session objectives

02

Pre-Submission

✓ What to do before the application window opens

03

Application Submission

✓ Entering TAMS and submitting your application

04

Wrap-up

✓ Key applicant resources and next steps to stay informed and prepared throughout the application process

Session Objectives

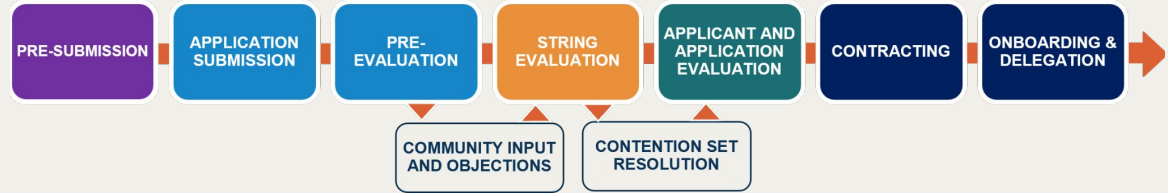
- Understand eligibility requirements for the 2026 Round and explain why early preparation is critical before the application window opens.
- Be able to identify the key components, fees, timelines, and resources required to prepare a complete gTLD application.
- Be able to navigate pre-submission considerations and application questions, including application types, Registry Service Provider selection, name collision risk, and Universal Acceptance.
- Be able to prepare for and complete the application submission process in the TLD Application Management System (TAMS), including system access, required sections, validations, and what to expect after submission.



02

Pre-Submission

What to do before the application submission period opens

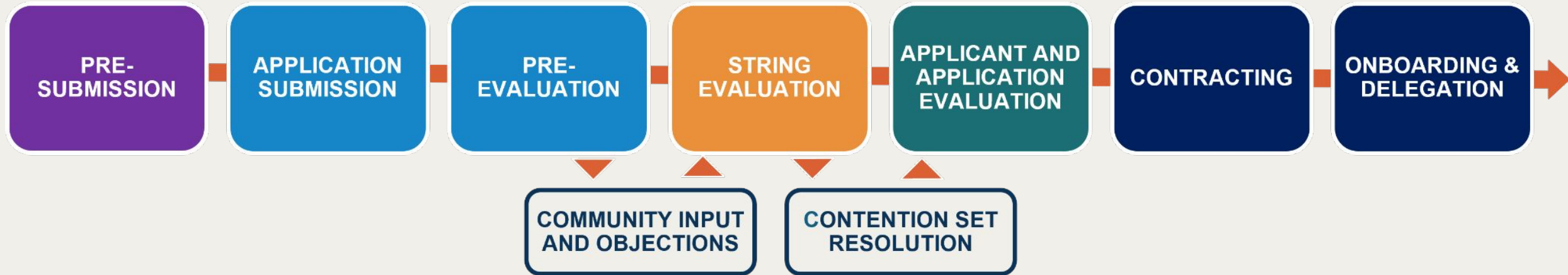


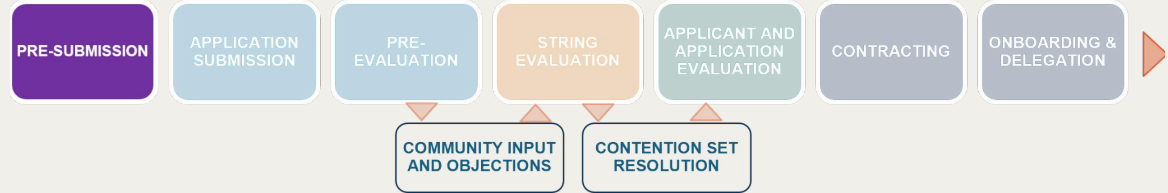
Where We Are in the Journey



This is just the beginning

The Pre-Submission and Application Submission stages mark the start of the application process. During this time, you prepare your materials in advance and submit your application once the round opens.





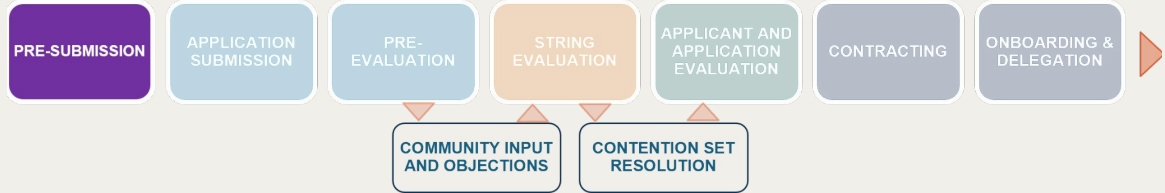
Eligibility to Apply and Why Preparation Matters



Prepare Early

Preparing early helps you:

- Confirm your organization is ready to apply.
- Understand application questions in advance.
- Gather required documents and stakeholder details.
- Identify application system users and the roles you'd like them to perform.
- Plan for fees, approvals, and payment timing.
- Avoid delays once the submission window opens.



Requirements of a gTLD Application

► Compliance Obligations and Legal Readiness

Applicants must be a formed legal entity and agree to the program's Terms and Conditions.

Individual persons cannot apply, and the applying entity must already legally exist.



► Cost Burden and Fee Requirements

Applicants must pay the USD 227,000 gTLD evaluation fee for primary string and up to 4 variants (plus any conditional evaluation fees) within strict deadlines.

Note: Exceptions to this base fee apply to 1) Variants of existing gTLDs and 2) Applicants approved for the Applicant Support Program (ASP).

► Evaluations

Eligible applications will undergo:

- String evaluation.
- Application and applicant evaluations, including financial and operational evaluation and background screening.
- Any additional conditional evaluations that may be required.



Challenges Applicants May Face

► Complexity and Timeline

The process includes multi-stage evaluation processes. Extensive documentation and evaluation occur over a multi-year timeline.



► Contention

If two or more parties apply for the same string or confusingly similar string, ICANN forms contention sets and resolves them through community priority evaluation, if eligible, or through an auction.



► Objections and Appeals

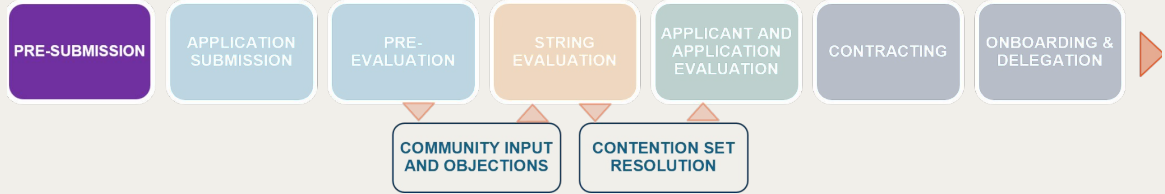
Filed by parties with standing. Objections require additional steps, push an application into contention, require modifications, or even prevent the application from moving forward. They can also result in significant financial fees.



► Technical Readiness and Infrastructure

Applicants must coordinate with and select an approved Registry Service Provider (See RSP Evaluation Program) that is approved to support the Registry Services that an applicant intends to offer.





Expertise Needed to Apply

Assembling a multidisciplinary team is essential to address legal, technical, financial, and operational requirements.

Legal

IP law, domain name law, contract law (Registry Agreement), dispute resolution, regulatory compliance.

Technical

DNS operations, registry technical requirements, name collision mitigation, cybersecurity, infrastructure architecture.

Financial

Financial planning and projections, budget development, cost analysis, sustainability modeling.

Operational

Registry operations management, RSP selection, abuse handling procedures, customer support, business continuity.

Strategic

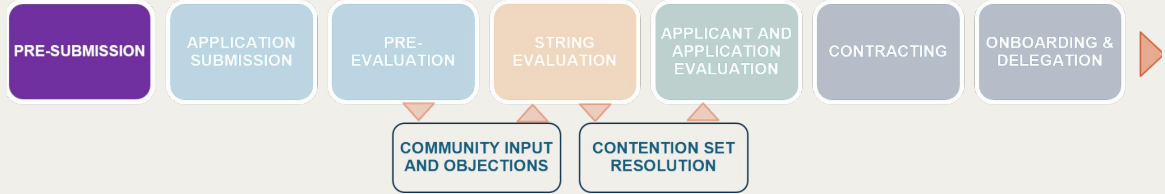
TLD strategy and positioning, market analysis, .brand management (.brand TLDs), community engagement, competitive analysis.

Policy & Governance

ICANN policies, Internet governance, multi-stakeholder processes, public interest commitments, rights protection mechanisms.

Fees and Refunds

Overview of the fees you can expect and how
refunds work



gTLD Evaluation Fee

gTLD Evaluation Fee (per application)

USD 227,000

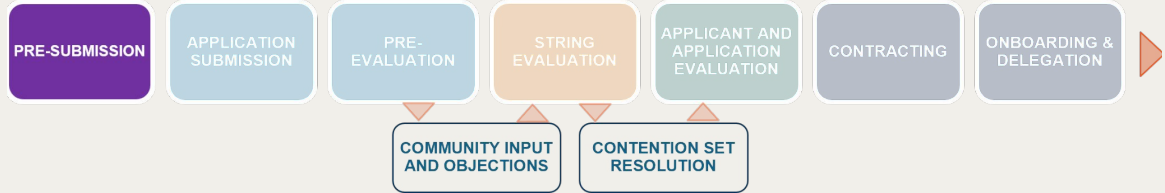
Exceptions:

- Supported ASP applicants eligible for reduced fees.
- Variant gTLD applicants meeting specific criteria.

Financial Sustainability: Applicants must demonstrate long-term operational funding capacity through Financial and Operational Evaluation.

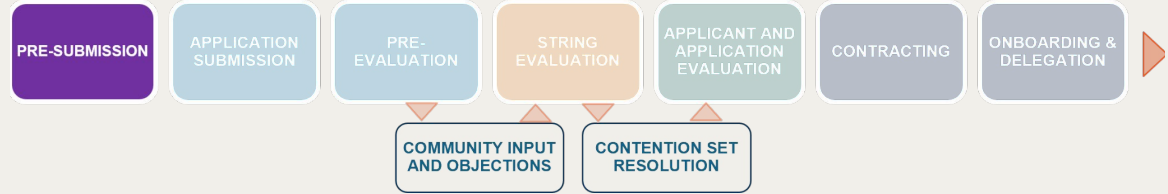
Additional gTLD Evaluation Fee Information

- Fee is due upon receipt of the invoice (generated following submission of application), and no later than 7 calendar days after close of application window.
- Payment received by ICANN must be in USD.
- Applicant is responsible for all conversion costs, transaction fees, and exchange rate fluctuations.
- Payments must be made via wire transfer, ACH, International SWIFT payment.
- Checks and credit cards are not accepted.



Other Costs - Conditional Evaluations

Conditional Evaluation	Fee
1 Brand Eligibility Qualification (Specification 13) (see section 7.3 of the AGB for further details)	USD 500 (Note: Applicants that apply for and are granted Specification 13 are exempt from complying with the requirements of CoC exemption (Specification 9). Applicants do not need to apply separately for a CoC exemption.)
2 Code of Conduct (CoC) exemption (see section 7.4)	USD 400
3 Community Priority Evaluation* (see section 5.4)	Estimated between USD 50,000 and USD 80,000 (Actual costs will be charged. See sourcing timeline for further details on when RFP is expected to be carried out.)
4 Geographic Names Review (including extended evaluation)* (see section 7.5.3.2)	This fee is payable to cover the cost of the panel's review of the application and will not exceed USD 12,000.
5 Name Collision High-Risk Mitigation Plan Evaluation (see section 7.7.5)	Estimated between USD 100,000 and USD 150,000 (Actual costs will be charged. See sourcing timeline for further details on when RFP is expected to be carried out.)
6 Re-evaluation resulting from a change request* (see section 3.8)	Dependent upon what needs re-evaluation.
7 Registry Commitment Evaluation that applies for Community registration policies review (Specification 12) and Registry Voluntary Commitments (see section 7.8)	USD 15,000. (Note: for Community TLD applicants that proceed to CPE, the fee paid for RCE will be deducted from the CPE fee.)



Other Costs

Outside of the Conditional Evaluations, other costs may include:

- Objections / Appeals (if applicable)
- Contention Set Resolution Costs:
 - Auction-related costs
- Registry Service Provider (RSP) fees - You must either select an RSP or seek approval to operate as one through the RSP Evaluation Program, and both options involve associated costs.
- Document translation and certification costs. Please keep in mind that documents submitted in languages other than English must be accompanied by a certified translation.

Refund Schedule

Window #1 65%

Receipt of payment until
10 days after String
Confirmation Day.

Refund* =
USD 147,550

Window #2 35%

11 days after String
Confirmation Day until start
of application and
applicant evaluations.

Refund* =
USD 79,450

Window #3 20%

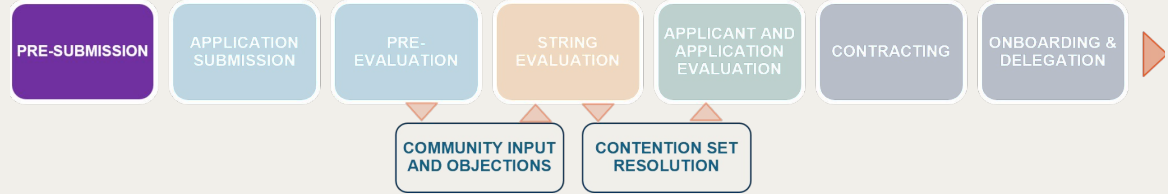
Start of application and
applicant evaluations until
the Registry Agreement is
executed.

Refund* =
USD 45,400



An applicant can withdraw its application at any time and request a refund in line with this refund schedule.

* Fully paying applicants



Special Refund Scenarios

1 **Volume Refund** – If more than 1,000 applications are received and implementation costs recovered, a volume refund will be available for all paid applicants who opt in.

2 **Refund as a result of material changes** – Applications that are withdrawn as a result of material changes to the AGB or program processes will be eligible for a refund to be determined by ICANN Board.

3 **High risk of name collision** – Applications that are withdrawn as a result of a high risk of name collision determination are eligible to receive a 100 percent refund.

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

Preparing for Application Submission

How to prepare before the application submission period opens

Review Application Questions Before the Round Opens



Use the 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook as your roadmap

- The Applicant Guidebook questions match the questions in TAMS.
- Access questions in the "Application Questions" (Appendix I) of the Applicant Guidebook.



Application/Applicant characteristics

- Questions vary based on the characteristics of application, applicant, and financial profile. Identify your specific path early to avoid irrelevant research.



Draft Responses Offline

- Prepare content and source evidence early. Draft responses offline before entering TAMS.

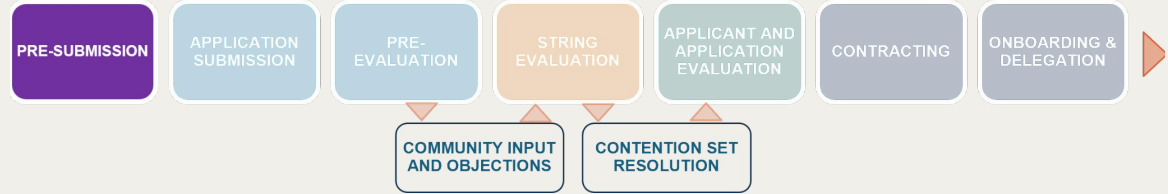


Applications must be submitted in English.



Identify Gaps Early

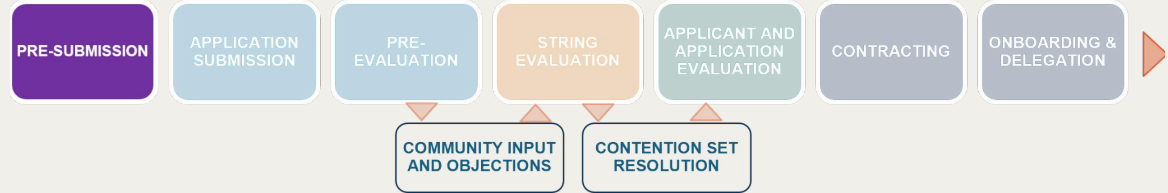
- Identify missing information, documents, or internal dependencies early.
- Flag questions that require third-party input or involvement.



Selecting an RSP

The RSP selection process ensures that new gTLDs are launched on secure, stable, and reliable infrastructure, maintaining trust in the global DNS ecosystem.

- ▶ Applicants may choose pre-evaluated RSPs or seek ICANN approval to perform RSP functions themselves through the RSP Evaluation Program.
- ▶ Applicants must designate one or more evaluated RSPs as part of their application. An applicant may do so at the time of completing their application. Alternatively, an applicant may do so after the application submission, but no later than prior to Application and Applicant Evaluation to avoid delays.
- ▶ If an RSP is designated after submission, this must be done by submitting an Application Change Request prior to application evaluation. To avoid delay, applicants are encouraged to specify the RSP(s) as early as possible.



String Check and Name Collision Observatory

- Applicants may check their strings against the blocked names list, reserved names list, delegated gTLDs list, and special-use domains list to help assess string eligibility.
 - [Reserved Names](#)
 - [Blocked Names](#)
 - [Delegated gTLDs](#)
 - [Special-Use Domains](#)
- Applicants should also check their string for potential name collision. ICANN has created the [Name Collision Observatory](#), a tool to help you with this process.

Name Collision

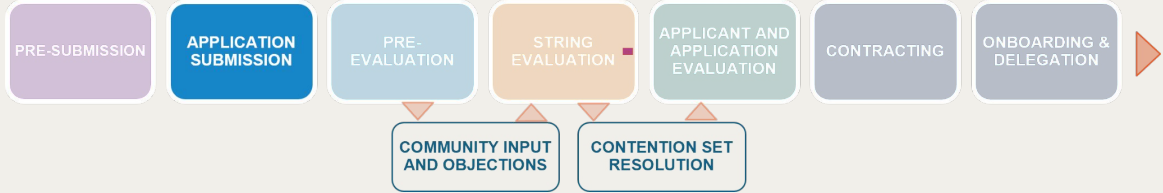
To use the Name Collision Observatory, type a value into the **String** field, select a **Start Date** and **End Date** (or use the default values), and click **Submit**. If data is available for the string, the graph below displays its DNS magnitude score across a number of sources for the specified date range. The magnitude score reflects the frequency a TLD string, whether delegated or not, is queried on a scale of 1 to 10. (Scores might not be available from every source for any given date.) The Daily Stats table includes the query volume and magnitude rank as well as the magnitude score. To compare the string data to other strings, click **Comparative Stats**.



03

Application Submission

Entering TAMS and submitting your application



ICANN Account Creation

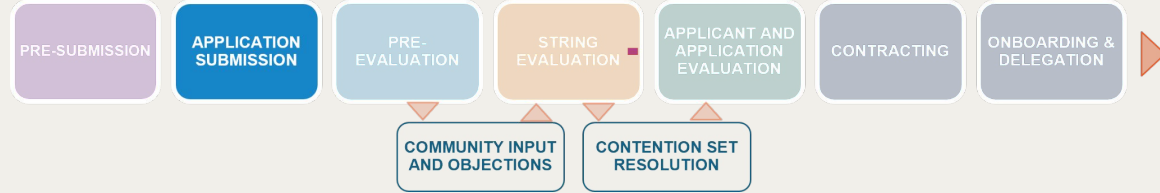
- ▶ All applicant system users must create an **ICANN Account** to access the **TLD Application Management System (TAMS)** and begin the application process.
- ▶ Applicants must designate **2 Primary TAMS users** (the only users authorized to submit the application), and optionally up to **5 additional 'invited' users** who can assist with drafting application content for the primary users to submit.
- ▶ **Secure login** via your ICANN Account with **multi-factor-authentication** is required to ensure application information is secure.

Welcome to ICANN Account

Email Address*

Next

Create an account at: <https://account.icann.org/registeraccount>



Universal Acceptance

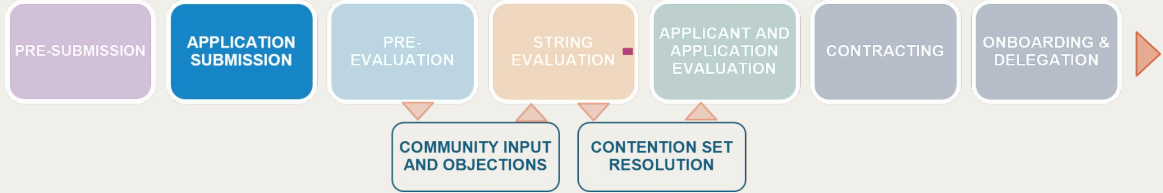


Universal Acceptance

- ▶ Universal Acceptance (UA) is a critical concept that aims to ensure that all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems accept all domain names and email addresses, regardless of script, language, or TLD length.

Notice: Obtaining ICANN approval and entering into a Registry Agreement does not guarantee immediate, comprehensive Internet functionality. Past experience indicates that network operators may not immediately fully support new TLDs, and software applications sometimes attempt to validate domain names and may not recognize new or unknown TLDs.

Applicants should familiarize themselves with these potential integration issues and account for them in their startup and launch plans. Successful applicants may find themselves expending considerable efforts working with providers to achieve acceptance of their applied-for string.



Terms and Conditions / Good Faith Intent



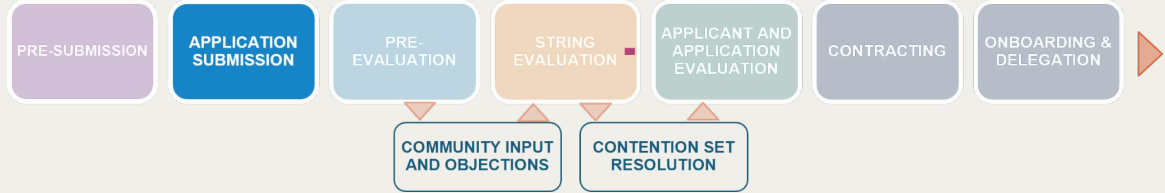
Terms and Conditions

- ▶ By submitting this application for a generic Top Level Domain (“gTLD”) (and any variant strings thereof identified on such application) through ICANN’s online interface (this “Application”), applicant (including all parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, agents, contractors, employees and any and all others acting on its behalf) (collectively, “Applicant”) agrees to the following terms and conditions (“Terms and Conditions”) without modification. Applicant understands and agrees that these Terms and Conditions are binding on Applicant and are a material part of this Application.



Good Faith Intent

- ▶ Applications must be submitted with a bona fide (“good faith”) intent to operate the gTLD. Applicants must affirm a bona fide intent to operate the gTLD for all submitted applications in TAMS (see Question Set 21 in Appendix 1 Application Questions). ICANN reserves the right to disallow an application from moving forward if it determines that the application was not submitted in good faith.



Application Options

I am applying for a **new gTLD string with no variants**.

- One primary string
- No variants included
- Separate application required for each additional string

I am applying for a **new gTLD and variant(s)** for that new gTLD string.

- Primary string plus variant string(s)
- Variants are evaluated **together** with the primary application
- Used when character variants within the same script are needed

I have an **existing gTLD string** and I am applying for variant(s) for that existing gTLD string.

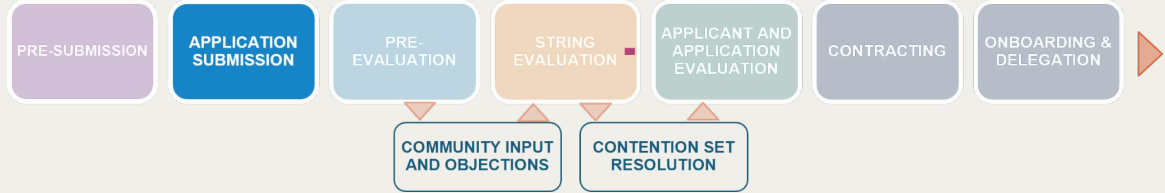
- The primary gTLD is already delegated
- Application is limited to the **variant(s) string only**
- Does not include a new primary gTLD

New gTLD Application: Enter gTLD String

Please tell us about the gTLD string for your application:*

- ☐ I am applying for a new gTLD string with no variants
- ☐ I am applying for a new gTLD string and variant(s) for that new gTLD string
- ☐ I have an existing gTLD string and I am applying for variant(s) for that existing gTLD string

CANCEL



Application Users



2 Primary Users



5 Additional Users



Primary Users

Full Access

Only primary users can take significant actions:

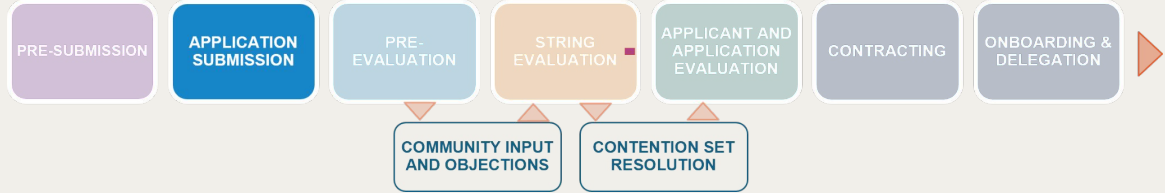
- ✓ Submit Application
- ✓ Submit Change Request
- ✓ Withdraw Application
- ✓ Answer Clarifying Questions



All Users

Additional Users have limited access. Primary and additional users can take support actions:

- ✓ Draft Applications
- ✓ Save Work in Progress
- ✓ Draft Answers to Clarifying Questions
- ✓ Communicate via Inquiry Function
- ✓ View Notifications



Pre-Submission String Validations

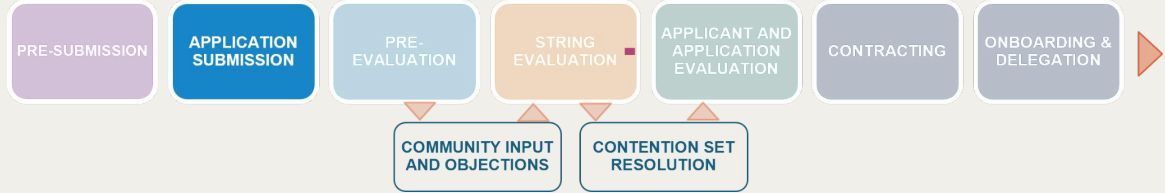
Automated validations occur in TAMS to ensure applied-for string and variant strings are eligible to be applied for.

Validation	What It Checks
Blocked Names	Identifies strings and variant strings on the Blocked Names list that cannot be applied for.
Reserved Names	Identifies protected names and their variant strings that are reserved for specific entities (e.g., IOC, RCRC, IGO/INGO), triggering an exception process prompting the applicant to upload additional documentation.
DNS Stability	Assess whether the applied-for string complies with DNS and other relevant standards, including compliance with the Root Zone Label Generation Rules and the technical requirements specified for gTLD strings.



String Validation Challenge

- ▶ If an applicant believes a string validation result was incorrect, they may file a **Pre-Submission String Validation Challenge** up to **14 calendar days before the application window closes**. ICANN's Challenge Panel must respond within **five calendar days**.



Information and Documents

Applications are comprised of three main sections:

SECTION 1 & 2

Organization and Financial Info

Core organizational entity and financial details required for all applicants when submitting their first application.

Includes:

- System Users
- Organization stakeholders and officers
- Entity information and documentation
- Financial information and documentation



Most documents must be in PDF format (5 MB limit)

SECTION 3

gTLD Application Information

Specific details for each application, including string information and operational plans.

Includes:

- Applied-for string and optional replacement string and variants
- Registry Service Provider selection / information
- Operational, technical, and program-specific responses
- Supporting documentation

Required Elements

- ❑ Answers to questions listed in "Application Questions" section of the 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook.
- ❑ Supporting documents as specified in documentation requirements.
- ❑ System validation of all mandatory fields before submission is allowed.

The **Application Questions Appendix** in the 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook details required questions and which responses and documents will be published publicly.

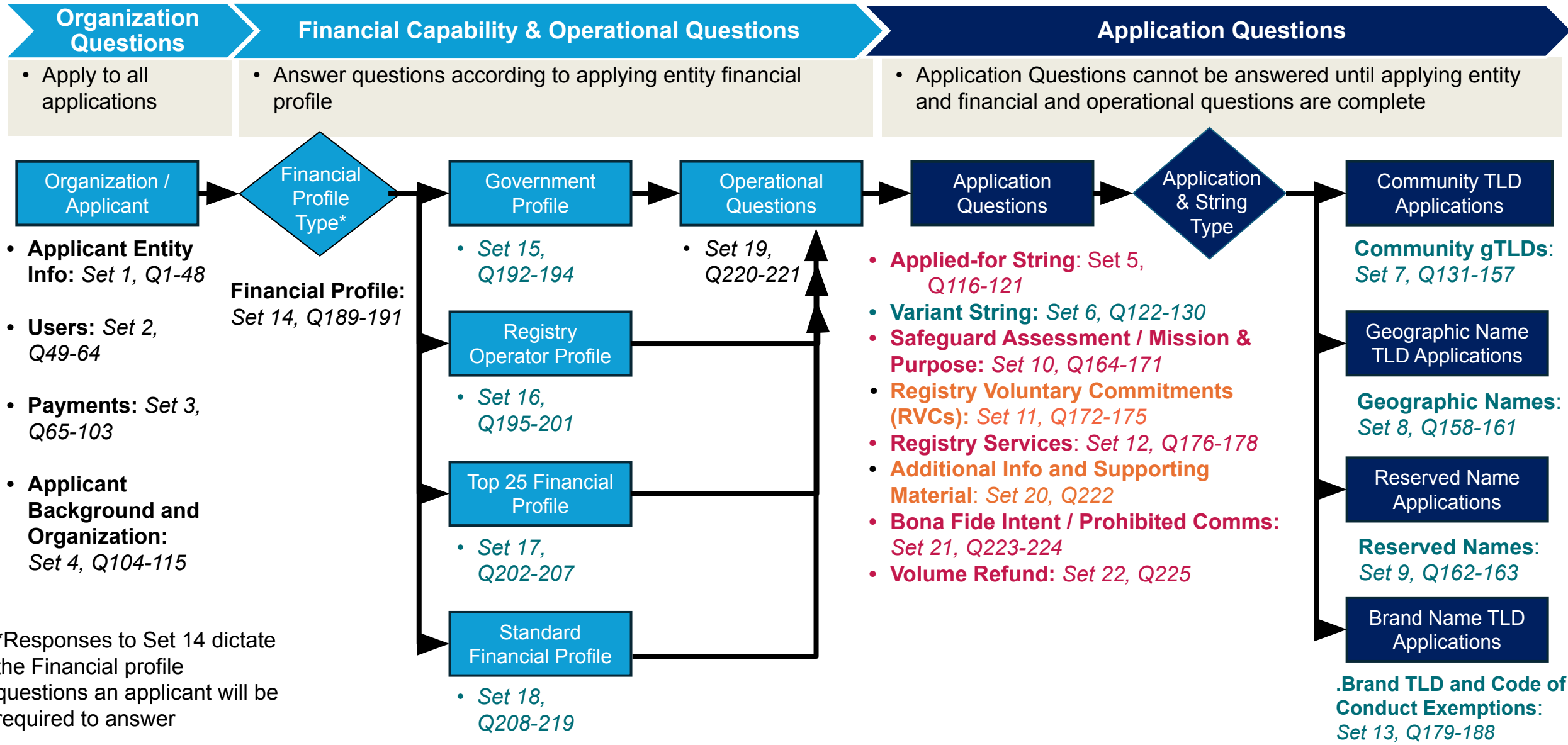
Application Question Flow

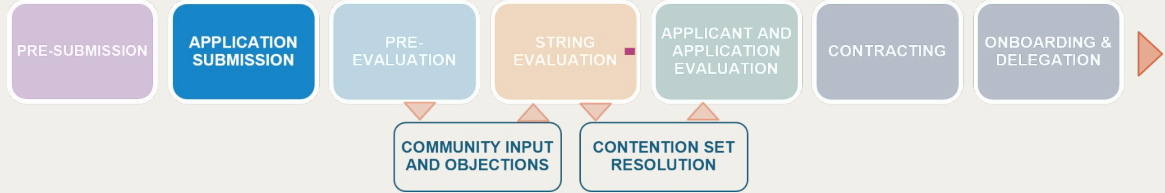
Black Font = Required Question Set for all applicants

Orange Font = Optional Question Set for all applications

Teal Font = Conditional Question Set required for specific applications or applicants

Raspberry Font = Required Question Set for all applications





Replacement Strings



Purpose

- As part of their applications, all applicants can designate a “Replacement String” alongside their original choice of string to help avoid contention before the list of applied-for strings is finalized.
- Although a separate application is required for the Replacement String, applicants will have the option to copy information from the original application into the Replacement String application.



Designating a Replacement String is suggested but not required.



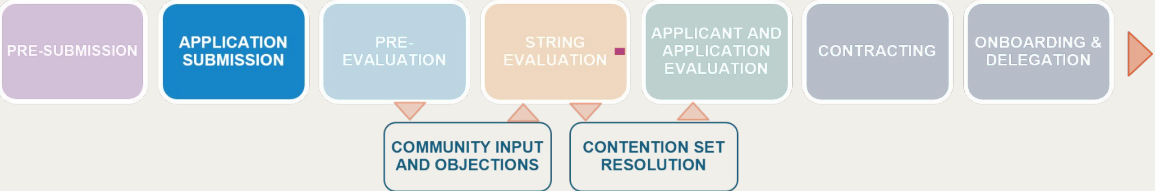
Process & Timing

- Applicants will be given 14 days following Reveal Day - the “Replacement Period” - to select their Replacement String in TAMS if they elect to replace their original string with their Replacement String, so long as it is not identical to the applied-for string or Replacement String of another applicant.

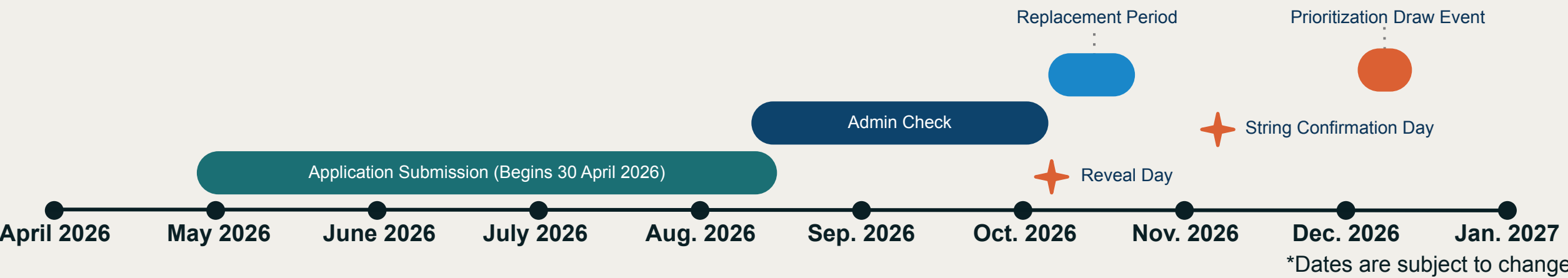


Considerations

- Applicants who opt for their Replacement String will be unable to revert to their original string and may still be placed in contention at a later stage of the application process.

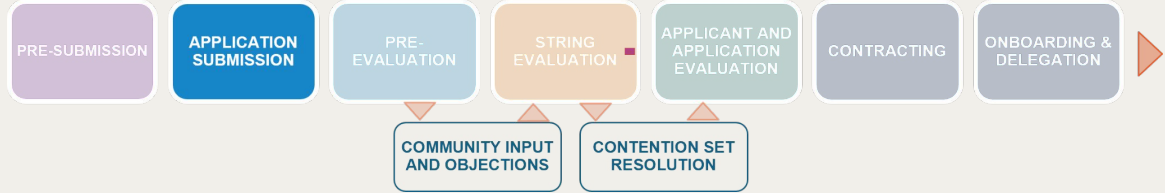


Application Submission and Pre-Evaluation Timeline*



Date	Milestone
30 Apr. 2026 – 12 Aug. (15 weeks)	gTLD Application submission period opens for application to be submitted via TAMS
19 Aug. 2026	Evaluation fee payment window closes seven days after the application submission period closes. If the applicant has not paid the gTLD evaluation fee by the end of the seven-day period, the application will generally not be processed any further and will be canceled .
Aug – Oct. 2026	Admin Check
Projected Oct. 2026	Reveal Day
Projected Oct.2026	Replacement Period - 14 days following Reveal day
Projected Nov. 2026	String Confirmation Day
Projected Dec. 2026	Prioritization Draw Event

*Dates TBD until application volume is known



What to Expect After Submission

After Submission

What to expect after submission:

- You'll receive an invoice for the evaluation fee.
- Administrative and completeness checks.
- Posting of public portions of application.
- Potential for requests for clarification or additional information.
- Evaluation phases begin.

TAMS After Submission

What you can do in TAMS after submission:

- View application status and updates.
- Submit permitted changes through formal processes.
- Create inquiries to ICANN and receive inquiries.
- Submit application change request.

What you can no longer do after submission:

- Organization and application information is locked for editing.

Communication with ICANN

Communication you can expect from ICANN:

- Notifications and messages delivered through TAMS.
- Requests for clarification or additional information.
- Status updates as the application progresses.
- Fee-related notices, including invoices and payment confirmations.
- Notifications related to evaluation results, including next steps.

03

Resources and Next Steps

Key applicant resources and next steps to stay informed and prepared throughout the 2026 application process

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

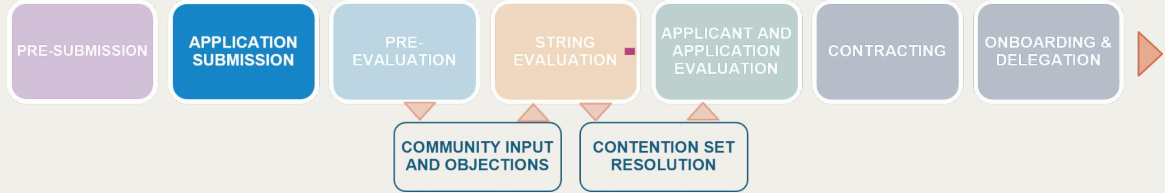
- Register for future webinars, or access recordings of past events.

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 and to the right. It is set against a light purple circular background. The word "Survey" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font inside the bubble.

Survey

gTLD

Thank you for your participation.

Visit us at <https://newgtldprogram.icann.org>



@icann



flickr.com/icann



facebook.com/icannorg



linkedin.com/company/icann



youtube.com/icannnews



instagram.com/icannorg

