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ICANN Transcription

Applicant Support GGP

Monday, 27 February 2023 at 15:00 UTC

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DEVAN REED:　　　　　Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Welcome to the GNSO guidance process (GGP) initiation request for applicants support call on Monday 27th February 2023 at 15:00 UTC. In the interest of time, there will be no roll call. Attendance will be taken by the Zoom room. We do have apologies from Paul McGrady.

All statements of interest must be kept up to date. Does anyone have any updates to share? If so, please raise your hand or speak up now. If you need assistance updating your statements of interest, please email the GNSO secretariat.

All documentation and information can be found on the Wiki space. Recordings will be posted on the public Wiki space shortly after the end of the call.

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As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multistakeholder process are to comply with the expected standards of behavior. With this. I will turn it over to the chair, Mike Silber. Please begin.

MIKE SILBER: Thanks, everybody, much appreciated. So the intent is that we move rapidly along. We have one more subject matter expert proposed by the GAC who hopefully will join us in due course. But we are moving rapidly along and on that basis.

I shared a proposal, which is very rough, but was intended to foster discussion. And in discussion with staff, instead of as originally contemplated just putting a proposal together in terms of outreach, which is what I'd originally started working towards, I thought, let me throw a set of principles, because otherwise, it's very difficult in terms of what we're working towards. So I'll put a set of high-level principles that hopefully can be the first item for discussion. And hopefully, we can come to some sort of agreement in terms of whether these objectives, goals have consensus in this working group in terms of what we're intending the applicant support program to achieve.

Think everyone's had an opportunity to engage. I don't know if we've got any comments on the document.

JULIE HEDLUND: Thank you, Mike. This is Julie Hedlund from staff. Just to note that I've got the document now up on screen. And also, please, you're welcome to click on the link that I posted in the chat if you want to

do the document yourselves. And then Mike, I can just scroll through the document on screen as you like. And we can—

MIKE SILBER: Can I suggest that you just make the size a little bit smaller so we can just get the goals up? Because I'd like to get some discussion and see if we're close on goals.

JULIE HEDLUND: That sounds like a great place to start.

MIKE SILBER: Gabriela, I see there's already a comment, which is a very useful one. I don't know if you want to take it from the top or my thinking is five regions we don't want—well, sorry, a measure of success is that we actually have geographic diversity both in number of applicants, as well as the successful applicants. If you agree, disagree, please feel free to comment, bearing in mind that this is what the aim is. It's not something that an applicant would be disqualified from support if they are three or four from a region, but rather these are the objectives that we want to see geographic diversity. And when staff are designing support, they obviously need to take that into account. But I didn't see that as in any way disqualifying potentially qualifying applicants for support, but rather, what does success look like?

JULIE HEDLUND: Thank you, Mike. You can open it up for discussion then on the goals. I see your hand is up from Rafik. Please go ahead.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Thanks, Julie. Thanks, Mike, for this document. It's helpful. I think it's good to start with goals because it gives us some guidance. But just I wanted to know what kind of assumption you thought of when you said those kinds of numbers. I'm not saying if they are right or wrong, I wanted just to understand kind of, I'd say, the thought flow that led you to maybe to set those numbers. So it will be helpful to just understand the background.

MIKE SILBER: So Rafik, it was pulled out of thin air. My thinking was very simple. Last time, we had three applicants and one of those was successful. I didn't want to set big, hairy, audacious goals and ask for 50 applicants and 25 of them must be successful. But my thinking was, it needs to be a damn sight better than three and one. So that's where I came up with these numbers, simply to provoke discussion that there was no objective criteria, but rather simply a thought exercise. And I'm sorry to respond. But how I came up with the numbers is irrelevant. It's whether you think that those are appropriate as objectives is really what's at issue over here. I'm happy to admit that they were plucked out of thin air. But that's because we've all been so hesitant to actually put something concrete down. So if you think those numbers are totally wrong, tell me. Don't ask me where I got them from. Sorry, Rafik, I say that as an old friend that I know you will not take it amiss when I respond in that manner.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Usually depends on the time of the day. But no, I wanted to just to understand if there were any assumptions. That's fine for brainstorming or [inaudible]. That's fine.

MIKE SILBER: I see Ros has got her hand up, and Thomas. So let's do Ros first.

ROSALIND KENNYBIRCH: Thanks, Mike. Really appreciate this and really appreciate you laying out the goals so clearly. First, to come in on Rafik's point and the numbers. I think—and really appreciate your efforts in this regard, and I think it's looking like a good start. I wonder—and this is an open question for discussion, no firm view on it yet—but perhaps to make that more clear, that linkage about what success would look like, potentially, instead of at least 20 parties, or at least 10 parties, we could say three times the amount or two times the amount, language like that. That way, if we get pushback on it, it's not necessarily that we pulled a specific number out of thin air, but actually proportionally, what we'd like to see if that might make it clear. And I think yeah, anyway, might need further thinking, but I thought I'd just raise it for a potential to discuss here.

MIKE SILBER: Sorry to interject. Can I just ask, when you say two times or three times, two or three times what?

ROSALIND KENNYBIRCH: So for example, the three applications that were submitted like last time, so we'd like to see, say, four times that amount at 12 applicants.

MIKE SILBER: Can I push back on that specific suggestion?

ROSALIND KENNYBIRCH: Absolutely.

MIKE SILBER: The last applicant support program was a dismal failure. Tying anything back to it is tying yourself to an anchor and expecting yourself to swim freely in the ocean. Why don't we just think—now, if you want to use that as a basis for the number, then let's just say 12. But I don't want to see any reference to the historical applicant support program because we're tying ourselves to failure. That's my personal view. If the working group feels that I'm totally off, please point out, but I see no point—if it was a success, I'd say we were wonderfully successful last time, let's be more successful and double it this time. But why do we want to tie ourselves to a failure? Sorry, Ros. Apologies for interjecting. Please continue with your next point.

ROSALIND KENNYBIRCH: Yeah, absolutely. Well, I'll just come back on this first, and I absolutely don't want to anchor this program to a failure, I guess I'm just looking at it more as an explainable baseline. Totally take

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that point in how that could be interpreted differently. So happy not to go with that. But just trying to make a positive suggestion of a baseline we could tie to. Of course, we all want the same goal of—and I think the number 10 parties, 20 parties does look about right, was just a suggestion to sort of make it clear.

But I think we all definitely agree that the last program was a failure. That is not in dispute. So if we are worried that any anchoring back could cause issues, then happy to leave that.

My next point was just going to be about adding greater specificity about the word "aware" in the second one. I thought we'd had a really good conversation at the last working group meeting about what awareness actually meant. And I think this was actually your point, Mike, about informed to make a decision. So I wonder if changing the language there could help in that regard. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER: Useful comment. Please feel free to throw in any friendly edits. Tom.

TOM BARRETT: Thanks, Mike. Yeah, finding this discussion very helpful. I'll work up from the bottom first, I guess. The 20 parties and 10 parties as a goal is fine. There's a second part of each of those last two bullets that I guess, strive to make sure that we don't have all the applicants concentrated in one region. But it doesn't really talk to how many regions do you want represented in this applicant support group. I'm wondering about asking the inverse question,

which is, we have at least three regions represented or what have you.

But back to the other comments that people are making about numbers, it obviously would be nice to have numbers against all of these bullets. And obviously, they don't exist, not just because the last program was a failure but because we didn't measure those types of goals. It's just a side point. But I want to make sure we put into place mechanisms to actually measure the achievement of these first few goals that don't have any number against them so that we could build on that for the next program.

MIKE SILBER: I think that's a very valid point. I think you make a very good point. And we just need to think how we craft that that at least three regions are represented. And maybe we pull out the three significantly developing and underdeveloped regions as the three that must be represented. The others, of course, can be.

In terms of the other items and starting to set metrics against the other items, it's something that's been bothering me a lot. And I'm not sure that we can set objective—I don't think that we can set numbers and objectives against things like information.

You will see my proposal which Julie has pointed out to me starts getting a little bit close to implementation on the awareness and education, where I started talking about making use of tools and some sort of portal where we can actually get interested parties to register because what I really don't want to do is start measuring effort rather than outcome.

So we can easily put in a metric over there which says by ICANN staff attending at least 50 international conferences ... Well, other than racking up huge travel costs and depriving people of a lot of sleep, I'm not really sure that going to lots of meetings helps. What we need is we need people to register, go through a process, engage with the process, understand and then make an informed decision as to whether they want to participate or not, and whether they want to apply or not. And those become very difficult. But if you've got suggestions, and you think that there is actually an objective metric that we can put in, in terms of these goals, bearing in mind that they're goals, then please feel free to suggest it. I was just really struggling when I was trying to come up with it. The only ones that I could really see as an actual goal would be a number in terms of applicants and successful applicants. Rafik.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Thanks, Mike. So about the suggestion. Thinking here why I was proposing to have some range and use percentage is to link our kind of success in relation to the whole program itself. And I'm worried that we set some absolute number that we will have hard time to justify or to explain how we come up with what percentage and how else to relate to the whole program.

Percentage can change. And that's why I suggested a range, because that gives us some flexibility. So that's why I think it's much better to use percentage and so on, because it will kind of be proportional to the size or how many applicants we will get at the end.

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And going back to your comment about setting metrics and regarding the outcome, I support that. Because one of the concerns, if we set some metrics that are related to activities, like the number of events and so on, those kinds of metrics will lead kind of to just pushing to do something, just to show that we are doing something, but doesn't mean that it will lead to any outcome or result.

So if we think more in terms of outcome, it will be helpful not just to set some numbers of whatever activities or initiative and so on, and using them just as a proxy for our goal. So I support that. The challenge is how we define those or determine those outcome carefully.

MIKE SILBER: Perfect, thank you. I've got Maureen and then Sarah.

MAUREEN HILYARD: Thank you. With regards to the number that you've set, I think that at least 20 parties make a request for applicant support. Personally, I think that if our awareness and education programs are successful, and this is where [inaudible] do we really need to limit the number of who actually make a request for applicant support?

I think 20 is fine as an arbitrary ballpark figure and say at least, as you got there, make a request. But I really, I think that limiting, limiting it to that number for people who actually make a request because we've actually raised awareness of the program and actually encouraged people to at least look at the applicant

support program, it's a criteria that we set for whether they qualify for the applicant support that is actually going to limit how many people actually get it.

So I think that saying that at least 20 parties make requests as ballpark. But at the same time, I don't think that there should be any limitations on the number of people who can actually make an application. But the criteria itself that we set are going to actually identify how many are actually going to qualify for getting that applicant support.

MIKE SILBER: I completely agree with you. And if success is we get 20 applications, then 40, or 60 applications would be overwhelming success. It would be even better if all of them were exactly on point and fully qualified. And then we're going to have a difficult situation of trying to work out how many we can actually afford to support. The one clarification I just want to put is that we're not setting the criteria. I know it was general language, but just to remind the group that we're not setting the criteria over here.

MAUREEN HILYARD: Can I just add one thing? I think if we actually had, say, 40 people, and they actually all qualified according to the criteria, and there isn't enough money to service all those people who actually qualify, what is our comeback on that?

MIKE SILBER: Sarah, if you wouldn't mind just holding on. Between Steve and Leon, I don't know if you want to jump in. But my understanding is that we would then need to make a decision whether all of the qualifying applicants get a smaller piece of the pie or if we then need to actually [inaudible] one of the group of qualifying applicants even further based on the budget that's available.

MAUREEN HILYARD: And I see Steve said it's going to be done [inaudible]. So that's fine. It's going to be covered. And I was implying too, as you mentioned, there are going to be extra bits and pieces that we're going to be considering within that support with regards to criteria.

MIKE SILBER: Fully agree with you there, Maureen. Again, I suppose—and we'll get to it when we get to task six, but there's going to be some applicants who will be able to take a deferral of fees, for example. And that will help kickstart their business model to actually get implemented, but they don't need a waiver of fees as an example, upfront. They can pay the application fee. But for the business case to work, they may need a two-year deferral of the ICANN fees compared to somebody else who may actually need a deferral of the actual application fee. And we're going to need to look at how they're balancing that. Well, the community and staff are going to need to look at the balancing of those different types of applications and the different needs of different applicants. Sarah, you've been very patient with me. Thank you. Your comment, please.

SARAH KIDEN: Thank you for getting us started with this proposal. I wanted to comment on something Tom has said and you [inaudible] too in terms of putting numbers against some of the metrics. I have a suggestion that doesn't involve putting like real numbers. But there are other ways that we can measure some of the goals.

For example, for the first bullet point that talks about making people aware, there are other things we can measure because you can make people aware by setting up a website, you can make them aware by having a dedicated session at each ICANN meeting to talk about the applicant support program, having maybe slides or comic strip or a video. So those are things we can say that we can actually measure against them. So we've not put a number on the number of events but we've put some sort of metrics that we can measure against.

Then my second comment is, I like the numbers on the last two bullet points, but just to say that the last bullet point says 10 parties, so that's 50% of the 20. I don't know if that's something we think we can achieve. Yeah, basically. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER: Thanks, Sarah. Just again, please, when you have some time, read further, because I don't think that in terms of the goals, we necessarily want to put metrics in the objectives. I do think that we want to start putting metrics in terms of some of the detailed approaches. So for example, awareness and education, we can start putting metrics in there.

But to me, the success or failure of the program is getting a reasonable number of applicants, and a reasonable number of those actually being qualifying applicants. Then, as Steve and Julie have pointed out, whether they actually get the funding will be another debate and discussion.

But if I can ask—I'm not seeing any other hands. But if there are any other thoughts or comments on this, I would really encourage you to raise it now or to start editing in the doc, because I would really like to try and close off on this as soon as possible. And if the general view is that we should be looking at a percentage, that's fine, just bearing in mind that the way the applicant support program is intended to run is that applicant support will open before the general application opens, which means that we can't actually test, certainly in terms of requests, we can't test against overall number of applicants because we don't know how many applicants there are. And we'll only know the number of applicants for the next round after the applicant support program has, if not completed, at least run a significant part of its course.

So maybe the way to look at it is to have the number of parties making a request for support, the number of parties who qualify for support and then to have another line, which is x percent of the total number of applicants being supported applicants. I don't know if that would then address Rafik's suggestion, while not tying us to a number which is not yet determined. Steve, your comment?

STEVE CHAN:	Thanks, Mike. Just wanted to throw out, I guess a potential couple of extra goals that might make sense. And it comes from thinking about all these goals in the context of the lifecycle that this group has also talked about in the past.
	So below applicants that have met the criteria for the applicant support elements, it might make sense to also include the steps afterwards. So for instance, after you've qualified for applicant support, you would presumably want these applicants to also pass the evaluation to be delegated. And then also looking forward once they're actually delegated, making sure that they're actually a durable entity, as in they're able to maintain and operate the registry operator after they've been delegated. So just suggesting that looking back towards our lifecycle, it may make sense to also look at those as also parts of the goals. Thanks.
MIKE SILBER:	I think that's an excellent suggestion Steve. So Rafik, I was suggesting that we maybe add a new bullet underneath the number of parties. We add a bullet which says at least 5% of applicants in the next round of gTLD applications are supported applicants.
	Maybe to Steve's point, we may want to add another bullet to that, which is and they actually proceed to delegation and operation. I'm seeing support in the chat. Not seeing more hands, but at least we've got some support in the chat. So let's look at this. Let's continue polishing it. And please, again, this is just a straw proposal. If anybody thinks that we have completely lost the plot, please let us know.

I don't think that we fully addressed Gabriela's question in terms of the regional representation. And Tom's useful comments there as well in terms of that. Do we want to prioritize any region over the others? Again, this is what success looks like. My opinion for what it's worth is if all of the qualifying applicants come from North America, I'm not sure that that's success. There may be incredibly deserving applicants. And the decision to support them will be absolutely fantastic. But I'm not sure that we really are successful if we get zero applicants through from Latin America, Africa and parts of the Asian region under development, developing parts of those regions.

I think maybe we need to put a bit more attention to that. So if anybody wants to apply their mind, please feel free. Throw some suggestions in there. Otherwise, I'll do the same. Maureen.

MAUREEN HILYARD: Thanks. Looking at what are the criteria, I guess, is that down on this? I'm sorry, I haven't looked completely through the proposal. But the criteria that's actually set, how restrictive are the criteria that are set? So that we can actually really be able to assess whether it's going to be enough to limit those regional expectations. How inclusive can we be for all regions to apply? What's the wording within the criteria that are set at the moment that may make it difficult for us—how do we change it if we feel that that would restrict the diversity that we were expecting with regards to regions, to cultures, to the different diversities that we've actually already discussed? Wanting to know a little bit more about what the criteria are at the moment and how restrictive we're going to be. Thanks.

MIKE SILBER: Well, Maureen, we don't have criteria at the moment. As far as I know, we're not tasked with drawing them up. But Steve or Julie, I don't know if you want to come in, or is that something we throw to GDS?

JULIE HEDLUND: So to criteria, no, this working group is not tasked with the development of the criteria for the applicants. Just as a reminder, maybe it would be helpful if I just reminded people what the tasks are and the ones in particular that we're dealing with right now. Not task six, because that's yet to come. But let me just quickly share screen with the tasks.

So this working group is not tasked with developing criteria. It is tasked with analyzing the suggested metrics in implementation guidance 17.9—that's from the final report of the SubPro PDP working group—and then you can identify other metrics that may not be there. So it's not limited to those metrics.

Task four, to identify any other appropriate metrics and measures of success, to help in identifying the necessary program elements and measuring program success after the fact. In identifying the suggested set of metrics, propose how data can be collected, how metrics can be measured, who can collect the data, and as well as what represents success. And that is in the matrix that staff had originally sent around that several working group members commented on.

And then task five is to consider and suggest how the outreach, education, business case development application evaluation elements of the program may be impacted by the identified metrics and measures of success.

So the work of this working group is quite limited, the scope is limited. And what we hope from this proposal that Mike has sent around—and I'll stop sharing and go back to the proposal—is that we hope that the proposal will help the working group in completing the three tasks in identifying metrics and prioritizing them.

And also in evaluating those metrics and determining indicators of success, and then the impacts on the various lifecycle elements of the program.

And what staff would like to do is try to help this working group by synthesizing some of the materials we have already, the matrix of the metrics on which you've commented, the summary of the indicators of success—and now we have this proposal from Mike—and see if we can distill from these materials some guiding recommendations that then could form the basis of the final output or the initial report of this working group that can then be sent for public comment.

And at this stage, according to our working plan, we should be developing those guiding recommendations. So what we'd like to try to do is set this group up for a working session at ICANN 76, our next meeting, where we can roll up our sleeves and maybe put some of those guiding recommendations down on paper so to speak. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER:

Thanks, Julie. Does that make sense to everybody? Maureen, maybe you want to talk to the comment you made in the chat.

MAUREEN HILYARD:

Oh, thanks. I think that's what we're discussing at the moment. And I think we really need to [inaudible] it out really have a have a roundtable in Cancun if we can possibly do that. I think that'd be wonderful. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER:

Yep, I do understand your frustration. But I think we do need to accept that we are in a little bit of a bind here. And in order to move forward, we need to make certain assumptions. And that's part of the reason why—I take your point that we don't know exactly the criteria for applicants to qualify.

But again, if we're telling staff or we're telling the Council and Council are going to staff around implementation and saying, in our view, success looks like this, that will have an impact in terms of how the criteria are determined.

If we say we think there needs to be reasonable regional representation, then the criteria need to be crafted appropriately. We're giving guidance, we're not getting involved in implementation. But we're giving some guidance, but more than just really wooly, "It needs to be richly represented."

So that was sort of my thinking. And I accept completely that that thinking can be improved upon. So please, let's continue the good work and very useful comments that we've already developed so far on that first section.

So then let's move on to the awareness and education. And here, I really needed to set out the assumptions that are used for this. And the assumption is that the people we're actually chasing after or are not for profits, social enterprises, and community organizations.

The second thing is that we're going to be focusing on underdeveloped and developing regions. And when we ask staff to develop their awareness and education programs, we would like them to focus on those particular areas.

Now, if anybody feels that my language is not inclusive, and if I haven't described it adequately, please feel free to polish, edit, amend as you see fit. But what I'd really like to understand is, does anybody disagree with these two assumptions that our main focus for applicants—for support will be not-for-profit social enterprises and community organizations, and drawn primarily from underdeveloped and developing regions? It doesn't exclude anybody. But those are the people we're really after.

So Maureen, I don't think those are criteria for applicants. I think that that is a set of assumptions in terms of the focus in outreach efforts. If that was a criteria for applicants, it would need to say support applicants must be not for profit social enterprises or community organizations. I wasn't willing to get into that area. I was rather suggesting that these are the types of people that we

want to be aware of the applicant support program. Lawrence, I see your hand.

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Aside from these demographics that you have highlighted, especially in regions where we hope to have applications coming in, talking about Africa or Latin America and the works, I think the basket will definitely need to be enlarged. I see businesses also [should be a point, target brands] and all that.

So it might not just be limited or rather, we shouldn't be limited to the civil societies and the sectors that you definitely have highlighted which is very okay. I think all the margin regions should be—we should be looking at especially the brands, putting them into the basket.

MIKE SILBER: Lawrence, I think you're misunderstanding. The session here is awareness and education. If you're of the view that we need to target commercial enterprises in terms of awareness and education, that's a different question. But this doesn't say that commercial enterprises will not qualify for applicant support.

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: So yes, I understand the discussion pretty well. And it is my take that even in terms of awareness, especially for the developing regions, for me, that's a place where we should focus on the commercial enterprises, it should be a priority, at the point where we're trying to get people to understand the process

leading up to [GGP.] I think it's an area that should also carry a lot of focus.

MIKE SILBER: Yeah, but for applicant support, or just general?

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: So like applicant support in the next round should open—I mean, we expect it to open up before the main round itself kicks off. So I pretty much see a situation where or I expect a situation where we would have a lot of interest or where we should have a lot of interest in applicant support, because it would not stop applicants from applying any further like we saw in the last round.

So the last round, if you go out for applicant support and you're not selected, you cannot go further in the process. So this is a different ballgame this time around. So I [inaudible] that there will be some interest for applicant support, and where they don't qualify, will still want to maybe muscle up the strength to still participate in the program because they'll still be eligible.

MIKE SILBER: Okay. Is there anybody else who supports the idea that we should not focus our outreach, our awareness and education and that we should approach commercial enterprises as well as noncommercial and social enterprises, community organizations, etc.? So zero focus. I took it as a given, but please, can we get some indication if there is support that we don't focus? Maureen, please.

MAUREEN HILYARD: Yes, thanks, Mike. I guess listening to Lawrence, I think, like for example, one of the things that we've just been talking about is that whole funding for people who are applicants, and this is where I guess when looking at that criteria, is that, I think that they're almost essential before we can even start looking at like what it is that we're going to be looking at.

The whole thing about—and I think it's been raised before, is that for moving forward, it's really important that in this awareness and education section, that people are made aware of what is actually required of applicants.

I've a feeling that we're going to get lots of requests from people applying who've got no real idea of what is involved in being a registrar, etc., etc. If these commercial enterprises—and again, it's to do with the criteria, what do they know already, what is their background, there's a whole lot of information that's required.

But if they're already set for actually establishing an application for a domain and there's absolute purpose behind it—it depends on what—the financial support may not be a real need for them. But there's other types of applicant support that would be helpful for them. So for me personally, I think that is probably an important category of applicant for support.

MIKE SILBER: Maureen, I have a challenge with that presumption. Does that mean that ICANN needs to set up in Silicon Valley going around to Silicon Valley enterprises trying to convince them that they

should apply for a new gTLD? Do we need somebody to go to Twitter and explain to them the benefits of a new gTLD? Because that's what we're essentially saying.

Are we going to regard—okay, maybe Twitter's a bad example. But let's take Tesla. Does Tesla qualify for applicant support and for priority in terms of awareness and education because they're interested in a gTLD and they don't know what's involved? So therefore, we need to prioritize them.

My suggestion is that in terms of the awareness and education for applicant support, that we should focus or ask staff to focus on a particular type of entity. Doesn't mean that other entities are not allowed to attend events. It doesn't mean that they're forbidden from—you'll see my recommendation of accessing the online materials.

But I'm not sure that the applicant support program is the right place for multinational organizations who are curious but don't know what's involved in running a registry to then come through. I think that dilutes what we're trying to achieve here. Lawrence, I don't know if you want to agree or disagree with me.

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Yes. Thanks, Mike. I very much understand where you're coming from around this. And I definitely know that, like you said, maybe the Twitters of this age isn't the appropriate example. But when it comes to the developing regions—try not to also use that word developing, I'm not sure if it sits right with everyone.

But if you look at the demographics—I agree and align that there are regions that applicant support should makes a lot of impact into getting them into the ICANN system and environments [inaudible] of those regions, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean and co.

For commercial entities in these regions, yes, they might have the capital to go through an exercise themselves. But maybe the actual support that they might need might be in line with Maureen was trying to outline earlier. We know that there have been commercial entities that have had to sit back wondering if this will be a good investment for their funds, their time and all that. And I guess one entity within ICANN that can help with that is the applicant support program. The target for me is not the global north but the global south. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER: Okay. Steve.

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Mike. So I know the question about the criteria has come up a couple of times. And as Mike noted, that's not within our scope. But since it's come up a few times, I thought I would just speak very briefly about what we do know from the 2012 round, which might be a little bit instructive, and also take into account what the SubPro group recommended, which was not materially changing the criteria in any drastic way.

So if you take a look at the 2012 handbook, it basically looks at the criteria from three different angles. One is public interest

benefit. The second criteria is about financial need. And then the third is looking forward about making sure that they have the financial capability to be able to operate the registry going forward.

So, as Mike notes, it's not within our remit to look at the criteria or try to redefine criteria. And we also don't know what the criteria will look like going forward because it will be subject to implementation.

But what we do know is that the SubPro group didn't recommend any drastic changes. One of the things that they did note is that the geographical elements, it shouldn't be limited to only underserved regions. It should also include—I can't remember the exact wording they used, but entities that are in maybe developed nations that are in struggling regions or something to that effect.

But they otherwise didn't drastically change the criteria. And it might be helpful to take a look at what the criteria looked like from 2012. Even if it doesn't define the process, it might still be instructive.

MIKE SILBER: Steve, I think that's an excellent idea. I'm pushing back a little bit because I'm not sure that I agree. And certainly the way the criteria were previously defined, I'm not sure that applicant support is intended for entrepreneurs.

There are plenty of VC opportunities for entrepreneurs to get funding if somebody's got the next big idea which can make lots of money. There are not a lot of opportunities for not for profit, social enterprises, community organizations, to raise the funding to apply

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or to get the financial assistance or technical assistance to take an application forward, which is why my view is that they should be our focus.

Now, again, if you disagree, please, let's relook at it. But I'm just really concerned about the ability to manipulate the system. If we say everybody—for profits are our focus area, for example, or an equal focus area to not for profits. I'm just worried that the ability to manipulate the program then becomes a significant one. And Steve, thanks for sharing those criteria.

We've had Lawrence, Maureen and myself debating this. Is there anybody who is going to come in so that we can at least see if there are other views on the topic? Or do we move on? And Maureen and Lawrence are welcome to suggest edits. Rafik.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Thanks. To be honest, all this kind of feeling of deja vu. Because it was discussed in length in the JAS working group about suggest for only for nonprofit or it can include like entrepreneur and so on. So it was quite limited.

And I think our focus is really that you want applicants from underserved regions that they should be mostly not for profit. And I think you can find in JAS working group kind of description just to explain what we're looking for. So I'm not sure that it's help. But just to share with you that's not really new topic that was discussed at that time. And we tried to find some kind of some acceptable solution or satisfying that we are not closing, just we

should really in the spirit of the recommendation really to focus on not for profit.

MIKE SILBER: Yep, thanks, Rafik. And again, the intent here is to provide staff with some guidance so that they can focus their outreach efforts. It's not to disqualify anybody or anything but to provide some level of focus. If you're looking for an event, do you go to a business event or do you go to a community or an event involving community organizations? That's the question.

Now there might be a different set of outreach that's required for businesses, the brands, entrepreneurs who want to get involved in the space. I think it's a different set of outreach. It might be legitimate, but I don't think it's our focus area. But again, please, the document's in there, or the text is up there. If you disagree and you want to suggest edits, please feel free.

Julie, if you're still controlling this, then maybe we should go down a bit. So now we're starting to get a little bit into operations. And Julie said she would help me a little bit in terms of some of the texts where I may have been stepping a little bit into operational issues.

But my thinking over here is that we want to go through a process. So the first is creating awareness. So they're in person events, as well as online, using both staff and community resources.

Now, that's quite difficult to develop metrics around there, because it's very difficult to measure. You can measure effort. But then what we want to start doing, or at least my view is we want to start

referring interested people to resources. Where there are prepared materials, we've spoken about some of those already.

The advantage of that is that you can actually start if you require people to register on a portal, you can actually start collecting metrics so that you know who they are, where they from, how they're engaging. If somebody chooses not to proceed with an application, you can ask them why. If the answer was this is too difficult and complicated, not good. If they turn around and say, I understand what's involved, and it's not for our organization so I've made an informed decision not to proceed, that's a huge win, then we're really successful.

So that was at least my thinking around using online resources, using a portal, having that engagement. But obviously, pre-prepared materials can only take you so far. You then need to go to a next step, which is people need to be able to start having more in-depth conversations, whether those are made more generally available. So the ability to access webinars, ask questions, one on one engagements with staff, as well as the ability to be introduced to those third parties who've indicated their interest and willingness to assist potential applicants who may require support.

Again, ICANN is not providing that assistance, but is simply providing the matchmaking facility. And again, using an online portal would be very useful, because we can actually see who has reached out, who has met whom. And we can then ask them if that's been useful.

Now, of course, this assumes that we have an online portal just waiting and that can be repurposed to these needs. But that at least was my thinking. And I don't know if anybody wants to engage, recognizing some of you haven't seen the proposal until now. I don't know if any of you want to engage in terms of my thinking in terms of how an engagement process could work and whether that makes sense or if you think I completely lost it.

And Maureen, to your question, pro bono support is not provided by ICANN. ICANN will facilitate interaction with third parties. But we've been through this before. ICANN is not providing pro bono support. And in terms of online training materials, again, my proposal at least is that there will be significant materials prepared, but I'm not sure they're necessarily classified as training materials. I don't know if you want to respond, Maureen.

MAUREEN HILYARD: Thanks, Mike. I was just going to be writing in the chat. But I think that this sets a very simple but clear process of engagement as you set out, and I see that as when we're coming to awareness and education, that's something we can build on. It's the first time I've seen it. But I like it. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER: And, Maureen, sorry to pick on you, but given your willingness to engage in the chat, we don't want to just have a text exchange. So that's why I'd appreciate your willingness to intervene on the call as well so we can try and provoke other people to participate in the discussion too.

MAUREEN HILYARD: I'm sure they're just sitting there thinking very carefully about what they want to say. I'm used to [inaudible]. But I do appreciate the work that you put into this, Mike. It's a great starting point for us. I think I'm right behind it. Thanks.

MIKE SILBER: Okay, so we have at least one vote of support from Maureen for at least the concept. So let's go through it, Julie. And I can just talk a little bit further in terms of what I was thinking.

So this really does step into the implementation side. But as I was explaining, the idea is to try and drive parties to online information and tools, starting to build lists of events, provide an opportunity for someone—is that the community as a whole, is it just this working group making suggestions for events? But ICANN staff are very well informed, especially on a regional level, but they may not know everything.

We split multiregional, regional, national, local events. We ship staff out to really important events where you're likely to see audiences from multiple countries or a significant number of regions—it was mentioned was ICANN meetings, but large meetings with multiple people from multiple regions warrants ICANN staff flying around the world.

Smaller events, we should make use of the technology as far as possible. But we should also be considering preparing materials so that the ICANN regional teams who may very well be attending many of these events, but who may not be subject matter experts,

can at least be used to help raise awareness without necessarily being able or expected to answer the very specific and detailed questions. Because at least in my notion, the idea of attending events is not to have individual one on one consultations with potential applicants requiring support, but rather to drive people towards an online tool.

And I've made a suggestion there that we even consider—and ICANN Legal may gulp very hard at the suggestion—is to what extent can GDS staff prepare some template or standard materials which can be considered public materials that you or I, if we happen to attend an event in our region, can actually stand up and say, "Hey, there's this interesting thing happening and here's where you go to get more information about it."

But the other thing is, I also think that we need to look at and encourage staff to look at nontraditional channels. So does ICANN need a TikTok channel? I have no doubt that my children would be more than happy to contribute. But if we do the same thing as we've always done, the likelihood is quite high that we will get the same outcome. And we want a different outcome. So we should be suggesting to staff some alternatives, some different ways of doing things so that they can consider those in terms of building and designing the program.

I don't know if that makes sense. And again, I'm acknowledging that a lot of this steps quite closely to implementation. And Julie has promised me her eagle eye to help refine some of my language so that it doesn't quite look as much like implementation as it currently does. Julie, please.

JULIE HEDLUND: Yes, thank you, Mike. And just to give an example, perhaps, to the working group members of what staff would suggest and ask working group members to suggest as well is to think of these implementation or operational points here more along lines of guidance recommendations.

So for instance, the first item, main purpose of awareness raising is to drive interested parties to online information tools and not try to provide people the information. That is in itself almost a guidance recommendation. And you could say instead, the purpose of the applicants for program awareness efforts should be to drive interested parties to online information tools and—or just stop at that.

Just trying to think a little bit less in implementation form and little more in guidance for implementation. Because that's exactly what we're trying to do here, what we're tasked to do, is to provide guidance to help ICANN and the implementation review team with its implementation.

So while there can be references to implementation steps, these should be framed more in terms of guidance recommendations. And staff can help with that language. And we certainly encourage working group members to help develop that type of language as well. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER: Thanks, Julie, much appreciated. We seem to have a very quiet working group.

JULIE HEDLUND: Shall I move along in the document, Mike?

MIKE SILBER: Please do?

JULIE HEDLUND: Thank you. Mike, do you want to speak to this section?

MIKE SILBER: No, I think it's pretty self-explanatory.

JULIE HEDLUND: I see Maureen's hand up.

MAUREEN HILYARD: Yeah. Just that, for example, the portal, I think a portal is actually critical, because we can't just rely on the awareness raising within the communities. We're not going to reach everybody. However, there's a better chance of more information being—if it's available online. I mean, I don't know what was online in 2012. Because I know that within our regional communities, within At-Large, getting that information out is probably more available if it's online, and we can support it in that way. So if anything, I think that they It's probably one of the most critical things for awareness and education and getting that the messages out to everybody. It's really important.

MIKE SILBER:　　　　　　Thanks, Maureen. That was my thinking, I haven't had staff throw something at me and told me that it's going to take years and cost tens of thousands of dollars or hundreds to build the portal. So I'm hoping that it can be done using the existing tools.

But the one thing that I see over there that is significantly missing is there's no reference to language support. And I do think that if we're going to move online, we need to provide some degree of language support.

MAUREEN HILYARD:　　　I'd have to agree with that. We're going to be getting out into the diverse regions and we're looking at global south, that is important. But [inaudible] wise, looking at the eventual benefits to the communities that we're actually selling this to, I think it's important that they are aware of what it is, but it's more that they're aware of what those responsibilities are in relation to moving forward. It's not just get it and happy days ever after. There's a lot of work that's involved. And I think that that's where getting that information out and making sure that they're aware of what those responsibilities are, not just applying for the actual application, but what happens beyond that as well.

And of course, there are lots of other sites already with that information and referring them to those other information links are important for the portal to be that gateway to other types of information that's going to be helpful. So setting it up, I think that's an ICANN responsibility. Thanks,

MIKE SILBER: I think you make an excellent point. And I think it's worthwhile including that. And again, we need to just work out with Legal and see how we can create a set of third-party resources in the same way as we're going to create third parties who are willing to offer their services either on a pro bono basis or on a deferred fee basis, we also need to include some of those excellent resources.

And we must just find out and ask staff to think how that gets done that doesn't create liability, because I know that there's always this hesitation. It's not just with ICANN, it's every organization, when you start linking third-party material, can you be held liable if there's a mistake in that third-party material? So it is something that we just need to ask staff to apply their minds to. But yeah, it's not our problem. Julie.

JULIE HEDLUND: I was just going to say it's not our problem. So this working group can go ahead and make guidance recommendations. We don't need to worry about whether or not something is feasible. Then in the implementation piece, that's when that step will happen.

So for example, the SubPro working group has made recommendations that now the Board is considering, some of which appear to perhaps contradict what's in the ICANN bylaws. So it's for Org and the Board to think about whether or not it's feasible to go ahead with those recommendations and how they might do so or whether or not they need to go back to the drawing

board. But at any rate, we should feel free to make the recommendations that we think are correct.

MIKE SILBER: Valid comments, Julie. Thank you. I just always prefer to think this through as far as possible. I agree with you, we shouldn't limit ourselves. But let's just think it through to turn around and say link everything in the world. We're asking staff to do some curation because we don't want rubbish over there because that doesn't help our potential applicants either if we start linking to material that's actually not helpful to them and could be harmful.

We do have—so Steve, valid comment, and Rafik, we do have GDS on the call. So the fact that they haven't raised their hands and screamed at us means that so far, we're reasonably on track. I'm sure if there's a concern that we are completely off [inaudible], they'll let us know. But let's move on.

So here, it's starting to look at a filtering, I used funneling. But the idea is give people general awareness of the program, point them towards a portal where they can start getting more detailed information. And if they think that is something that's going to be of interest to them, and they want more information, then we start pushing them into more resources, webinars, potentially scheduling one on one discussions with people that you can start actually engaging in a very directed and interactive basis to get more information.

It also, in my view, is the opportunity to start introducing them to the third parties who will be asked if they're willing to provide pro

bono or deferred fee services. And I think we may also want to even consider asking staff to expand, because I don't think it's only pro bono and deferred fee. I was speaking to the CEO of a registry the other day who suggested that he may be willing to work with potential applicants to understand how to select a backend registry service provider. And he may also be willing to assist in trying to help negotiate best prices with some of the backend registry providers so that people at least have some benchmarks in terms of the pricing that they can look at.

Now, as long as it doesn't turn into huge marketing opportunity for backend registry service providers, that might be very useful. I've no doubt that some of the backend registries will be willing to put their names down as well.

And Maureen, to your question of who does the outreach, my understanding is that staff would manage that, because when they build the portal, one of the items would be building a referral process. Because during the last round, we did have this mechanism, but people simply put their names down. And ICANN had no understanding of whether the services were used or not used, whether they were helpful or not helpful. It just became a bit of a blank screen.

So the idea here is that there will be an ICANN introductory service where people can put down the types of services they're willing to offer, and again, preferably behind a portal, so it's not necessarily open without registration. The portal can then facilitate the matchmaking so that we know that it's being used. And then we can actually ask both potential applicants and these third parties whether anybody made use of the service.

Yeah. I completely agree with you, Maureen, and I suspect Leon will be making a call to IT very soon afterwards to say, "Do you have something that can be used or is this going to be something that requires development?" I'm desperately hoping, again with Julie's admonition ringing in my ears, I do hope that it's something that can be built on existing platforms and doesn't need a completely new platform. Steve.

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Mike. You might have seen some of the—it was a little bit joking, but some of the friendly banter in chat between me and Rafik. And I thought it might actually be helpful to just take a look at what it involves when GDS provides feedback.

Generally, that feedback is not in the actual deliberations of the group like right now. It's often difficult for, say, Leon in this specific case to be able to provide an assessment every comment or piece of text that's put down into paper or discussed on the working group calls.

So generally what happens—and you can take a look at the IDNs EPDP as an example—what we try to do is to get the recommendations to a quote unquote stable place so that our GDS colleagues can have a better basis for considering them against feasibility.

So in our case, once we get to the point where we have some more concrete examples of concrete recommendations to be considered, that's a probably more likely place that GDS can perform that analysis and provide feedback to the group.

So I guess just to help explain the process by which GDS usually provides feedback to groups, which, it's helpful that they can actually provide feedback along the way, but it's not easy, I guess is the way to put it. So we'll probably be looking for that milestone where there's stable recommendations. That's a great place for GDS to come in. Thanks.

MIKE SILBER: Steve, thank you. Valid comment, and I agree with you, it seems to be friendly banter all in good spirits. So I don't think anybody is taking it the wrong way.

But the more helpful hints we can get—and I think Julie makes a very good point, let's set our guidance based on what we think is right, let's not do something that we know is not implementable. But again, at the right times, it really will be useful to get input from staff in terms of whether they would find something implementable, feasible, practical, concerning or not.

Because my preference is, if there's going to be a problem, it would be really helpful if we knew about it before we finalize the recommendations and send them off, rather than afterwards and we've got to go and try and fix things when it's really been finalized. So let's try and work collaboratively on that basis.

Given that we're at the 90 minutes, let's do a quick check if there's any AOB from anybody. Thank you also very much to those who have participated. Maureen in particular who is my very useful [inaudible], thank you for that. But thanks to everybody who's participated in the chat live on voice or just following the

discussion and very carefully considering and also making comments in the document itself. That's as useful if not more so than putting your hand up and speaking [inaudible] Julie.

JULIE HEDLUND: Yes, thank you, And please, everybody join me in thanking Mike for a very productive meeting and for the helpful proposal. And just to let everybody know the next meeting in two weeks is actually at ICANN 76 as a hybrid meeting. So that means if you're in person in Cancun, this will be an I person meeting. But of course, you'll have the usual options to attend remotely, as we always do. And so that's Monday, March 13th, 13:15 local time for 75 minutes, and there's the link to the schedule as well. Thanks again, everyone. And we'll send the document around again and ask for more comments and staff will also work to prepare some materials for ICANN 76. Thanks all. Bye.

MIKE SILBER: Thank you, everybody. Have a good day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]