**Call for volunteers to join Cross-Community Working Group tasked to develop a proposal(s) for the mechanism that should be developed in order to allocate the New gTLD Auction Proceeds**

**In Brief**

The New gTLD Program (approved in 2011 established auctions as a mechanism of last resort to resolve string contention (when two or more applications are in direct contention). Most string contentions (approximately 90% of the competing application sets) have been resolved through other means, and never reach an auction conducted by ICANN's authorized auction service provider. For the others, however, they proceed to an ICANN-facilitated auction.

It was recognized from the outset that significant funds could accrue as a result of these ICANN-facilitated auctions of last resort. To date, over 230 million USD has been accrued. These auction proceeds have been reserved and earmarked until the ICANN Board authorizes a plan for the appropriate use of the funds. A Cross-Community Working Group (CCWG) is now being formed, and the CCWG will be tasked to develop a proposal(s) on the mechanism to allocate the new gTLD Auction Proceeds and the ICANN Board must consider the proposal. The CCWG will NOT make any recommendations or determinations with regards to specific funding decisions (i.e. which specific projects or organizations are to be funded or not).

Below you will find further information concerning the various ways you can participate and/or contribute to this effort as well as the expected time commitment.

**What the CCWG is tasked to do**

The CCWG is tasked with developing a proposal(s) for consideration by the Chartering Organizations (those ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees that have adopted the CCWG Charter) on the mechanism that should be developed in order to allocate the new gTLD Auction Proceeds. That proposal will then be submitted to the ICANN Board.

As part of this proposal, the CCWG is expected to factor in a number of [legal and fiduciary principles](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/58730906/May%202016%20-%20Note%20to%20Auction%20Proceeds%20Charter%20DT%20re%20legal%20and%20fiduciary%20principles-UPDATED.doc?version=1&modificationDate=1466697425839&api=v2), due diligence requirements that preserve ICANN’s tax-exempt status, as well as address matters such as potential or actual conflicts of interest. The CCWG will NOT make any recommendations or determinations with regards to specific funding decisions (i.e. which specific organizations or projects are to be funded or not).

The CCWG is required to, at minimum, to give appropriate consideration to and provide recommendations on the following questions[[1]](#footnote-1), taking into account the Guiding Principles as well as the legal and fiduciary constraints outlined in the charter:

1. What framework (structure, process and/or partnership) should be designed and implemented to allow for the disbursement of new gTLD Auction Proceeds?
2. What will be the limitations of fund allocation, factoring in that the funds need to be used in line with ICANN’s mission while at the same time recognising the diversity of communities that ICANN serves?
3. What safeguards are to be put in place to ensure that the creation of the framework, as well as its execution and operation, respect the legal and fiduciary constraints that have been outlined in this memo?
4. What aspects should be considered to define a timeframe, if any, for the funds allocation mechanism to operate as well as the disbursements of funds?
5. What conflict of interest provisions and procedures need to be put in place as part of this framework for fund allocations?
6. Should any priority or preference be given to organizations from developing economies, projects implemented in such regions and/or under-represented groups?
7. Should ICANN oversee the solicitation and evaluation of proposals, or delegate to or coordinate with another entity, including, for example, a foundation created for this purpose?
8. What aspects should be considered to determine an appropriate level of overhead that supports the principles outlined in this charter?
9. What is the governance framework that should be followed to guide distribution of the proceeds?
10. To what extent (and, if so, how) could ICANN, the Organization or a constituent part thereof, be the beneficiary of some of the auction funds?
11. Should a review mechanism be put in place to address possible adjustments to the framework following the completion of the CCWGs work and implementation of the framework should changes occur that affect the original recommendations?

As a first step, the CCWG is expected to (1) develop and adopt a work plan and an associated schedule of activity and (2) at a minimum, to publish an Initial Report for public comment followed by a Final Report, which will be submitted to the Chartering Organizations for their consideration. The ICANN Board will consider the report in its final decision-making and the Board has committed to enter into a dialogue with the CCWG if the Board does not believe that it can accept a recommendation.

For further details, please review the [CCWG Charter](https://community.icann.org/x/mRuOAw).

**How the CCWG will work**

The CCWG is expected to adhere to the following Guiding Principles, both in the context of its deliberations as well as the final recommendations:

* Ensure transparency & openness;
* Provide sufficient accountability;
* Ensure that processes and procedures are lean & effective;
* Take all appropriate measures to deal with conflicts of interest; and
* Deal with diversity issues.

ICANN WGs use transparent, open processes. As a result, the meetings of the CCWG will be recorded and transcribed, these recordings and transcriptions, together with the mailing list archives are publicly posted. The CCWG will collaborate using a public workspace for draft materials and all final work products and milestones will be documented on the [WG’s wiki](https://community.icann.org/x/yJXDAw).

**How to participate**

There are various ways to participate in this process and it is important that you give due consideration to the desired level of involvement as well as time commitment you are able to make :

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| **Level of involvement** | **Expected time commitment[[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Requirements** |
| Individual participant | 2-4 hours per week for at least 1 year (weekly conference calls + preparation time) | Complete Statement of Interest as well as Declaration of Intention |
| Mailing List Observer | 1-2 hours (review of mailing list) | None. |
| Respond to public consultation | 2-4 hours – per public comment opportunity (Time required to review materials and provide input). | None. |

* **Individual participants**– anyone interested can volunteer to join the CCWG as a participant, regardless of whether they are members of any ICANN SO or AC or have been active participants in ICANN. Participants are expected to actively contribute to mailing list conversations as well as meetings – it is anticipated that the CCWG will at a minimum meet on a weekly basis via teleconference. Participants are expected to provide essential input to the process. Participants will be required to provide a Statement of Interest ([SOI](https://community.icann.org/display/gnsosoi/New+SOIs)) as well as a Declaration of Intention ([include link when available]. Note, an intention to apply for these funds following the completion of the CCWG work will not preclude individuals and/or organizations from participating in the CCWG, but these intentions need to be declared as part of the CCWG transparency and accountability requirements.
* **Mailing list observers** – for those who are merely interested in monitoring the CWG's conversations, there is the possibility to sign up as a mailing list "observer" which offers read-only access to the mailing list. Mailing list observers will not be permitted to post, will not receive invitations to the various meetings or calls of the WG and will not have to complete a Statement of Interest. At any point in time, an observer can request to switch status to participant or visa versa.
* **Public Consultation Respondent** – In addition, there will be opportunities to provide input through public consultations and public comment processes that the CCWG is expected to organize throughout its deliberations.

In addition to participants and observers, there will also be members appointed by each Chartering Organization (CO) (a minimum of two and a maximum of five per CO). In addition to participating in the deliberations in the same manner as other participants, CO appointed members are expected to serve as a liaison between their respective Chartering Organization and the CCWG. Members must, if and when necessary, ensure that the Chartering Organizations are kept up to date on the progress and deliberations of the CCWG as well as sharing any input from the Chartering Organization with the CCWG.

**How to Join**

If you are interested in joining the CCWG as an individual participant or mailing list observer, please fill in the sign up form [link to be included] or send the Word document [link to be included] filled in to the [GNSO Secretariat](mailto:gnso-secs@icann.org). Following that you will receive further instructions on how to complete your Statement of Interest and Declaration of Intention.

All members and observers will be listed on the CCWG's wiki page.

**Next steps**

In addition to this call for volunteers, Chartering Organizations are also in the process of identifying their respective members to this effort, each according to their own processes. It is the expectation that the WG will convene for its first meeting during the week of 23 January. Following that, regular online meetings will be scheduled in accordance with the CCWG's work plan and schedule.

**Further information and preparation**

For those interested in volunteering for this effort, you are strongly encouraged to review the following materials prior to the first meeting of the CCWG:

* The [new gTLD Auction Proceeds CCWG Charter](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/59644825/CCWG%20Auction%20Proceeds%20-%20clean%20-%20FINAL%20Charter%20-%209%20September%202016.docx?version=1&modificationDate=1473434952000&api=v2)
* [Slides from new gTLD Auction proceeds](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/58730906/new%20gTLD%20Auction%20Proceeds%20-%20Slides%20-%2012%20October%202016.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1476375111000&api=v2) drafting team presentation 12 October 2016
* The [New gTLD Auction Proceeds discussion paper](https://gnso.icann.org/en/drafts/new-gtld-auction-proceeds-07dec15-en.pdf) (7 Dec 2015)
* Additional materials available at the [CWG’s wiki](https://community.icann.org/x/yJXDAw).

**Background**

In March 2015 that the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) started discussing a possible process for facilitating the conversation around new gTLD auction proceeds during the [ICANN meeting in Singapore](https://singapore52.icann.org/en/schedule/sat-gnso-working/transcript-cwg-new-gtld-auction-07feb15-en). As part of that discussion, it became clear that there was interest from the GNSO to commence formal conversations on the topic of new gTLD auction proceeds and following which, the GNSO Council reached out to other ICANN Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs) to determine whether there would be interest to form a cross-community working group (CCWG) on this topic.

Following a number of sessions on this topic during the ICANN53 in Buenos Aires (see <https://buenosaires53.icann.org/en/schedule/mon-soac-high-interest> and <https://buenosaires53.icann.org/en/schedule/wed-cwg-new-gtld-auction>), a [discussion paper](http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/auctions/proceeds/discussion-paper-07sep15-en.pdf) was published in September 2015 to solicit further community input on this topic as well as the proposal to proceed with a CCWG on this topic. As the feedback received on the discussion paper confirmed the support for moving forward with a CCWG, James Bladel, GNSO Chair, reached out to all the ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees to ask for volunteers to participate in a drafting team to develop a charter for a CCWG on this topic. All ICANN SO/ACs, apart from the ccNSO, responded to this request and have put forward volunteers to participate in the drafting team. The Drafting Team (‘DT’), commenced its deliberations on Tuesday 23 February 2016. A draft charter for community discussion was published in advance of ICANN 56 and discussed during the [cross-community session](http://sched.co/7NE0) held at ICANN56. Following ICANN56, the DT [reviewed all the input received](https://community.icann.org/x/fgmbAw) and updated the proposed charter accordingly. On 13 September, [this proposed charter](https://community.icann.org/x/mRuOAw) was shared with all ICANN SO/ACs with the request to review it and identify any pertinent issues that would prevent adoption of the charter, if any. Subsequently, a webinar was held on 13 October to allow for some additional time and information to undertake this review. As no pertinent issues were identified, the proposed charter was submitted for adoption by the ICANN SO/ACs prior to the ICANN meeting in Hyderabad. To date, the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), ASO (Address Supporting Organization), ccNSO (Country Code Supporting Organization) and GNSO have adopted the charter with other groups expected to follow.

1. Note, these questions have been reflected here in abbreviated format – to review the full questions, please see the CCWG Charter. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The CCWG will determine its own work plan and schedule so these estimations are based on the experience with previous CCWGs. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)