
ICANN84 | AGM – GDS: Subsequent Procedures IRT (1 of 6)
Saturday, October 25, 2025 – 9:00 to 10:00 IST

ELISA BUSETTO

Hi everybody and welcome to meeting number 160 of the Sub-Priority on 25th of October 2025 at 08:00 UTC which is 9 a.m. local time. I'm Elisa and I'm the remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and The ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

If you would like to speak during this session please raise your hand in zoom alongside participants who use a physical microphone to please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. Note that this session was repurposed to be an open community briefing session on Applicant Guidebook topics and attendance of IRT members will therefore not be tracked. And I will hand the floor over to Jared.

JARED ERWIN

Thanks, Elisa. Hi everyone, good morning, good to see you all and welcome to the first of several sessions of the IRT, the SubPro IRT. I think the slides are coming up. So, yes, this is for the Subsequent Procedures Implementation Review Team Meeting #160. We have a few sessions scheduled. You can see on the screen there that the goal of these sessions is to focus more on providing an overview of the AGB for the community.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

So, this is open to anyone. This isn't a regular working meeting per se. So, we're just going to be reviewing kind of the highlights of the AGB and answering any questions that anyone might have. We're not expecting or shouldn't be making any more substantive changes to the AGB at this point. We have also published the full AGB on the wiki. We published it on Wednesday, Thursday the 23rd and you can see the link there on the slide. Any other opening things?

LARS HOFFMANN

We'll put a link. So, we all know that the IRT members that are here, you're going to be spending some time on Facebook, you're going to do some googling. So, instead of that, right, I mean we've all been at ICANN meetings, let's not kid ourselves. I would really appreciate if some of you were to click on the link I'm going to post to vote on the poll that we have.

We had only three submissions so far and I feel we can do slightly better than that. That's what I'm saying. That'd be great. We brought medals and everything. So, gold stars only Dan Halloran gives us out. So, we don't have authority to do that. But I'll post the link in a moment. Thanks.

JARED ERWIN

Thanks Lars. Okay, so for the agenda today, we're focusing today on the session on the Applicant Journey. So, looking at a brief overview of the full application lifecycle. Then a little bit more

detail on the phase of submission to prioritization. Then string evals, contention, application evaluations, Applicant Evaluations, contracting, and then community input, objections, and appeals. And we have several folks from the Next Round team from the ICANN staff side to walk us through those different areas. Jeff, is your hand up? Yeah, go ahead.

JEFF NEUMAN

Thanks. This is Jeff Neuman. I always have to be early on and first, right? Now it just says on the slide that it was published on the 23rd. When you say published, what, where, and how, and is it like an ICANN announcement or is that to us?

JARED ERWIN

Yeah, so maybe posted is a better term, but it's been posted on the wiki, the IRT wiki, and we can share the link for that.

JEFF NEUMAN

Okay, I just thought that meant it was published for the community. Okay, no, sorry.

LARS HOFFMANN

Just to clarify, Jeff, so the version that is posted is the version that we expect, I'm going to say, the Board to adopt on Thursday. As you know, there is the DRSP rules that are still missing, so therefore it's not the finalized guidebook that is published. We'll make an announcement if the Board does approve it as soon as the

resolution is published to make sure that everybody knows the guidebook is out with the caveat that that bit is missing.

And as soon as we have it, then we'll post and publish the final guidebook in its final version, if that makes sense. So, therefore, it's not going to be on the ICANN website. We don't want to have people download that, think it's the final, final, and when, in fact, a little bit is missing. And obviously, the other item is the IGO, INGO issue that's with the council still. So, those two items are standing there. I hope that makes sense.

JARED ERWIN

All right, and it looks like Alexander posted the link in the chat, so thank you for that. All right, I think we're ready to move to the first section. I'm going to walk us through the Applicant Journey Overview. So, kind of some level setting basics here for who can apply. That is legal entities such as corporations, organizations, institutions, as well as governmental, non-governmental, and intergovernmental entities.

They can apply for a New gTLD. This is, of course, not individuals, but legal entities. When starting in April 2026 for 12 to 15 weeks, the fee there is \$227,000, plus any conditional fees where applicable, depending on application or string type. We'll get into some of that a little bit later. And then how will this be done? Through the TLD application management system, or TAMS, as we call it. Applications will be submitted and managed through that

system. And Anne, sorry, I'm not looking at the chat as much. Jeff, is that an old hand or new hand? So, Anne, please go ahead.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE

I know you've probably said this before, but on the 12 to 15 weeks, do we know when that will be decided, whether it's 12 or 15, or when it would be decided?

LARS HOFFMANN

It's a third issue that we'll have in the final guidebook, so we're working on that. And when we post the final version, we expect it to be late November, early December, that'll have the dates in there as well.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE

Thank you.

LARS HOFFMANN

And I'm going to contact someone to see if we get some chairs in here.

JARED ERWIN

Thanks, Lars and Merika, too. Okay. And I'm assuming that's your old hand still. Yeah, okay. Just making sure there wasn't a follow-up. Okay. Next slide, please. So, here, it's a bit hard to see on the screen there, but this is the full application life cycle.

At the top there, you can see that's where it starts, application submission period through string confirmation day, and then you move down to the lower parts, the bigger part from string confirmation day through string evaluation, prioritization draw, community input, and then over to contention, if applicable, and then application Applicant Evaluation, and the different contention resolution mechanisms.

Again, we're going to talk through all of these different parts, so this is just for high-level overview, and this is also in the AGB, of course. Next slide. So, you can see here a bit more detail on the different kinds of evaluations. We have string evaluations, so this is looking at things like DNS stability, so we're reviewing the strings for more technical aspects and adherence to various technical requirements.

Block names identification, reserve name identification, Geonames identification, so determining whether the proposed string or the string that's being applied for falls into one of those categories and requirements, or in the block name case, inability to apply for that, for example. Also name collision initial assessment, safeguard assessment, singular, plural, and string sim, or other string evaluations.

Application evaluation, so this is, so if you are identified as a Geoname or reserve name, you have to go through a further, more substantive review to show appropriate documentation that you

can apply for those names. For name collision, there's a, if you're identified as high risk, there's a mitigation plan evaluation.

There's also code of conduct exemption evaluation, registered commitment evaluation, brand eligibility evaluation, and variant string evaluation, so a lot of those are conditional to the type of string or application you're submitting. And then finally, Applicant Evaluations, which is background screening and financial and operational evaluation, and again, we have more detail on those, but those two are required for all application types, applicant types.

So, here, from Submission to the Prioritization, so after you've clicked submit on your application, what happens, or I guess it's part of, part of submission, rather, so you'll create an account in the system, you'll complete the application questions, which are listed in the AGB Appendix 1, and there's a few different types of application questions, or several kind of question sets that gather different information, organization information, so the applying entity, information about the applying entity, and then the application specific information.

So, are you a community, are you a geo, things like that would come up in those. And then the selection of the string, or inputting of your string, and identifying if you would like to apply for, or submit a replacement string. And then when you do input your string into the system, into TAMS, there's a few string validations that occur at that moment, so you would type in your string, and it

would identify whether you are on the block names list, or reserve names list, or that string, rather, is on one of those lists, and will also review for DNS stability. So, those things are done right away when you type in your string that you wish to apply for.

Okay, and then here, so this is after you've submitted your application, prior to evaluation, some of the key milestones and steps up to that point. So, you submit your application, there's an administrative check, and then ICANN will prep for reveal day, and then on reveal day, all applications and strings, including replacement strings, would be published on that day.

And then there's a two-week replacement period, so this is when applicants can elect to opt for their replacement string, if they've chosen to submit one. And then there's a review of those replacement strings, if the applicant has chosen to go for their replacement string. And then after that is string confirmation day, when the list of final strings and contention sets are published, contention sets for identical strings, that is.

And then after that, the prior, I think, 30 days after, no later than 30 days after, is the prioritization you draw. And I think here we move to Ariel? So, go ahead, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG

Hello, everyone, this is Ariel Liang, and long time no see, haven't seen you guys in ICANN meetings for a year and a half, and very happy to be back. So, since everybody's an expert, I'm not going to

delve into the detail of string evaluation. We're just going to go over some high-level points and key takeaways, and next slide, please.

So, quickly, what's the purpose of a string evaluation? It's basically to ensure that all the applied for string, they meet some mandatory requirements for the program, and it happens after the string confirmation day, and it's conducted for all of the applied for string at the same time, but it doesn't mean it will finish for everybody for the same time.

So, for application that's on the happy path, means it's straightforward and doesn't have any sticky issues involved, the expectation is this phase of the evaluation should finish within 180 days for the application as part of the first priority back.

And another key takeaway is, this does not follow priority order for the applications, not like application review, Application Evaluation, Applicant Evaluation. So, again, it's conducted for all the strings at the same time. What are the components for this phase of the evaluation? There are five components. First is the String Similarity Evaluation. It's basically to ensure that strings that are not visually similar to each other, and this helps mitigate potential user confusion and maintain the trust of the DNS.

And the second component is geographic name identification. So, it means it will help flag which applied for string may be a geographic name. That's basically the first step, but then there will

be a substantive review following that as part of the Application Evaluation.

The third component, safeguard assessment. It basically determines which applied for string may require a specific set of safeguard Public Interest Commitments or safeguard PICs as part of its contractual obligation in the RAA. And to do that, all of the applicants, they have to answer a series of questions in the application, and their answer will help inform the evaluation for this assessment.

The fourth component, single plural notifications evaluation. That means that it will help determine which strings may be the singular and plural form of the same word in the same language, but this will only be conducted following ICANN receiving a notification from the public regarding this single plural issue.

And finally, the fifth component, Name Collision Initial Assessment. Again, that's an initial check to see which string could be of high risk for name collision, and if that's the case, the applicant may submit a mitigation plan for ICANN to further evaluate, and if that mitigation plan approves, then the application could proceed. If not, then the string will be added to name collision list, and it will not be able to proceed in the program.

So, that's the five components of the String Evaluation, and what happens next is that after this phase of the program completes, ICANN will publish the results of string evaluation on the New gTLD program, as well as an updated set of the contention strings as well

on the New gTLD program as the outcome of this evaluation. So, that's it for String Evaluation. Any questions? I guess, Anne, please go ahead.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE

Thank you, Ariel. This is very helpful, and you may have just said this, but I'm wondering in relation to string contention and name collision assessment, does name collision assessment come after string contention resolution or before? I honestly cannot remember.

ARIEL LIANG

So, the name collision initial assessment, I think it's before, yes? It's before, yeah, it's before, because that's the kind of initial kind of check for any string that may be on the collision list.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE

Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG

Yes. Any other questions, or we're good to move on?

JARED ERWIN

Yeah, I think Jeff had a question in the chat, but Elisa answered that.

ARIEL LIANG

Oh, thank you. Thank you.

JARED ERWIN

I think we're okay to move on, which is Peter. Go ahead, Peter. Thanks.

PETER EAKIN

Hello. So, yes, contention and its resolution.

JARED ERWIN

So, I think, sorry, I think they just went up. So, sorry. Jeff and then Elaine.

JEFF NEUMAN

Yeah, thanks. This is Jeff Neuman. Because you have lots of things and lots of different notification periods and all that going on, what is ICANN planning on doing in terms of making sure the community is aware of, okay, the only time you can notify for singular plural is these 30 days, which is different than the Public Comment period, which is 100 whatever days, which is different from the objection period.

So, what is your plan to make it crystal clear? Because there's lots of moving parts, and I have a feeling people are going to get lost, and you're going to have people responding to singular plural during the Public Comment period, not realizing that it was

supposed to be submitted somewhere else. How are you all planning for that?

ELISA BUSETTO

I can try and answer this. I think the plan for now is to have dedicated pages on the NUG website with clear indications on what starts when, and I think that also on TAMS it will be quite clear if there's a comment period open for a specific application, be it in the community input period or because of a change request. And I think we would also have overviews on the website to address that, and I think Marika can add to that.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks, Elisa, this is Marika. So we definitely need to work as well on kind of the communication and Outreach Plan, and part of what Christy is going to be working on is as well the readiness. So, that's not only readiness of applicants, but also the community. So, as part of that, we'll plan for as well making sure that, you know, notices go out, that we're clear in our communications.

This is already a part of that conversation already, to get people aware that indeed, you know, the different stages, what does that mean. But if anyone has suggestions on how we can make sure that that gets across loud and clear, we're of course happy to hear those as well.

JEFF NEUMAN

Yeah, and on that, I think the more you can line up certain things, like so, if the singular plural notification period is 30 days, that you start it on, let's say, the same day that Public Comment periods are started, or whatever it is, the more you can kind of put things together, I think the better it would be. And yeah, I think I was talking, I know you're going to update TAMS, but that doesn't, as Marika was saying, it doesn't, that doesn't go out to the community.

And so, I think you should have one general page that's got the full timeline, pretty, you know, crystal clear as to this is starting this day, ends this day, this other part starts this day. And I guess all that I'll have to wait until you figure out 12 to 15 weeks and that whole thing. But yeah, I think it's going to be tough, because everything has a different time period, whether it's Public Comments or objections or singular plural notifications. And I'm sure I'm missing a ton of other things.

LARS HOFFMANN

Yeah, Jeff, as you say, as soon as we have a timeline, and it's a little bit more than the 12 to 15 weeks, I want to remind that the period afterward until reveal day will also depend a little bit on if we get three applications, reveal day will happen more quickly than if we get 3000, as you can imagine.

So, that is obviously also a somewhat flexible timeline that we don't really know until the application period closes. But we'll have that, as you say, on the website with the timeline on there, because

we can have reveal day as the start day and we update them with the live dates as soon as we know when that will be, which obviously will not be on reveal day, we tell you guys well in advance of when reveal day will be as much as we can. So, no, absolutely. Thank you for that.

JARED ERWIN

Elaine, please.

ELAINE PRUIS

Thank you. Elaine Pruis, for the transcript. I just wanted to ask a clarifying question on the name collision initial assessment. So when an applicant puts in their TLD, is there some indicator initially that there may be an inclusion? And then I think my understanding is that the applicant only submits a mitigation plan if they clear contention, it's much later in the process.

JARED ERWIN

Thanks, Elaine. So, in the first question, is Francisco here? Oh, yeah, we are having a meeting with Francisco as he'll be in a later session. So, we can get into more of the nitty gritty there. So, I think you're asking if you type in your string into the system, if it'll somehow assess at that moment. No, that's the initial assessment phase where they would test that. That's part of it's where temporary delegation comes in or determines whether your string would be high risk. As for the contention piece, I've been trying to look, I can't remember what we were.

ELISA BUSETTO

Yes.

JARED ERWIN

After contention, yes, is when if you do are identified as high risk that you would have the opportunity to submit a mitigation plan after contention. Thank you. Okay, so I think we're ready for Peter. Thank you.

PETER EAKIN

Hi, everyone. So, yes, string contention. So contention and its resolution will be an important part for many of the applicant's journeys in the Next Round. And a consultation with the community. ICANN has implemented certain new features and some cases restrictions. And these are described in the HEP to help both reduce instances of contention and transparency, transparently resolve contention occurs.

But what is contention? So, really the classic example of contention is always when one or more applied strings are identical. However, contention can also happen in several other scenarios. For example, in the Applicant Journey, they just mentioned identical strings can be identified as in contention on reveal day. However, strings can also be notified as singular plural versions, same word in the same language, contention.

And strings can also be found confusingly similar by an expert panel. So, strings that are in contention form, what is known as a

contention set. And these are identified various stages of the application process. And these junctions are all set out in the HEP. So, a significant change for the Next Round is that the ICANN Board has prohibited all forms, private resolution of contention sets in the Next Round, including private auctions and post-application joint ventures. This practice was accepted in the 2012 round, but it's no longer permitted.

Next slide, please. Yes, so some of the significant aspects of high contention will be treated in the Next Round. So there's a new feature. And Jared talked about this in the intro, the replacement strings. So, starting from during the application process, all applicants can now designate a replacement string alongside their original choice of string. So, the intent of this is to avoid contention before the list of applied for strings is finalized.

So, applicants will be given the option to switch from their applied for string to the replacement string during the replacement period, which as Jared noted before is 14 days after reveal day. There are certain conditions attached to this. Most notably that the replacement string cannot be identical to another applied for or replacement string.

And it's important to note that once a string is replaced, the decision is final and the original string cannot be reinstated. Also returning from 2012 is a community priority evaluation or CPE. This is an evaluation conducted by a third-party panel, which determines whether a community-based application fulfils the

criteria identified in the AGB in order to receive priority in the contention set.

So, another new process being introduced for brand TLD applicants in particular are dotbrand string change requests. So, subject to certain conditions, these applicants can change their string to avoid contention resolution procedures. And certainly, the conditions for this are set out in the AGB.

And finally, as in 2012, if all else fails, the New gTLD auction will definitively resolve contention sets that were not eliminated earlier in the process. So, three objections or withdrawals were resolved by CPE. Any questions?

JARED ERWIN

Yeah, Jeff has a question in the chat. Jeff, I was hoping maybe you could provide a bit more context to your question or add to it, please.

JEFF NEUMAN

Sure. And you may have seen certain recent articles of services out there where people have announced an intent to apply for something to privately resolve it before the actual reveal day. There's nothing prohibited by that. Is that correct?

LARS HOFFMANN Yeah, that's correct. If you haven't applied, you haven't applied. You can talk, I mean, you can talk in this room right now who is going to apply for what and have a chat over a coffee. There's no--

JEFF NEUMAN No, I'm saying you've applied, it's just not public yet.

LARS HOFFMANN Oh, I mean, if it's before, I mean, if you applied and submitted, then again, if it's not reveal day, we're only going to look at the application at that point. If you then withdraw at some point, I don't think there's anything you can do about that.

JEFF NEUMAN No, what I'm saying is you've submitted an application.

LARS HOFFMANN Sure.

JEFF NEUMAN Right. But it hasn't been revealed day, but people get together to figure out who's applied for what.

LARS HOFFMANN I think the guidance states, Jeff, that as of reveal day is when the no collusion comes in. So, what happens before that is between the applicants at that point.

JEFF NEUMAN

Right. So, just be clear when you say there's no private resolution, that you're clear that it's no private resolution prior or after reveal day.

LARS HOFFMANN

Yeah, I think that's what the guidebook states. I don't think it states anything else.

JEFF NEUMAN

Well, in the guidebook it talks about prohibited communication, but it's a separate thing as to-- I'm just saying be super clear because--

LARS HOFFMANN

Jeff, could I ask you something? Could I ask you to just check the text and see if that's not clear for you? Because I think it clearly states that the prohibition of communication starts on reveal day and lasts until either, one person drops out or one person signs everybody, you know, whoever how many they in there everybody but one drops out or somebody signs the registry agreement. So that I think that is--

JEFF NEUMAN

Well, that's on the Communiqué then, but there's a separate sentence, I'll look it up.

LARS HOFFMANN

Look it up.

JARED ERWIN

Jim, please, go ahead.

JAMES GALVIN

Yeah, Jeff, I think Jared pasted the language actually into the chat, but that's not my question. Jim Prendergast for the record. So, apologies if this has been announced. If this has been announced, and I missed it, but has the provider for the community priority evaluation been selected and or announced? And if not, I'm getting head shakes now, when will that take place?

JARED ERWIN

Yeah, thanks, Jim. No, it has not been selected. We're in the RFP, the request for proposal process right now with our procurement team. We have talked about this couple of different times with the IRT that the plan is to select a vendor by the end of the year. And then we will work with that vendor to develop an evaluation guide, which would be posted for Public Comment early January, February, 2026.

And then I think final contracting and selection or finalization of that process by March, ahead of the opening of the round. Yeah. Thank you. I was just going to note, maybe it's clear, but the orange numbers and brackets on all the slides are AGB references.

However, this number four is actually the wrong number. It's module five, that string contention appears in the updated AGB. So, just for your awareness.

And to come back on the language I put in the chat, that is one small snippet, but of course, there's more language about prohibited communications and activities as it relates to private resolution or string contention resolution in the AGB. But yes, I think that's the main point there. And a new hand from Jeff. Yeah, go ahead.

JEFF NEUMAN

Yeah, thanks. And you see there, that's where there's a little confusion because the first sentence is very different than the second one. A person is an applicant the day they submit the application, right? But it just says communications are prohibited from reveal day. So, between the time in which they submit their application to the time it's reveal day, they may not share information about their applications with other applicants, but they can share it, let's say, with an independent party who anonymously gets applicants together, right? The first sentence seems to be from application day and the second sentence is only from reveal day.

JARED ERWIN

Okay. I don't have much to say, but yes, I see your point, Jeff. I don't know if Lars, you want to say anything?

LARS HOFFMANN

Yeah, I mean, we can look at the language again, Jeff, maybe, but I think there's also the issue of being in contention. So until reveal day, nobody's in contention. So there's that qualifier around there as well, because you can obviously talk to other applicants as long as you're not in contention at any time anyway.

LARS HOFFMANN

Okay.

JARED ERWIN

Yeah, it seems like maybe a sequencing issue with the language there, because it doesn't mention contention set. Yeah. Okay. Anne, please go ahead.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE

Yes, thanks. It's Anne Aikman-Scalese for the transcript. And I'd have to say that I share Jeff's concerns about being clear with potential applicants, because it would be pretty easy to establish a database and provide a service whereby everyone delays their application to the end of the application period, but they're resolving things that they may see as contention sets prior to actually putting the application in. It'd be pretty easy to provide a database service for that, to charge for it, and to have essentially a nice way actually to resolve ever getting in a contention set. And I don't know, maybe that's not bad, you know?

JARED ERWIN

Thanks, Anne. Jeff, is that your old hand? Okay. Elaine, and then Jim.

ELAINE PRUIS

Thank you. So, as Anne just said, maybe it's not bad to prevent a contention set to start with. Prohibition is on private resolution of contention sets, not avoiding contention sets. So, I want to be really careful about when we put this prohibition in place. We did that. We discussed it. We came up with when contention sets are revealed. And I'm, you know, I'm still concerned that we can't talk to each other until a registry agreement is signed. But I'm going to let that go because we discussed it a lot.

JARED ERWIN

Thanks. Thanks, Elaine. Jim? Okay. Michael.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Thanks, Michael Bauland for the record. This process is happening after the string evaluation, right? And are the replacement strings already part of the string evaluation or is the string evaluation repeated in case a replacement string is activated?

JARED ERWIN

So I think it's actually a few slides up. Maybe we could just show that. But you submit your application. Keep going. Sorry. There's the flow chart here, I think. So, you submit your application.

There's reveal day at that point is when the replacement period starts. So, you would choose if you want to go to your replacement string, you would do that in that period. And then string confirmation day would occur. And then prioritization draw. And from that point is when the string evaluations would begin, I believe. So, it's not repeated to answer your question.

LARS HOFFMANN

Okay. I think we're done with contention, right? No other hands or questions?

JARED ERWIN

Okay. So, I think we're back to Ariel. No? Is it? Application evaluation.

JARED ERWIN

Yes. Go ahead.

JARED ERWIN

Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG

All right. Application evaluation. So, this phase of the program refers to a series of substantive review to verify information from applicant based on, for example, their TLD application type or their specific request. And just generally, there's one mandatory review as part of the component that applicable for all of the applications,

which is the RSP review. And then the other components, they're either conditional.

So, it's based on the application type or optional. It's based on the request from the applicant. And what we could expect is that the outcome of the review will affect what specific designation or exceptions or commitments the applicant may wish to include in the register agreement. So, if that path review, then these approved elements will be included in the register agreement when the application moved to a contracting phase. So that's the kind of big picture overview of this phase of the program. So let's just dive in quickly and look at each of these components.

So the first one, RSP review, that's the part that applies to all of the applications. That means that ICANN will want to verify whether the applicant has selected an ICANN approved RSP to support the necessary technical service for operating the gTLD. And another part of the verification is to ensure that ICANN approved RSP is indeed willing and able to support that gTLD. So, that applies to all of the applications.

And then the next few ones, these are the conditional ones because these apply to the specific TLD application type. So, for the geographic name review, that means ICANN will make sure this is indeed a geographic name and the applicant is providing all the supporting documentation for its name. So, the purpose of the review is to verify all that.

And then for the reserved name review, again, that's another kind of verification process to ensure the applicant is indeed the appropriate organization that the name is reserved for it. And then the applicant can provide all the supporting documentation to prove they're indeed that organization that should have this strength.

And then for the dotbrand TLD eligibility evaluation, as its name suggests, is to assess whether the applicant meets the criteria to be a dotbrand TLD. Again, there are a lot of verification involved in that part of the evaluation as well. Next slide, please. And the next one, Variant String evaluation, again, this is a conditional evaluation.

It's basically assess whether the application includes the necessary justification for apply for variant string and to ensure this string is indeed needed, desired, and the applicant has a plan to run it to put that into use. Otherwise it's not good to have so many strings delegated in the DNS, but just put idle there, for example. And then the next few ones, these are not really conditional.

It's based on kind of requests from the applicant. So, code of conduct exemption evaluation, this is basically some applicant they may wish to run their TLD and put that into exclusive use just by itself or its affiliate. Then if that's the case, then, you know, the registry operator can be exempt from having a specification nine in its registry agreement. So, this evaluation is to verify whether

they're indeed eligible to have that exemption for specification nine code of conduct.

Name Collision High-Risk Mitigation Plan Evaluation, we kind of touched that earlier a little bit. It's basically if a string is flagged as at high risk for name collision, then the applicant has the option to submit a mitigation plan for ICANN to evaluate. Then the outcome of this evaluation will affect the fate of the application.

And finally, the Registry Commitments Evaluation, so that's assess the registry voluntary commitments submitted by the applicant and community registration policies submitted by community TLD applicants. And this evaluation is to ensure these commitments indeed meet the ICANN criteria for inclusion in the base RAA. So, just quickly, one point is this mandatory kind of evaluation for all community TLD applications because to have the community registration policy is a mandatory requirement for that type of application. But then for registered voluntary commitments, that's generally the optional. It's not like for all the application, this particular evaluation will be triggered if a RVC is submitted.

So these are some kind of quick overview of these each components of the Application Evaluation. And I just want to kind of provide some quick takeaways. So, in general, for an application that's on the happy path, that doesn't have, you know, sticky issues or have unresolved string contention issues, this phase of the program will kick in, you know, at the later stage, basically prior to contracting. But for a certain part of the components, if they come

earlier, so for example, for a community TLD, if it's indeed getting to a contention situation, and also the applicant elect to go through CPE, that means it's a community registration policy has to be evaluated first.

And the registry commitments evaluation has to happen quickly so that the application can proceed to CPE in a timely manner. And also, for the brand TLD eligibility evaluation, if there's a brand string change request, then that particular evaluation has to happen earlier as well to make sure that it's indeed a brand.

So, some part of the components of this evaluation may kick in earlier than others. That's the first takeaway. And the second takeaway is that some of the evaluation will be conducted by ICANN itself. Some we may use vendor to conduct that externally. Some may request conditional fees. Again, the details is in the fee section of the AGB. And if the fee is indeed involved, then the application will only kick in after ICANN receives the payment after invoicing.

So, that's something to kind of take away with you. But again, the whole RSP process is ongoing, and we don't know yet vendors for these applicable components of the application. But once we know, of course, we will let the community know.

And the third takeaway is that during the evaluation, besides the materials and information submitted by the applicant, the evaluation panel has the discretion to request further information

or verify factual claims. And then also it will take into account application comments related to these applications.

So, sorry, one thing I forgot to mention is about the when. So, this part of the program will run in parallel with the community input period. There is a part of it's overlapping. So, during that community input period, the public could submit application comments, also objection will happen, and then they can provide other input. So, the evaluation panel will have a chance to look at, for example, application comments received when they conduct this evaluation.

And also, if they do reach out to the applicants for clarifying questions, for example, the applicant needs to respond within the certain designated period of time in order to help this application to be evaluated. Otherwise it could have a negative impact if it doesn't respond to clarifying question by the deadline set by the evaluation panel.

And then the other takeaway is that some of these evaluation components has extended evaluation. It means the applicant could request for a second review in order to submit additional information to address certain deficiencies in this evaluation. But this extended evaluation is not available for all components of this phase of the program. So, what is available is for one RSP review, second the geographic name review, third the reserve name review, and fourth variant eligibility evaluation.

So for these, the applicant may have a second chance to address the deficiencies of its submitted information. And then the ones that are not available for extended evaluation are the brand TLD eligibility evaluation, code of conduct exemption evaluation, registry commitments evaluation. But the interesting thing I want to quickly flag, but I'm not expert in, is the Name Collision High Risk Mitigation Evaluation. So, that one is not available for extended evaluation, but it's the only one that can be challenged.

Again, if you have further questions about that component, maybe we can wait for Francisco to address some further of the question. So, that's some of the kind of key takeaways. And I think Jared is looking at me, I guess I need to stop. Yes.

JARED ERWIN

So, sorry for that look. But yes, we do have a big section Elisa is needing to get to, to talk about community input and things. So, thank you Ariel for that, very helpful. Just going to briefly go through the Applicant Evaluations. So, these can occur concurrent or will occur concurrently with the application evaluations that Ariel just went through. And as mentioned earlier, these are both mandatory for all applicants. And these are background screening in the financial and operational evaluation with the caveat there, that both of these evaluations do have some tailoring available to different types of applications.

So for background screening, which I think should be fairly clear with what that is, but in an effort to be brief, I won't go through

those bullets there. But for example, for applicants that are on the top 25 stock exchanges, which those types of entities have to go through extensive review to be on those exchanges.

The ICANN will take that into account as they look at their background screening requirements. And then for financial and operational evaluation, there are different financial profiles. There're four different profiles that ICANN will tailor those evaluations to those different profiles. So, there's the governmental profile, the existing registry operator profile, the top 25 exchange profile, and then a standard profile. So, again, there's some tailoring there to those different types of entities. And both of these evaluations are also eligible for extended evaluation.

Okay. So I think I'll go ahead and turn it over to Elisa for the next part. Oh, sorry. Just kidding me. Contracting and Post-Contracting. So, again, hopefully this is what it sounds like. So, I'm not going to go into too much detail here, but these are the phases after the applicant has signed a registry agreement with ICANN.

You can see some timing requirements there to complete contracting no later than 90 days following the date of invitation to contracting, as well as requirements to delegate their TLD, new registry operator delegating their TLD within one year from execution of the registry agreement, with some exceptions as described in the base registry agreement, 2.19 bracketed as that is, of course, still in the works. But you can review that section in the version that's been out for Public Comment.

And then you can see there some of the different specifications that may or may not be included in an applicant's registry agreement based on the type of application or applicant. Okay. I think now ready to turn it over to Elisa.

ELISA BUSETTO

Thanks, Jared. This is Elisa. And we have eight minutes to go through the community input processes. As I mentioned earlier, starting on string confirmation day, the community will have the opportunity to provide their input in different ways. So the general public, everybody can post about application comments. GAC members can start issuing GAC member early warnings. The GAC may issue GAC consensus advice. And the general public will also have the opportunity to submit singular plural notifications.

And finally, parties with standing will be able to file objections, and the determination of objections can be appealed. All these processes started on string confirmation day, but they have different durations, and as we will see in the next slides. So, Application Comments can be filed at any time after string confirmation day, but only the comments submitted within the 104 days, the following 104 days, and in the 30 days following a specific application change request will be made available to evaluators for consideration.

And comments are a mechanism for the public to bring any relevant information or issues to the attention of ICANN applicants and evaluators regarding specific applications. And while they do

not have a direct impact on applications, they may be taken into account by the relevant evaluators only submitted during the specified time frames, as mentioned earlier.

They are mostly public, and they're posted on an ICANN managed platform, which is called the Application Comment Forum, which is the ACF, yet another acronym, and do not have any costs associated. And applicants will be notified once a comment is posted, related to their application, and will have the opportunity to respond. I mentioned that comments are public, but commenters will have the opportunity to submit comments confidentially if these comments refer to confidential portions of the application.

ICANN will review the comments submitted confidentially, and will determine whether indeed they refer to a confidential portion, and if not, the commenter will be asked to post the comment publicly. And I see Anne's hand is up.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE

Thank you, Elisa. It's Anne Aikman-Scalese. I remember something about a request in relation to the very fact that a confidential comment was filed, and being able to be aware a confidential comment has been filed, even if it's determined to be confidential, that the public can see that a confidential comment was filed.

ELISA BUSETTO

I think this has been looked into, like, I think this is one of the system requirements, so we will make sure that that's the case.

ANNE AIKMAN-SCALESE

Thank you.

ELISA BUSETTO

Thank you. And I don't see any more hands, yeah. Another way the community can provide their input is GAC member early warnings, and this can be issued by individual or groups of GAC members or observers, and they provide the applicant with an indication that the application is seen as potentially sensitive or problematic.

They can be issued in the 104 days after string confirmation day, so, like, for application comments. And GAC member early warnings have to include a written explanation describing why the early warning was issued and how the applicant may address it. And whoever is issuing a GAC member early warning is requested to also include contact information that applicants can also communicate with them and try and find a solution before, in case, GAC advice is subsequently issued.

And, yeah, GAC consensus advice, this can be issued at any time, and it's issued by the GAC according to ICANN's bylaws, including the rationale, and it is intended to address applications that are identified to be problematic. GAC consensus advice does not require an early warning to be submitted before it is issued, and applicants will have the opportunity to respond within 21 days of

GAC advice being issued so that the response can be taken into account by the Board before it considers it.

And if GAC advice is accepted by the Board, it may prevent an application from proceeding, or it may prevent the application from proceeding unless specific modifications are made, such as the addition or modification of an RVC.

Then, another way the community can provide their input is singular plural notifications, and these are submitted by the general public, also do not have any costs associated, like comments, and they can be issued in the 30 days following string confirmation day. So, these are based, singular plural notifications are based on the claim that an applied first string is the singular or plural form of another applied first string, a delegated TLD, a string being processed from a previous round, or a block name.

They must include evidence, and the evidence that must be provided is specified in the guidebook, also do not have any costs associated. And if a match is found, the string may be placed in a contention set, if it is found to be the singular or plural form of another applied first string, or in the other cases, the application will not proceed.

And finally, the most complex process, which also has, oh, there's a hand up.

JARED ERWIN

So, no, sorry, just we have two minutes.

ELISA BUSETTO

We have a minute. So, it's objections, and objections are filed by parties with standing on specific grounds, and they're administered by external dispute resolution service providers, which have already been selected, and we will actually publish the rules quite soon. And they have costs associated, and the fees will also be published in the upcoming months.

Independent objectors will also be selected in the upcoming months, and they may file limited public interest and community objections given certain conditions. And if the objector prevails, the relevant string may be placed in a contention set, or the application prevent it from proceeding, or again, may only proceed with modification, similar as for GAC Advice. Unlike in 2012, the expert determination can be appealed, and there are specific, there's a specific procedure in place also for appeals to expert determinations.

And since we only have, I believe, one minute, in the slides, you can also find details on the different grounds, and the claims, as well as the parties with standing. The grounds are string confusion, legal rights, limited public interest, and community. So the only page in which anybody can file an objection is for limited public interest, for the remaining grounds, only specific parties have the, can file them.

The process for objection and appeals are, is quite complex, and we have it described both in the, in the applicant guidebook in

Module 4, and in Appendix 3, where you can find both procedures for objections and appeals. And I think, yeah, we're on top of the hour, so I don't think we have time for questions, but in case we can use another session to further discuss this. Thank you.

JARED ERWIN

Yes. So, yeah, this is the first of six sessions with the IRT, right? So, more time on different topics as well. We just have one more slide, I think. You can see some of those sessions. So, today is our super busy day, where we are going to be talking to the GAC in a couple hours, and then we're back with the IRT this afternoon to discuss Application Evaluation in more detail, and contention set resolution in more detail.

And then we have another GAC session concurrently with the IRT session in the afternoon, and then several other sessions throughout the week on, I have no idea what day that is actually, Tuesday the 26th? What is, no, that's tomorrow, sorry.

Applicant String Evaluation with the IRT, and then on Tuesday, the 28th, DNS Stability String Sim. I believe Sarmad is going to be here for that one. And then we have an outreach session on Wednesday. So, we'll see you again soon, and thank you. Sorry, go ahead.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, just one thing. Although these are built as IRT sessions, it's really important that these are open sessions. So, anyone who has questions or comments, please invite your friends to come over,

because this is really an opportunity to have that conversation and clarify any questions people may have.

ELISA BUSETTO

And maybe just to mention that the last IRT session, so 6 of 6 on the 29th, will be an open Q&A. So please, if you have any questions that we can't address during this first IRT, you can ask them there. Thanks.

JARED ERWIN

Thanks, everyone. See you soon. We can end the recording.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]