

Access in ICANN's 2026 New gTLD Round



Applicant Support and a Pacific Island case study

Objective: Review how the 2026 New gTLD Round addresses access barriers, using Applicant Support data and the **Pacific as a case study**.

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Bali, Indonesia — October 2026

A new gTLD is not an ordinary domain registration

Ordinary domain registration

mycompany.com

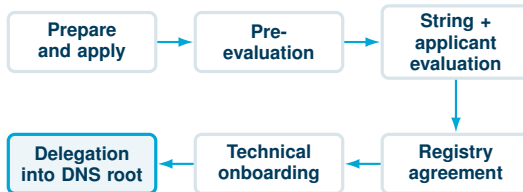
A name inside an existing TLD

New gTLD application

.mycompany

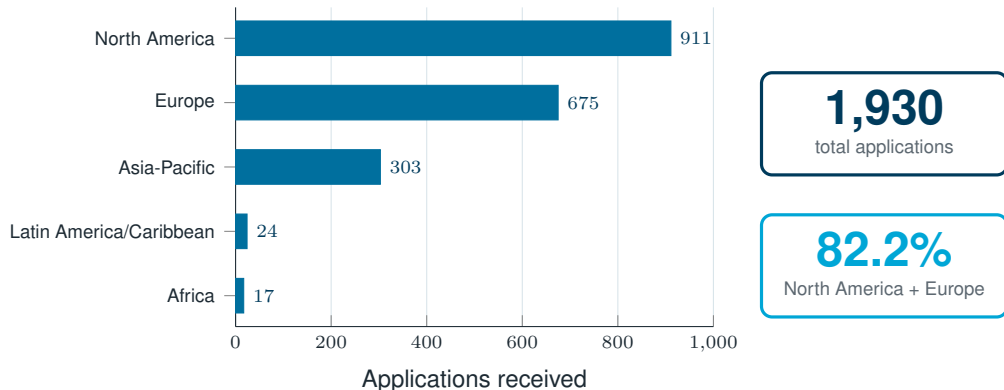
Apply to operate an entire
top-level namespace

Simplified 2026 applicant journey

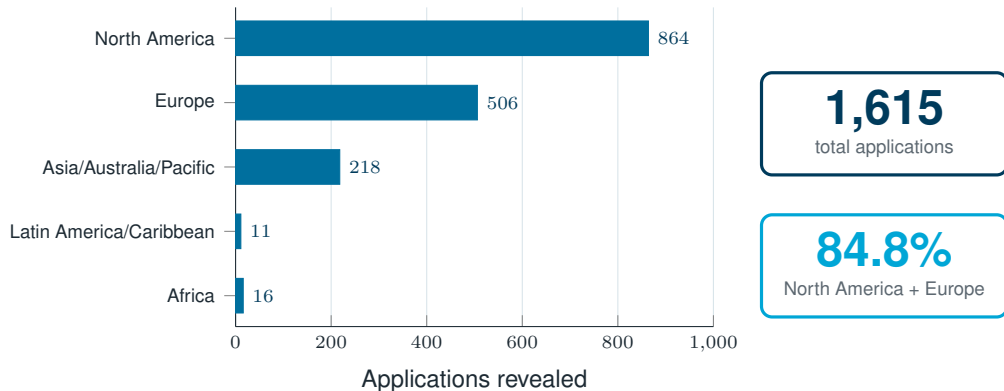


**Access requires financial, technical
and operational capability.**

The 2012 round was geographically concentrated



The 2026 round remains geographically concentrated



Applicant Support was strengthened to reduce barriers

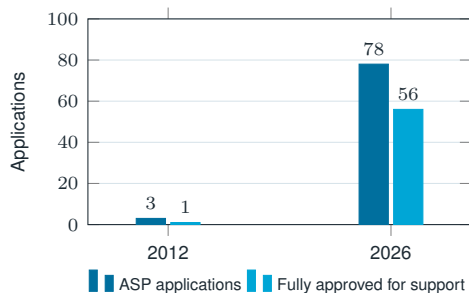
The CCT Review highlighted low participation from underserved regions.

Outreach + awareness

Capacity + assistance

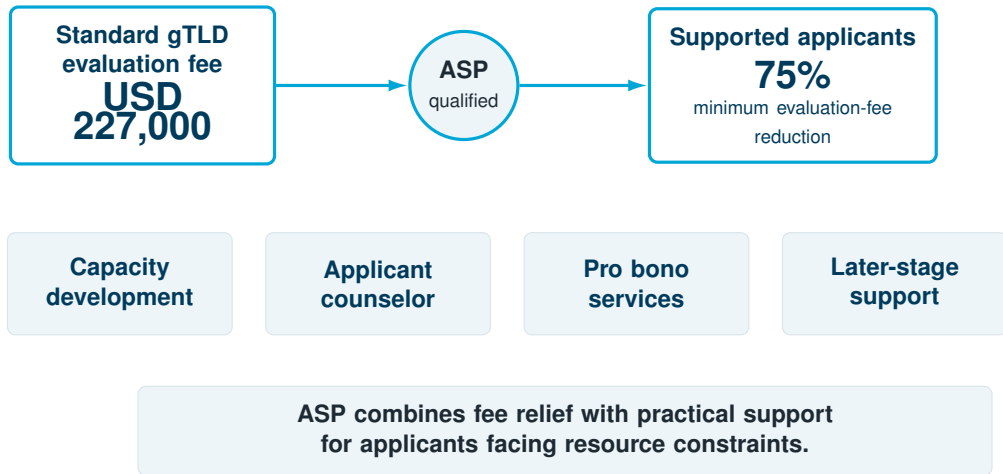
Financial access

Applicant Support Program uptake: 2012 vs 2026

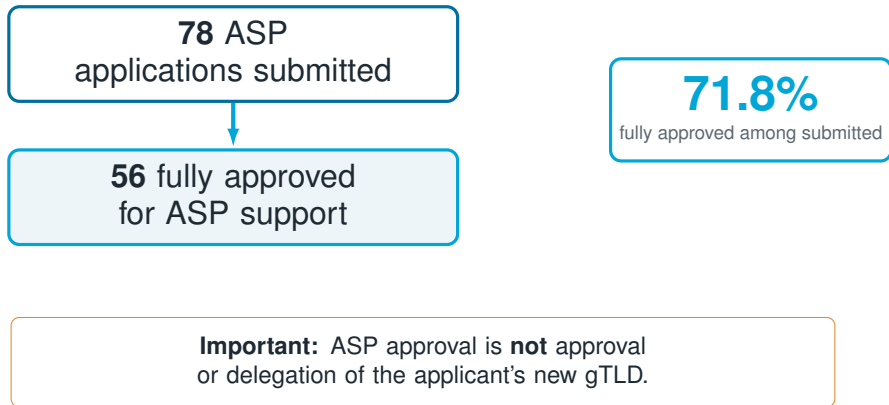


2012 and 2026 ASPs differed in design; figures compare **uptake**, not like-for-like success rates.

The 2026 ASP lowers financial and capability barriers

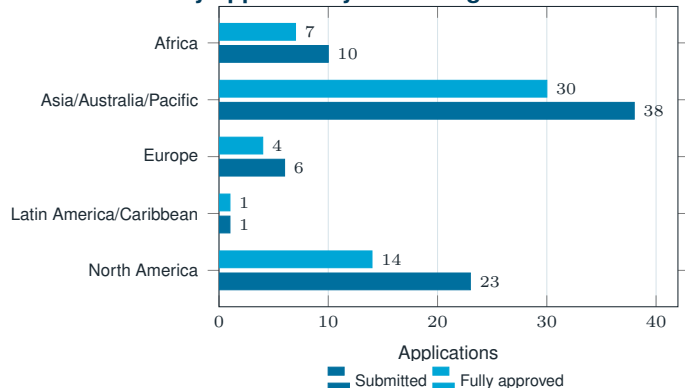


ASP uptake expanded substantially in 2026

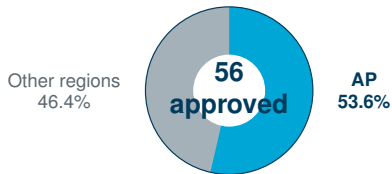


Regional ASP uptake was strongest in AP

Submitted vs fully approved by ICANN region

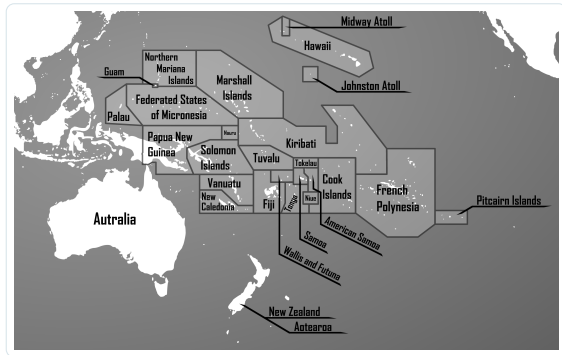


Share of 56 approved applicants



30 of 56 fully approved applicants were in AP.

Regional data can mask Pacific Island participation



Political map of the Pacific Islands region; Wikimedia Commons, CC0 1.0.

30 of 56
fully approved ASP
applicants were in
ICANN's broad AP region

AP is broad: Asia + Australia/New Zealand + Pacific Island countries.

Pacific participation requires country-level analysis.

What this says about the 2026 Round

Access
75%

minimum evaluation-fee reduction

Stronger financial + practical
support

Applicant Support
78

ASP applications

56 fully approved

51 applications flagged
for Applicant Support

Reveal Day
1,615

applications revealed

218 from AP

7 Oct. 2026

Pacific case study

Reveal Day now provides applicant-level public data.
Pacific Island participation can therefore be examined
more specifically.

Still too early for an outcome verdict

84.8% of applications are from North America + Europe.
Delegation outcomes remain ahead.

ASP uptake increased, while applications remain concentrated.
The next test is who succeeds and reaches delegation.

References

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