

NEW gTLD PROGRAM: NEXT ROUND

gTLD

Applicant Support Program and update

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#PacNOG34, Apia
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Agenda

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02 Becoming a Registry Operator

03 Applicant Support Program (ASP)

04 Outreach, Engagement and Communications Approach

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Overview of the New gTLD Program: Next Round

The New gTLD Program

The **New Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Program** is a community-driven initiative to enable the continued expansion of the Domain Name System.

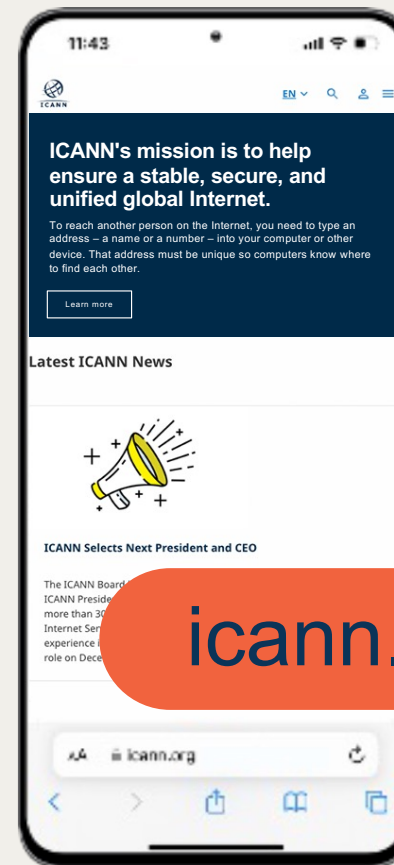
Beginning in 2026, businesses, communities, governments, and other organizations can apply for new gTLDs tailored to fit their needs.



What is a gTLD?

Top-level domains form the last part of a domain name, appearing after the dot. For example, in the domain name **icann.org**, the characters 'org' identify the TLD.

Through the 2012 New gTLD Program, more than 1,200 new unique names like **.trade** and **.vegas** were added to the Internet.



New Domain Names, New Uses

- ▶ Serve diverse cultural, geographic, language, and professional communities.
- ▶ Provide communities and organizations opportunity to create their own space online.
- ▶ Build trust in and awareness of a brand.
- ▶ Manage and secure your online presence.

EXAMPLES:

- Industry-specific: **.photography**, **.rugby**, **.bank**
- Creative tools: **playlist.new**, **doc.new**
- Location-based: **.durban**, **.nyc**
- Script-based: **.网址**, **.شبكة**
- Brands: **.google**, **.apple**
- Online identity: **.blog**

gTLD Opportunities

Connect and serve new groups:



Businesses and brands



Communities and cultures



Geographies
(e.g., cities and regions)



Governments – local and national - and IGOs



Targeted customers or members



Users of diverse scripts

Benefits of Operating a gTLD



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Becoming a Registry Operator

Becoming a Registry Operator



Applying for a gTLD means you are applying to operate a piece of the Internet (a registry).



A registry supports all the domains registered under a particular gTLD.

A Registry Operator:

- ▶ Sets the requirements for the gTLD.
- ▶ Determines which second-level domains (the characters to the left of the dot) can be registered, and by whom.

Financial and Technical Considerations

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expected evaluation fee: **US \$227,000**

- + Standard operational fees included in the Registry Agreement signed with ICANN
- + Ongoing financial and technical obligations

*Fees subject to change

**Exceptions may apply for eligible applicants



Applying for a new gTLD requires significant financial and technical resources.



All new gTLD applicants must be able to demonstrate the operational, technical, and financial capacities necessary to operate a registry and comply with contractual requirements.

Responsibilities of Registry Operators



Registry operators:

- Maintain master database of all domain names registered in the TLD.
- Generate the "zone file" that allows computers to route Internet traffic to and from TLDs anywhere in the world.



Responsibilities include:

- Manage requirements detailed in the Registry Agreement and ICANN policies.
- Convert domain names into IP addresses to enable routing of Internet traffic.
- Operate the technical aspects of the TLD.

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Applicant Support Program (ASP)

Applicant Support Program (ASP)



- **Makes applying for a gTLD more accessible** to entities that are interested, but unable to apply because of a lack of financial or other resources.
- **Provides financial and nonfinancial assistance** to qualified, eligible entities:
 - access to volunteer professional services
 - capacity development
 - reductions in gTLD evaluation fees

Applicant Support Program

Applying for a gTLD is expensive and may be out of reach for many. The Applicant Support Program makes applying for a new gTLD more accessible to entities that are unable to because of financial and other resource constraints.

Candidates must be one of these types of entities:



**Nonprofit,
Nongovernmental,
and charitable
organizations**



**Intergovernmental
organizations**



**Indigenous/
tribal peoples'
organizations**



**Micro and small
businesses that
are social
enterprises or
that operate in a
less-developed
economy**

Criteria for Applicant Support

To be eligible for assistance through the Applicant Support Program, applicants must demonstrate:

- ✓ General business due diligence
- ✓ Public responsibility due diligence
- ✓ Financial need
- ✓ Financial viability
- ✓ Eligible entity status

Applicant Support Portfolio

The Applicant Support Program provides a range of financial and nonfinancial assistance to qualified, eligible entities.



Financial Support

- ▶ A 75-85% reduction in applicable gTLD evaluation fees
- ▶ Bid credit
- ▶ Reduced/waived base registry operator fees



Nonfinancial Support

- ▶ Training materials: applying for a gTLD, becoming a Registry Operator
- ▶ Capacity Development/ Mentorship Program
- ▶ Access to an Applicant Counselor
- ▶ List of volunteer professional service providers

Evaluating Support Applicants

PHASE 1

General business due diligence, including:

- ▶ Legal compliance check.
- ▶ Confirming that all required documentation has been submitted.
- ▶ Confirming the applicant meets eligibility criteria for New gTLD Program: Next Round.
- ▶ Background screening and cybersquatting history check.



Applicants that do not pass the general business due-diligence pre-screening will not be considered for Phase 2 evaluation.

Evaluating Support Applicants

PHASE 2

Evaluations conducted by third-party vendor managing a Support Applicant Review Panel:

▶ **Public responsibility due diligence:**

- Applicant does not trade in, produce, or promote an industry/string contrary to generally accepted legal norms of morality and public order.
- Applicant is not affiliated.

▶ **Financial need:**

- Applicant could not afford to apply to the New gTLD Program without financial hardship.

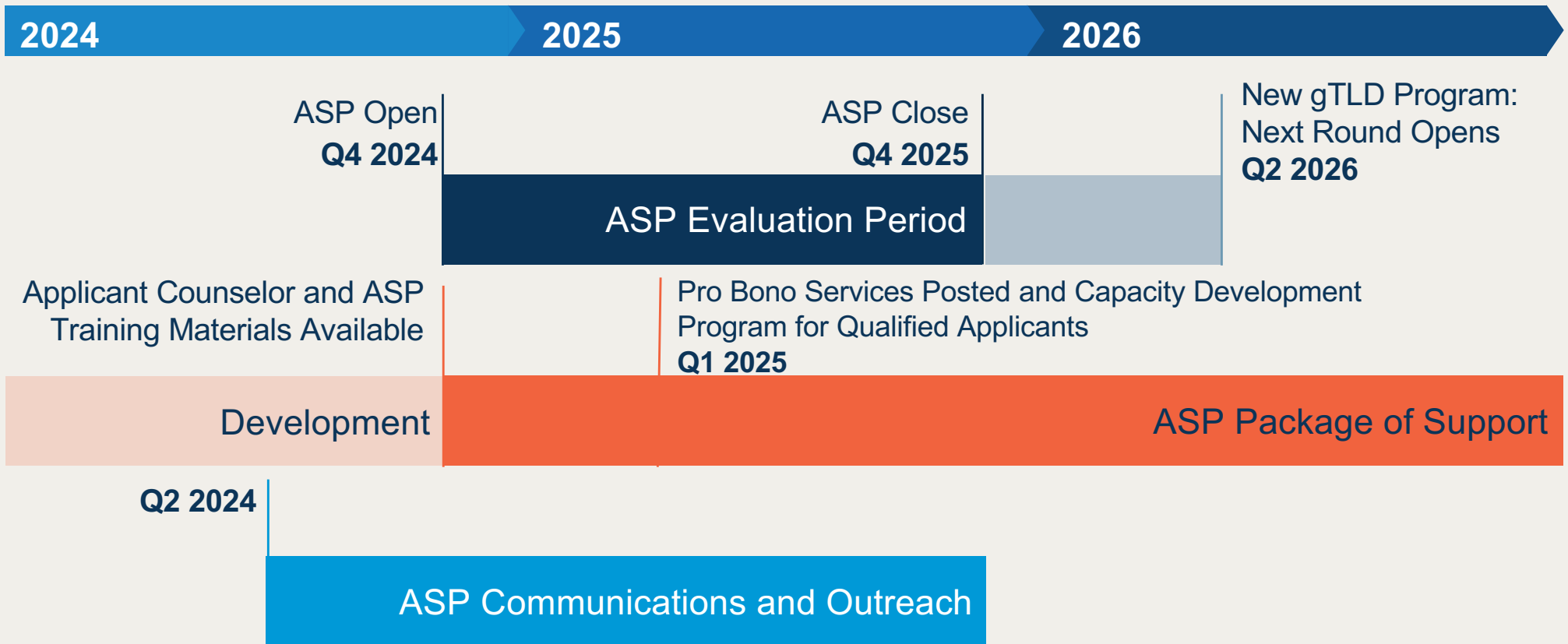
▶ **Financial viability:**

- Applicant demonstrates plan to cover remaining discounted portion of the base gTLD application fee and submits required deposit.



An approved entity that passes both phases may qualify for support.

ASP Timeline and Package of Support



Pre-Application Content

Content for **prospective applicants** has been developed to support the decision-making process prior to submitting an ASP Application.

ASP Quick-Start Guide

ASP Applicant Checklist

ASP Application System User Guide



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Outreach, Engagement and Communications Approach

Regional Approach with Focus on ASP

- **Focus entirely on the ASP** through opening of the application window.
- Target ASP-eligible entities in **underrepresented geographies** (regional and country-specific).
- Regional VPs work toward country and region-based **targeting** matrices.
- Regional VPs leverage and **collaborate** with ICANN community to identify and reach targets.
- **Communications support**: Champions Toolkit, media campaigns, social media, webinars, blogs, etc.

Communications

We build awareness and promote participation in the New gTLD Next Round Program through the **creation, publication and distribution of key messaging** for the community and more broadly on a global scale.

ICANN and Next Round Websites:

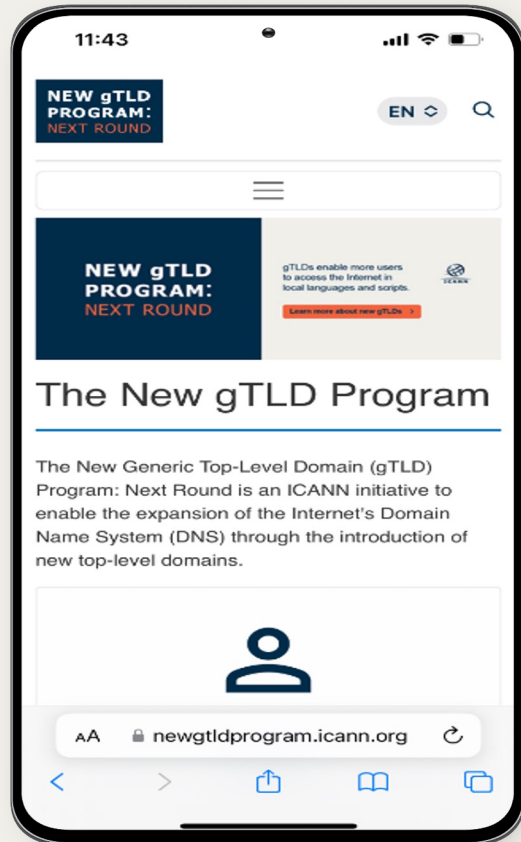
- Announcements and Blogs
- FAQs, Fact Sheets and Toolkits

Traditional Media

Social Media: Paid and Organic:

Emails: Regional Updates and Resources





Stay Informed:

Mailing List: nextroundinfo@icann.org

General inquiries: globalsupport@icann.org

Updates and news:
<https://newgtdprogram.icann.org>

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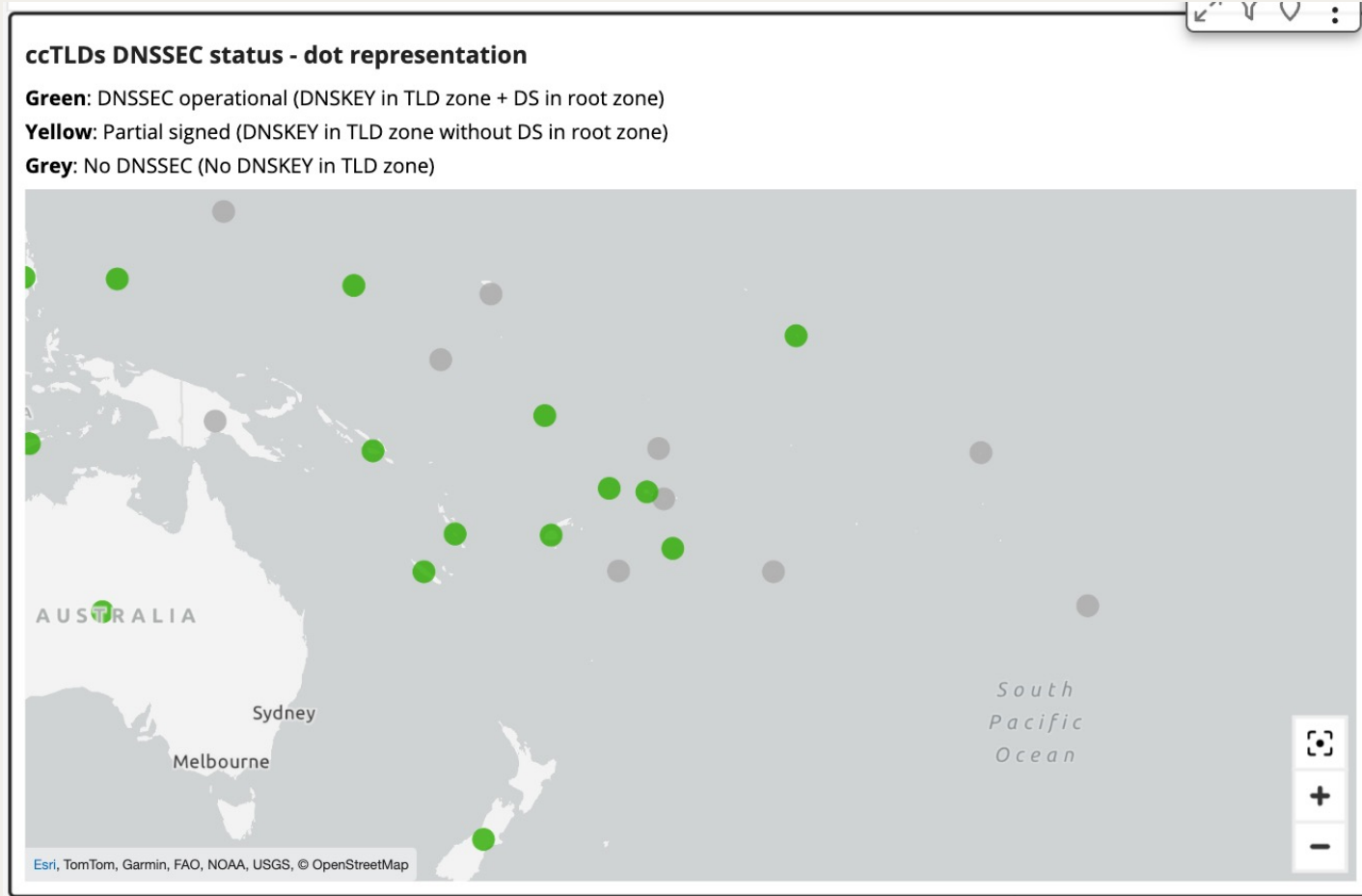
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Secure DNS in the Pacific

Let's secure the DNS ecosystem in the Pacific

- Practice security hygiene
- Perform your network Self-Assessment via KINDNS, <https://kindns.org/>
- Implement **DNSSEC zone signing** and **DNSSEC Validation**
- As an ISP, consider hosting Anycast Root-server Instance (contact Root-server operators)
- ccTLD Manager: Keep IANA Whois current
- Collaborate; request capacity development opportunities
- Participate in ICANN meetings – open to anyone interested
- Participate in processes that could impact the Internet: UN IGF and WSIS+20 review, local legislation proposals and consultations

ccTLD DNSSEC Status in Oceania



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gTLD

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