**Announcement**

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| **Work Continues to Increase Developing Economies Participation in the New gTLD Program** | | | | |
| **Comment Period Deadlines (\*)** | | | |  |
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| **Open Date:** | 13 Oct 2011 | | |  |
| **Close Date:** | 16 Dec 2011 | **Time (UTC):** | 23:59 |  |
| **Section I: Description, Explanation, and Purpose** | | | | |
| A message from the JAS WG:  Public comment is requested concerning the **Final Report** which deals with a very important issue: *How can ICANN assist applicants from developing economies increase their participation in the new generic Top-Level Domain (New gTLD) Program?*  Translations of the Final Report [PDF, \_\_\_ KB]:  1  2  3  4  5  The Final Report is the last step of the work done by the Joint Applicant Support Working Group (JAS WG). The group is represented by ICANN community members from around the world that have been working together on this initiative since April 2010. The Report offers recommendations on how ICANN should develop a sustainable approach to providing support to applicants from developing economies requiring assistance in applying for and operating new gTLDs Registries under the New gTLD Program. The Report proposes initial criteria for qualification as well as several other types of support for ICANN to consider. It has been approved by ALAC and the GNSO, the chartering organizations. | | | | |
| **Background** | | | | |
| Below are some basic aspects of this work.  *This proposal is currently under consideration by ICANN community, Board and Staff. A Program is under development and further details will be made available on ICANN’s website to the general public.*  The JAS WG was formed following a [Resolution](http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-12mar10-en.htm) from ICANN Board of Directors in Nairobi, on March 2010 that asked ICANN's stakeholder community *"...to develop a sustainable approach to providing support to applicants requiring assistance in applying for and operating new gTLDs."*   1. **What is this all about? What is a Final Report?**   The Final Report is a document produced by the JAS WG that offers recommendations on how ICANN should develop a sustainable approach to providing support to applicants from developing economies requiring assistance in applying for and operating new gTLDs Registries. The Final Report proposes initial criteria for qualification as well as several other types of support for ICANN to consider. It has been approved by the GNSO and ALAC, the chartering organizations.  This initiative is related to the New gTLD Program, which in the near future will allow entities from around the world to apply for a new generic top-level domain (new gTLD). The applicants passing the evaluation process will sign a contract with ICANN and run a Registry.   1. **Who is being considered to receive support?**   Once the new gTLD applicant interested in receiving support has demonstrated "service to the public interest," "financial capabilities and need," one or more of the following characteristics apply:   * + Support by and/or for distinct cultural, linguistic and ethnic communities;   + Service in an under-served language, the presence of which on the Internet has been limited;   + Operation in a developing economy in a manner that provides genuine local social benefit;   + Advocated by non-profit, civil society and non-governmental organizations in a manner consistent with the organizations’ social service mission(s); and   + Operation by a local entrepreneur(s), providing demonstrable social benefit in those geographic areas where market constraints make normal business operations more difficult.   The Final Report also recommends that it instead use the internationally agreed-upon UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs list:   * Least Developed Countries: category 199; * Landlocked Developing Countries: category 432; * Small Island Developing States: category 722; * Indigenous Peoples, as described in Article 1 of Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.All applicants will be expected give a self-declaration that they are eligible to receive support under these criteria.  1. **Who does NOT qualify for support?**   According to the JAS WG, the application must NOT have any of the following characteristics:   * An applicant for a gTLD string that is not a generic word intended to reference a specific commercial entity (commonly referred to within ICANN as a “dot-brand”); * A governmental or para-statal institution; * A gTLD string that is a geographic name or is based on one; * Affiliated with sponsors or partners that are bankrupt or under bankruptcy protection; * Affiliated with sponsors or partners that are the subject of litigation or criminal investigation; * Incapable of meeting any of the Applicant Guidebook’s due diligence procedures.  1. **Who benefits from this? Why is it important?**   We all benefit from this initiative. The Internet belongs to all as well as the responsibility to look into effective ways to reduce the Digital Divide, in this particular case, by delivering a sustainable and critical support for applicants from developing economies and looking for a solution not only at the application phase but also through to the initial years of these new Registry operators.  It is important because the Internet is a virtual real estate that belongs to everyone. Entities from around the world should be able to increase their participation in the top-level expansion. The Working Group also stresses it is important not only to increase participation from developing economies, but also to increase the likelihood of success by these new participants that will be delivering Domain Name Services (DNS).  The current New gTLD Program, as designed, has an evaluation (and several other fees) that are considered high for a significant number of potential participants from around the world. Besides the issue of high fees, the program is in English only and has an evaluation process with criteria and requirements that are quite complex to navigate.   1. **What kind of assistance in being considered?**   The Final Report proposes a full array of financial and non-financial support to be offered to applicants that meet the established criteria.  The support should be available in the first and all subsequent rounds of new gTLD applications.  Currently ICANN has launched an online work space dedicated to connect potential applicants from developing regions who wish to apply for a New gTLD in their community with organizations who wish to offer either financial or non-financial assistance. See details on how this space works here: <http://newgtlds.icann.org/applicants/candidate-support>.   1. **Who is part of this Working Group?**   The JAS WG is comprised of highly respected and experienced volunteers from the Supporting Organization and the Advisory Committee. This all-volunteer group teleconferences twice each week, and works through a Wiki and mailing lists. These active contributors are located in Australia, Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, North America and the Caribbean. | | | | |
| **Section III: Document and Resource Links** | | | | |
| Relevant Resolutions and previous Public Comment Forum:   * <http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-12mar10-en.htm#20> * <http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-25sep10-en.htm#2.2> * <http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-28oct10-en.htm> * <http://gnso.icann.org/resolutions/#201004> * [First Milestone Report Public Forum](http://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/public-comment-201012-en.htm#jas-milestone-report) * <http://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/second-milestone-report-10jun11-en.htm>   [Information about the New gTLD Program](http://www.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtld-program.htm)  Archive regarding the WG activities:   * E-mail: [soac-newgtldapsup-wg@icann.org](mailto:soac-newgtldapsup-wg@icann.org) * Wiki: <https://community.icann.org/display/jaswg/SO-AC+New+gTLD+Applicant+Support+Working+Group+%28JAS-WG%29> | | | | |
| **Section IV: Additional Information** | | | | |
| The JAS WG will hold a session during the upcoming ICANN Dakar Meeting (<http://dakar42.icann.org/full-schedule>) to both explain the Final Report and receive additional community feedback. This session will have remote participation for the people not able to attend in person.  The JAS WG recently held a webinar about the Final Report. The webinar has been recorded and is available in English, French and Spanish. See recordings here (<http://gnso.icann.org/calendar/#sep>) | | | | |