

BC response to [GNSO Guidance Process for Applicant Support Guidance Recommendation Initial Report](#)

Section 1: Affiliation: ICANN Business Constituency (BC)

This response was drafted by Vivek Goyal with edits from Steve DelBianco and David Snead.
It was approved in accordance with the BC Charter

Section 2: Preliminary Guidance Recommendations Relating to Tasks 3, 4, and 5

Guidance Recommendation 1: *Please refer to page 11 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 1: Increase awareness of the Applicant Support Program of the next round of gTLD applications among those who may need and could qualify for support.

Implementation Guidance: Target potential applicants from the not-for-profit sector, social enterprises and/or community organizations from under-served and developing regions and countries.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 1: [single select, optional]

- Support Recommendation as written
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- **Significant change required: changing intent and wording**
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

If you support the intent of Guidance Recommendation 1 but think it requires a wording change, please provide your revised wording and reason here. [open ended response, optional]

The Applicant Support Program (ASP) is a great initiative by ICANN to bring forth increased diversity in the next round of gTLDs. Its aim is to enable applicants that might, without support, be unable to successfully participate in the next round.

It is unfortunate that the program communication is considering specifically to NOT focus on businesses, even as there is no restriction on who may apply for support.

Businesses come in all shapes and sizes from across the world, from a one-woman entrepreneur to a multi-billion dollar enterprise. It is unfair to group all of them under one umbrella of "for-profit" and to exclude them from communications targeting plans. There are businesses all over the world that work hard to uplift the community that they operate in and can significantly benefit from a brand TLD or a generic TLD to further spread their message and impact more lives positively. Moreover, these businesses may be as resource-constrained as other entities that are specifically targeted for

communications, even though they may provide the same benefits to an underserved community.

For example, consider this small business that makes a big difference in the community they represent - [Two Blind Brothers](#) is a comfort clothing company created by two visually impaired brothers, and 100% of the company's profits go towards funding research to cure retinal eye disease. Customers can browse and purchase individual items or "shop blind" and purchase mystery boxes without seeing the products—much like the people they are supporting.

ICANN org suggested that the Applicant Support Program should not limit communications and outreach to particular regions for applicant support. Instead, the intent is to seek potential applicants that would qualify from all regions, while emphasizing that more attention should be paid to under-served regions.

We recommend that the communication for the ASP should be inclusive and should aim to reach as many people and organizations as possible without specifically excluding any group, country, or region based on their assumed capability to participate in this program without help.

One of the quantitative metrics for success for the "COMMUNICATIONS And OUTREACH/AWARENESS" is conversion rate. We would be setting up the communication program to fail if we are more concerned with whom NOT to focus on as compared to focusing on all possible and relevant opportunities for creating a more diverse applicant pool.

The second round of new gTLD expansion is an immense opportunity for every organization and every one should be allowed to benefit from it – including businesses. The decision to grant support is based on a robust methodology and by specifically excluding one type of organizations from targeted communications is a significant flaw in this program.

Therefore, our recommendation is to reword the Implementation Guidance as follows
"Target all potential applicants from the not-for-profit sector, social enterprises and/or community diverse organizations from under-served and developing regions and countries."

Guidance Recommendation 2: *Please refer to page 14 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 2: That the Applicant Support Program has cultivated pro bono services as well as ICANN-provided information and services to be available for supported applicants to inform their gTLD applications; that ICANN will communicate the availability of pro bono services and the parameters in which they are offered to potential supported applicants; and that supported applicants report that they found the information and services offered by pro bono providers to be useful.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 2: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Additional comment:

The ASP states that support requested by the applicants does not necessarily have to be financial. It could be technical, educational or even language support for those businesses that may be a valid applicant but need understanding the application and help with filing the required form. Even small support such as hand-holding during the application program and pointing out relevant resources could be beneficial for many who are not familiar with ICANN or the first round of gTLD expansion.

Guidance Recommendation 3: *Please refer to page 16 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 3: That the Applicant Support Program has the necessary resources to achieve its goals based on the GGP Guidance Recommendation Report.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 3: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Guidance Recommendation 4: *Please refer to page 17 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 4: Make application materials and the application process timely and accessible to a diverse set of potential applicants, with the aim of facilitating successful applications in the Applicant Support Program among those who may need and could qualify for support.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 4: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Guidance Recommendation 5: *Please refer to pages 18–19 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 5: Of all successfully delegated gTLD applications, the goal is that a certain percentage of them should be from supported applicants.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 5: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Guidance Recommendation 6: *Please refer to page 20 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 6: ICANN org to investigate the extent to which supported applicants that were awarded a gTLD are still in business as a registry operator after three years.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 6: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Section 3: Preliminary Guidance Recommendations Relating to Task 6

Guidance Recommendation 7: *Please refer to page 23 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 7: In the scenario that there is inadequate funding for all qualified applicants in the Applicant Support Program, the recommended methodology for allocating financial support should be for ICANN org to allocate limited funding by way of fee reduction equally across all qualified applicants, while not hindering the efficiency of the process. In this context the working group agreed to assume, for the sake of equity, that one application equaled one string. This recommendation is made in the context of no additional funding being made

available, however the group recommends that ICANN org, as a high priority, makes every effort to provide additional funding so that all successful applicants are supported.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 7: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Guidance Recommendation 8: *Please refer to page 24 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 8: To mitigate the risk that the allocation of support under the Applicant Support Program could be diluted to the point of being unhelpful, ICANN org should designate a minimum level of support each qualified applicant must receive, and develop a plan if funding drops below that level.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 8: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Guidance Recommendation 9: *Please refer to page 25 of the Initial Report.*

Recommendation 9: ICANN org should develop a flexible, predictable, and responsive Applicant Support Program to transparently communicate the results of the evaluation process and allow applicants to know about their range of support allocation as early as possible.

Please indicate your response to Guidance Recommendation 9: [single select, optional]

- **Support Recommendation as written**
- Support Recommendation intent with wording change
- Significant change required: changing intent and wording
- Do not support Recommendation
- No opinion

Section 4: Other Comments and Submission

Are there any issues pertaining to Tasks 3, 4, 5, and/or 6 that the GGP Team has not considered? See the list of tasks on pages 3–4 of the Initial Report. *Note that issues not addressed by these tasks are out of scope of this GGP working group.* If yes, please provide details below. [open ended response, optional]

Other comments:

Are there any other comments or issues you would like to raise pertaining to the Initial Report? If yes, please provide your comments here. If applicable, please specify the section or page number in the Initial Report to which your comments refer. [open ended response, optional]