**Developing countries and New gTLDs**

The **Milestone Report** published for public comment today deals with a very important issue: *how should ICANN help and/or setup a program to help New generic top-level domain (New gTLD) applicants from developing countries?*

A Working Group (WG) formed by ICANN stakeholders has been working since April 2010 to address this issue. This WG was formed after a Resolution from ICANN Board of Directors in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 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."*

Here are some basic aspects of this important work.

1. **What is this all about?**

The Milestone Report offers recommendations on how ICANN should develop a sustainable approach to providing support to applicants from emerging markets/nations requiring assistance in applying for and operating new gTLDs Registries. The Report proposes initial criteria for qualification as well as several other types of support that can be provided, for example, technical, informational, etc.

Although this work presents the foundation for ICANN to establish a Support Development Program dedicated to this issue, the work is not final yet. This report is going to be considered by the Board, staff and ICANN’s supporting 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 gTLD. If an applicant passes the evaluation process, it will sign a contract with ICANN and run a Registry.

1. **Why is it important?**

It is important because the Internet is a virtual real estate that belongs to everyone. All new gTLD projects nations around the world should have access and be allowed to participate in the top-level expansion. It is also ICANN’s core values to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ reinstated in the Affirmation of Commitments \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The current New gTLD Program, as design, has an evaluation (and several other fees) that are considered high for a significant number of countries around the world. Besides the issue of high fees, the program is English only and has an evaluation process with criteria and requirements that are quite complex.

1. **What are the highlights of this report?**

This report approached the issue of accessibility from several angles. First, there are recommendations to lower the fees for applicants the meet the criteria recommended by this group. The initial focus is on a relatively limited and identifiable set of potential applicants that is often considered not controversial to support. The main criterion for eligibility is “need”. The detailed definition of financial need and the method for determining the needs of an application will be part of a continued work.

1. **Who is part of this Working Group?**

This Working Group is composed by representatives from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and by individuals. There are \_\_\_ countries represented and a diversity of professional background and expertise. See here the complete list of members and here the meetings recordings (under JAS WG)

1. **Who will be entitled to receive support? Who benefits from this?**

The WG is proposing that the following are eligible for support:

* Community-based applications such as cultural, linguistic and ethnic;
* Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), civil society and not-for-profit organizations;
* Applicants geographically located in emerging markets/developing countries;
* Applications in languages whose presence on the web is limited;
* Entrepreneurs wanting to serve a developing market that might not be sustainable under the current cost structure.

Also, in this phase, the WG has not adopted any specific classification and recommends using a classification that is internationally agreed upon, for example, G-77 or United Nations or World Bank classifications.

We all benefit from having an Internet that is accessible to all.

1. **What happens next?**

Few things will happen in the upcoming months:

* The general public is strongly encouraged to participate in the public forum that can be found here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* The Board, staff, supporting organizations will review the Milestone Report and public comments received.
* The Supporting organizations and Board will allow for the continuation of this initiative, which means that this or a new working group will carry this work to a next phase.
* Staff might initiate working on the Support Development Program, depending on Board direction.
1. **How can one get involved?**

One way to get involved is to provide a feedback using ICANN’s public comment forum. This is one of the ways ICANN listens to the global Internet community. You can find the link to the forum here\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The public forum will close on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If you feel strongly about this (and other Internet related issues) join ICANN by attending the Meetings (next one is in Cartagena beginning of December); join one of our stakeholder groups. At-Large is a great place to start; Join the volunteer working group.

1. **How can one help?**

If you are an individual, see participation opportunities in # 7. If you are an organization willing to explore opportunities for providing aid and service, please write to karla.valente@icann.org using the subject Applicant Support – New gTLD Program.

1. **Where to find more information?**

Information on this working group’s members, activities, previous reports, etc:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Information about the New gTLD Program:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relevant Board resolutions:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_