Applicant Support Program

ICANN

GDS Briefing for the GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) on Applicant Support

19 December 2022

1. Brief Background from 2012 Round

Applicant Support Program Background (2012 Round)

Background
- GNSO Implementation Guideline N: "ICANN may put in place a fee reduction scheme for gTLD applicants from economies classified by the UN as least developed"
- Joint SO-AC New gTLD Applicant Support Working Group published underlined final report in September 2011. Working group recommended financial and non-financial support via:
  - Financial assistance via New gTLD Application Fee reduction
  - Pro-bono services (Applicant Support Directory)
  - Establishment of funding mechanism for the Program
- Board approved in December 2011 and directed ICANN org to implement. The Board approved reduction of the application fee from $185,000 to $47,000. The financial assistance element of the Applicant Support program was made possible via a $2,000,000 fund set aside by the Board.

Support Application Review Panel (SARP)
- Working Group recommended that Support Application Review Panel (SARP) should be established to review applications. It further recommended that the SARP should be composed of volunteers (from the ICANN community and outside experts). Consistent with this recommendation, on 3 February 2012, ICANN issued a request for expressions of interest to serve on the SARP. ICANN received 8 applications and the panel chosen consisted of 5 members.

Financial Assistance Handbook and Criteria
- A handbook (published January 2012) was developed to assist those requiring reduced evaluation fees for the New gTLD Program. It provided a step-by-step guide to applying for financial support, including information on critical deadlines, criteria, process and evaluation.

Applicant Support Program Background (2012 Round)

Applicants seeking support were reviewed against three main criteria:
- **Public Interest Benefit:** offer demonstrable benefit to the public or suitable community group
- **Financial Need:** lack sufficient financial resources to pay for application fees or otherwise execute their projects
- **Financial Capabilities**: able to manage funds and execute project if successful
    - Per the handbook, Applicants that do not meet the threshold criteria for financial assistance are excluded from the Program. However, those that meet the criteria for need and public benefit could pay the remaining fee and proceed in the Program.
    - There was no appeals mechanism.

Results from 2012
- There were only **three applicants** in the Applicant Support Program:
    - .KIDS (Dot Kids Foundation)
    - .IDN (Nameshop)
    - .UMMAH (Ummah Digital Ltd).
- Results were initially released on 12 March 2013; however, following community feedback that the results were not sufficiently transparent, they were updated on 20 March 2013 with additional information.
- **Only one applicant prevailed** and met the three criteria: .KIDS (Dot Kids Foundation).

2. Questions and Discussion