

Detail of Communications About the Applicant Support Program

23 February 2012

Greetings to the At-Large New gTLD Working Group,

Thanks for your inquiry about ICANN's efforts to reach needy applicants. We admire the work the Joint Applicant Support Working Group did, and have been working hard to realize the inclusive vision of helping worthy but under-financed parties run a public interest TLD.

This correspondence lists our efforts to raise awareness about the Applicant Support Program (ASP) through various channels:

- Social Media
- Global Press
- ICANN's Website
- Live Events
- Other Activities

It concludes with a description of further efforts in progress.

Promotion of ASP through Social Media

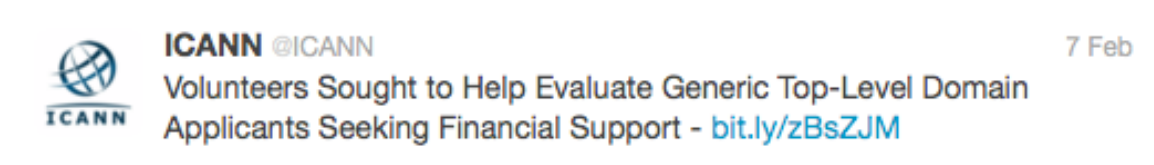
In the 10 weeks since the Board defined the ASP on [8 December 2011](#), the program has been the focus of regular promotion using our Twitter and Facebook tools, and through an aggressive, targeted online advertising campaign.

Helped by Burson-Marsteller, we ran Google ads about new gTLDs for seven weeks in 145 countries, especially including the 35 that the World Bank defines as lowest income. (There were six ads in the series; you can see one on our [Facebook page](#).) These ads were targeted geographically by IP address.

In deference to needy applicants, we opted not to run the campaign in North America so there would be more funds for the rest of the world. This might explain why an informal survey of ICANN Working Group regulars did not turn up awareness of the campaign.

One specific campaign using online "banner ads" targeted Chief Marketing Officers in developing economies. Together, the CMO-targeted campaign and Google Ad campaign sent nearly 22,000 visitors from 136 countries to the new gTLD website and delivered more than 5,550,000 impressions.

From our Twitter account, we publicized (and still publicize) ASP numerous times using as many different wordings as we could come up with. Examples include:



- Community organizations seeking to register #newgTLDs can apply for financial assistance. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/wUq6eo>
- The Applicant Support Program provides assistance to communities seeking to register #newgTLDs. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/wUq6eo>
- Financial assistance is available for needy #newgTLDs applicants. Learn more about the Applicant Support Program: <http://bit.ly/wUq6eo>
- @allafrica discusses global reach, financial assistance & opportunities for the African region with #newgTLDs <http://bit.ly/znErJI>
- #NewgTLDs will offer global Internet reach & opportunities for the African region according to @allafrica <http://bit.ly/znErJI> #ICANN

During this time period, ICANN's Twitter following mushroomed from 8,000 predominantly North American followers, to nearly 45,000 followers from all parts of the world. The biggest increases in followers of our Twitter account were measured in Jakarta, Nairobi, Istanbul, Lima and Cairo.

Promotion of ASP in Global Press

We have woven ASP awareness into the fabric of all new gTLD publicity and educational efforts. This has been necessary because of a perception by many outside our community that we are offering assistance in a complex program overseen by a "foreign company" about which most are largely unfamiliar. Thus, we must first introduce ICANN, then the Internet's domain system, then New gTLDs, and *only then* ASP.

Measuring the success of coverage in the developing world is difficult. We offer some statistics below, but we ask you to understand the difficulties of tracking the coverage and analyzing it. Since the 20 June 2011 approval of the New gTLD program, more than 10,000 articles about it have appeared around the world. Given that breadth of coverage (both numerically and geographically), it is beyond our capabilities to parse through all articles in all languages for mentions of "applicant

support.” While we obviously cannot control exactly what the media writes about ICANN and the New gTLD Program, we do our best to influence editorial direction.

Our actual Board mandate was, “Resolved (2011.12.08.03), the Board directs staff to amend the communications campaign as needed to incorporate the Applicant Support Program which should include the publication of a brief handbook.” We were asked to wrap the ASP into the new gTLD program generally, and to that end, almost any news coverage is beneficial. Some mention ASP, some don’t; we believe that almost any press about New gTLDs in developing countries contributes toward the goal of raising awareness.

In many areas where ASP will resonate, it is difficult to track media exposure. In Africa for instance, media tracking is notoriously difficult because of the emerging nature of many African media outlets, the wide variety of government controlled news outlets and the diversity of languages. However, we can document approximately 40 articles about the New gTLD program in Africa alone.¹ We believe that in all likelihood there have been many more press articles that our media monitoring services haven’t caught; for example, Vocus comes up with a greater number of articles, but it is hard to compare results because Vocus divides geographical regions differently than ICANN does.

Anne-Rachel Inné and Brad White provided in-depth briefings to reporters attending the largest journalism conference on the African continent ([Highway Africa](#)). Those briefings not only led to direct media coverage (i.e., [From Dot Com to Dot Anything - Modern Ghana](#)), but also provided a foundation of understanding for journalists who later wrote about the ASP, even before the program had been finalized (i.e. [ICANN Board focuses on assistance for developing economies by CIO East Africa](#)). The impact of our media relations and our on-going engagements in this region might best be summarized by the headline of a widely distributed AGP News Service story – [“ICANN Engagement in Africa Bears Fruit.”](#)

At the end of this document, you can find detail on how many articles about the New gTLDs program we can find in the developing world, broken out by country. All told,

- ¹ Specifically the following (all articles were in English except where noted): [Star Africa](#) in both French and English, [ThinkAfricaPress](#) in both French and English, [Afrik.com](#) in both French and English, [A24media](#); [Afribiz](#) in English for Business-related news releases only, [CodeWit](#), [MyZa.co.za](#), [Ugandan Radio](#), [Crossover.co.ke](#), [Spyghana](#), [Senetoile News](#) in French, [African News Media](#), [Nigeria Newslane](#), [Nigeria News24](#), [AfricanBrains](#), [Africa News](#), [ModernGhana](#), [The Nigerian Voice](#), [En-Afrique.Info](#) in French, [AfricaBusiness.com](#), [itwebafrica.com](#), [Afrinnovator.com](#), [AfricaNews](#), [Marketing Site](#), [africanews.fyiag.com](#), [ghanapolitics.net](#), [nigerianewsdaily.com](#), [in2eastafrika.net](#), [allnewsghana.com](#), [bulawayo24.com](#), [africafocus.org](#), [africab.net](#), [informafrica.com](#), [Africa-News](#), [Afropages](#) in English and French, [Ghanaianreactoronline.com](#), [newsblaze.com](#), [Izuba.info](#) in French, [Ivorian.net](#) in English and French, [The New Age newspaper](#), [Notre Vision](#) in French and [PanAfrican Times](#).

we find almost 2,500 articles published in the World Bank's five designated regions for developing countries:

Number of Earned Media Articles in World Bank Developing Regions	
Asia and Pacific	1017
Latin America and Caribbean	651
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	601
Middle East / North Africa	68
Sub-Saharan Africa	150
TOTAL	2,487

This does not count the number of blogs written specifically on the ASP, as we do not have tools to track them. Nonetheless, we know anecdotally there were many.



Promotion of ASP on ICANN's Website

All of our outreach efforts have directed followers to ICANN's website. In the last 10 weeks, ICANN staff has:

- Created the [Financial Support Handbook](#), translated it into the five UN languages, and posted it online.
- Updated the [Applicant Support pages](#) on the New gTLDs microsite, which includes the Applicant Support Directory, providing a way to enroll as an applicant seeking assistance and as an organization offering assistance. At least a dozen entities have responded in each category (seeking donations and offering donations).
- Created all forms and processes necessary to apply for financial assistance.
- Created a banner ad, displayed on the microsite to call attention to the program (pasted below). This helps capitalize on all the traffic driven to the New gTLD site in general, as Applicant Support is touted prominently:

Applicant Support Program

- Pro Bono Services
- Reduced Evaluation Fees
- Donate to the Program



In addition, the staff:

- Introduced for public comment our [implementation plans](#) for applicant support; completed the public comment period; analyzed and summarized the comments; and posted the results [[PDE](#), 164 Kb]
- Issued an announcement calling for Expressions of Interest by volunteers willing to serve on the Support Applicant Review Panel. We also issued this as a press release, and published it on [PR Web](#), where several different news aggregators picked it up. Examples include the [San Francisco Chronicle](#), [Managing IP](#), the [National Journal](#), and [The Hill](#).

Promotion of ASP through Live Events

A plethora of live events were dedicated to raising awareness about new gTLDs, and the Applicant Support Program was mentioned at almost all of them. Because the ASP was not fully defined until 8 December, at many of these events we could only say “a group is working on it” or “the Board is considering recommendations from the JAS WG,” but the potential for applicant assistance was consistently highlighted. Here is a high-level summation of our outreach events.

Number of Events per Region	Region	Total Attendees per Region
4	Africa	750
19	Asia/Australia/Pacific	1,389
3	Latin America/Caribbean	5,700
27	Europe	5,330
6	North America	1,250
Total # of Events = 59		14,419 = Total # of attendees

A wide spectrum of ICANN representatives (Board Directors, staff, registry representatives, and others) have spoken at 59 live events. Several of these events occurred in countries the World Bank classifies as lower-middle-income or low income; specifically, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, and Ukraine.

Other Activities

Two more significant activities do not fall into the other categories, but demonstrate our commitment to reaching the world with news of the ASP.

First, after the new gTLD program was approved last June, ICANN mailed a letter to governments to make them formally aware of the program. We sent the document to 136 government representatives related to the GAC, and to 87 governments that are not GAC members. While this is not publicity of Applicant Support *per se*, it is another effort to make governments in developing countries aware of new gTLDs.

Second, two months ago ICANN contracted a full-time consultant with notable fund-raising experience, Dennis Chang, to serve as Program Manager for Applicant Support.

ASP Promotions In Progress or Planned

ICANN has not slowed its efforts to promote the ASP, and we have more efforts currently in progress:

- We wrote a fact sheet neatly summarizing the Applicant Support Program. It has been reviewed by Legal and approved by Kurt Pritz on 17 February 2012, and should be released by the time you read this.
- We are creating a PowerPoint presentation that community representatives can use to describe the program. The first draft is done and the presentation is currently being edited and refined.
- We began posting Facebook updates specifically about Applicant Support during the week of 13 February, and will continue doing so:



ICANN

Would you like to have a hand in ushering in the biggest change to the Internet in years? Want to help close the digital divide? You have the opportunity to ensure innovation and economic development created by the Internet are open to all. If you are interested, you can find the details below.

ICANN | ICANN Seeks Evaluators for the Support Applicant Review Panel (SARP) – Request for Expressio
www.icann.org

ICANN – Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

Like · Comment · Share · Wednesday at 2:08pm

4 people like this.

1 share

We also have envisioned a social media campaign that would use “twibbons” to raise awareness of the ASP among the Twitter and Facebook followers of ICANN

participants. We hope to collaborate with the At-Large New gTLD Working Group on this program; you'll be hearing more about it this week.

Conclusion

We believe these facts demonstrate that ICANN is acting upon the desire to inform all peoples that they are included in the New gTLD program.

Thus far, [12 organizations](#) have posted their desire to receive pro bono assistance. (Note that these are not TLD applications, but we cite them as evidence of some awareness of the availability of help for potential applicants.) Current funding of the Applicant Support Program is sufficient to assist 14 deserving applicants. Dennis Chang has lead weekly sessions devoted to strategizing ways we can encourage donors to provide additional funding, so we are diligently examining ways we can expand the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to list our efforts to date. We recognize the importance of this program both to ICANN and to global Internet users, and we sincerely welcome and will consider any practical suggestions you (or anyone in the community) can offer for spreading news of the Applicant Support Program further.

Best Regards,

The Communications Team
ICANN

News Media Coverage of New gTLDs in the World Bank's Five Designated Regions for Developing Countries (June 2011 – February 2012)

NOTE: The charts below were compiled using Vocus media monitoring analytics. They document by country the number of news stories about the new gTLD program in each of the five regions. Different monitoring tools provide substantially differing results. We believe these figures are conservative.

