ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.03.12.1a

TITLE: **Updates to the Process for GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency Charter Amendments**

PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The ICANN Bylaws, Article 11, Section 5.c, state that each Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Stakeholder Group and its associated Constituencies "shall maintain recognition with the ICANN Board." The ICANN Board has interpreted this language to require its approval of any GNSO charter amendments. The ICANN Board Organizational Effectiveness Committee (OEC) oversees GNSO charter amendments through the Process for Amending GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency Charters ("Process"), which the ICANN Board established in 2013.

The ICANN organization ("ICANN org") developed updates to the Process based on over a decade of experience managing the Process and from working with several GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies. The updates include a request for GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies to inform ICANN org when charter amendment begins rather than when it concludes. Additionally, the updates to the Process encourage the use of templates that align with the GNSO Operating Procedures and Recommendation 6.5 (viz., to increase ICANN community group accountability through regular updates to their policies and procedures) of the Final Report of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability Work Stream 2. ICANN org conducted Public Comment on the proposed updates to the Process and developed a summary report of the four supportive submissions for the review of the OEC.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The OEC recommends that the ICANN Board approve the updates to the Process.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, the ICANN Bylaws, Article 11, Section 5.c, state that each Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Stakeholder Group and its associated Constituencies "shall maintain recognition with the ICANN Board."

Whereas, the ICANN Board Organizational Effectiveness Committee (OEC) oversees GNSO charter amendments through the Process for Amending GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency Charters ("Process"), which the ICANN Board established in 2013.

Whereas, the ICANN organization ("ICANN org") developed updates to the Process and conducted a Public Comment proceeding, which received four supportive submissions.

Whereas, the OEC reviewed the updates to the Process and the Public Comment summary report and recommended that the ICANN Board approve the updates to the Process.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the ICANN Board approves the updates to the Process and directs the GNSO and ICANN org to adopt it with immediate effect.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

The ICANN Board approves the updates to the Process on the recommendation of the OEC, building on over a decade of ICANN org experience managing the Process and working with GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies. The ICANN Bylaws, Article 11, Section 5.c, state that each GNSO Stakeholder Group and its associated Constituencies "shall maintain recognition with the ICANN Board." The ICANN Board has interpreted this language to require its approval of any GNSO charter amendments. The OEC oversees GNSO charter amendments through the Process for Amending GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency Charters, which the ICANN Board established in 2013.

ICANN org proposed updating the Process in early 2022. The goal of updating the Process was to streamline charter amendments for GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies, ensuring their continued focus on generic top-level domain policy development. The updates to the Process allow for more in-depth review by ICANN to consider the evolving needs of GNSO community groups. The updates to the Process also provide an opportunity for a GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency to work with ICANN org to establish an appropriate timeline for the effort that is not bound by the Process.

Finally, the updates to the Process recognize the continuous evolution of the GNSO and better reflect the review roles of the ICANN Board and ICANN org.

The updates to the Process include a request for GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies to inform ICANN org when charter amendment begins rather than when it concludes. This ensures ICANN org can engage with GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies earlier in the Process, serving as a resource about best practices in ICANN community governance. Additionally, the updates to the Process encourage the use of a charter template and an operating procedures template that align with the GNSO Operating Procedures and Recommendation 6.5 (viz., to increase ICANN community group accountability through regular updates to their policies and procedures) from the Final Report of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability Work Stream 2. The templates include revised sections to address the increasing complexity of governance documents.

Recent governance developments in GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies also served as motivation for updating the Process. At least one GNSO Stakeholder Group has been incorporated as a legal entity in the United States and other GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies have been considering incorporation. Motivations for incorporation, in the United States and in various other countries, include protection from financial and tax liabilities related to the collection of membership dues. This raised broader questions about how ICANN supports the ICANN community, especially when other legal entities are involved.

Shortly after the OEC approved the updates to the Process for Public Comment in July 2022, two GNSO Constituencies and one GNSO Stakeholder Group began work to amend their charters. ICANN org refrained from opening the Public Comment proceeding to avoid changes to the Process while those three GNSO groups were actively working on their charters. This work concluded in early 2025, and ICANN org worked with the OEC to restart the work to update the Process. ICANN org briefed the OEC and conducted a Public Comment proceeding on the updates to the Process. Four submissions, including from the Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers Constituency, Registrar Stakeholder Group, and Registries Stakeholder Group, expressed support for the updates to the Process. Having reviewed the Public Comment summary report, the OEC recommended that the ICANN Board approve the updates to the Process.

This action is within ICANN's mission "to coordinate the development and implementation of policies … [t]hat are developed through a bottom-up[,] consensus-based multistakeholder process and designed to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique names systems." This action is in the public interest because "ICANN and its constituent bodies shall operate to the maximum extent feasible in an open and transparent manner and consistent with procedures designed to ensure fairness." It also furthers ICANN Strategic Goal 1.1 to "Ensure Inclusive Stakeholder Representation and Enhance Collaboration."

This action is not expected to have any fiscal impact or any impact on the security, stability, and resilience of the Domain Name System.

This is an Organizational Administrative Function for which Public Comment was received.

Submitted by: Chris Buckridge
Position: OEC Chair
Date: 23 February 2026
Email address: chris.buckridge@board.icann.org

REDLINE VERSION:

Process for Amending GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency Charters

(September 2013)

Overview

Charters of Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies are approved by their respective memberships and the ICANN Board according to the ICANN Bylaws. As a best practice, each Stakeholder Group and Constituency should review its charter and governance documents on a regular basis. In addition, Work Stream 2 (WS2) Recommendation 6.5 (Updates to Policies and Procedures) of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability encourages regular updates.

This document *replaces* the process established by the ICANN Board in 2013. The process has been updated in recognition of the continuous evolution of the multistakeholder ICANN community and to reflect the review roles of the ICANN Board and ICANN organization.

Questions about this process can be directed to policy-staff@icann.org.

Phase 1: Charter Revision

1. Initiate. When a GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency begins a charter revision process, it should notify its ICANN organization support team as soon as possible. Together, the ICANN organization and GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency may establish an appropriate timeline for the review.
    a. *Liaison.* The GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency should identify a liaison to the ICANN organization for the charter revision process.
    a. *Templates.* A charter template and an operating procedures template are available to guide GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies. The templates account for requirements in the ICANN Bylaws, GNSO Operating Procedures, and applicable WS2 recommendations.

2. Revise. During the charter revision process and at the request of the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency, the ICANN organization may serve as a resource. The ICANN organization may identify requirements related to ICANN reviews and implementation. The aim is to raise concerns early and prior to approval by the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency.
3. Conclude. The GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency should approve any proposed charter amendments according to its operating procedures. After approval, the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency sends the proposed charter amendments to its ICANN organization support team. *Note: If required, proposed amendments to GNSO Constituency charters must first be submitted to the applicable GNSO Stakeholder Group for consideration*~~SG for review and evaluation~~ *before ICANN org review.*~~being forwarded to Staff and Board.]. Subsequently, after formal community action approving any proposed amendments, the Staff should be formally notified of that action as early as practicable (at policy-staff@icann.org).~~

Phase 2: ICANN Organization~~II: Staff~~ Review

a. Initial Review. After the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency submits its revised charter, the ICANN organization~~Upon formal receipt of the proposed amendment(s) approved by the community group, ICANN Staff~~ will identify any areas of concern or outstanding questions related to ICANN governance and legal requirements.

a. Engagement. Depending on the complexity of the documents and potential issues, the ICANN organization may engage in a discussion with the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency. The timing of this engagement may vary.

b. Submission to the ICANN Board. After the ICANN organization completes its review, it will ~~analyze the proposal and, within 10 business days,~~ submit the proposed charter amendments ~~community proposal with a report~~ to the appropriate ICANN Board committee as a report, identifying any fiscal, legal, or governance~~liability~~ concerns for its consideration. ~~.~~

Phase 3~~III~~: Public Comment~~Comments~~

When the appropriate ICANN~~After~~ Board committee approves~~review of~~ the ICANN organization~~Staff~~ report of~~and~~ the proposed charter amendments, it then directs the ICANN organization to open ~~the Board committee will direct the opening of~~ a Public Comment proceeding. The Public Comment proceeding will include an overview~~Forum. Upon completion~~ of the proposed charter amendments. The ICANN organization~~Forum, within 30 calendar days, Staff~~ will prepare~~provide~~ a Public Comment summary report of all submissions for~~to~~ the consideration of the appropriate ICANN Board committee. ~~summarizing the community feedback.~~

Phase 4: ICANN~~IV:~~ Board Review

The appropriate ICANN ~~At the next available opportunity after the delivery and publication of the Staff report, the appropriate~~ Board committee will~~shall~~ review the proposed charter amendments, the report by the ICANN organization, and the Public Comment summary~~Staff~~ report then~~and any community feedback and~~ make a recommendation for~~to~~ the consideration of the ICANN Board. At any point in its consideration, the ICANN¶
~~After receiving a recommendation from the committee, the~~ Board may engage with the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency for more explanation and information about the proposed charter amendments.~~shall either:~~

The ICANN Board can either:

1. Recognize the proposed charter amendments~~amendment~~ by a simple majority vote; or
2. Reject the proposed charter amendments~~amendment~~ by a supermajority (⅔)~~(2/3)~~ vote and provide ~~a~~ specific rationales~~rationale~~ for its concerns.

Phase 5: Adoption

1. ICANN Board recognition~~If neither above condition is met, the Board will ask for further explanation~~ of the proposed charter amendments constitutes approval. The GNSO Stakeholder Group~~by the community.~~¶

¶
~~In its review of the proposed amendments, the ICANN Board may ask questions and otherwise consult with the affected SG~~ or Constituency~~. If it is not feasible for the Board to take action on the proposed amendments after two meetings, the Board~~ shall adopt the amended charter and publish it. ~~report to the affected SG or Constituency the circumstance(s) that prevented it from making a final action and its best estimate of the time required to reach an action. That report is deemed an "action" under this process. If it is not feasible for the Board to take action on the proposed amendments after four meetings (or after a total of six scheduled meetings), the proposed community amendments will be deemed effective.~~

Process for Amending GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency Charters
(March 2026)

Overview

Charters of Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies are approved by their respective memberships and the ICANN Board according to the ICANN Bylaws. As a best practice, each Stakeholder Group and Constituency should review its charter and governance documents on a regular basis. In addition, Work Stream 2 (WS2) Recommendation 6.5 (Updates to Policies and Procedures) of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability encourages regular updates.

This document *replaces* the process established by the ICANN Board in 2013. The process has been updated in recognition of the continuous evolution of the multistakeholder ICANN community and to reflect the review roles of the ICANN Board and ICANN organization.

Questions about this process can be directed to policy-staff@icann.org.

Phase 1: Charter Revision

1. Initiate. When a GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency begins a charter revision process, it should notify its ICANN organization support team as soon as possible. Together, the ICANN organization and GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency may establish an appropriate timeline for the effort.
    a. *Liaison.* The GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency should identify a liaison to the ICANN organization for the charter revision process.
    b. *Templates.* A charter template and an operating procedures template are available to guide GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies. The templates account for requirements in the ICANN Bylaws, GNSO Operating Procedures, and applicable WS2 recommendations.
2. Revise. During the charter revision process and at the request of the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency, the ICANN organization may serve as a resource. The ICANN organization may identify requirements related to ICANN reviews and implementation. The

aim is to raise concerns early and prior to approval by the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency.

3. Conclude. The GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency should approve any proposed charter amendments according to its operating procedures. After approval, the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency sends the proposed charter amendments to its ICANN organization support team.

   Note: If required, proposed amendments to GNSO Constituency charters must first be submitted to the applicable GNSO Stakeholder Group for consideration before ICANN organization review.

Phase 2: ICANN Organization Review

1. Initial Review. After the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency submits its revised charter, the ICANN organization will identify any areas of concern or outstanding questions related to ICANN governance and legal requirements.
2. Engagement. Depending on the complexity of the documents and potential issues, the ICANN organization may engage in a discussion with the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency. The timing of this engagement may vary.
3. Submission to the ICANN Board. After the ICANN organization completes its review, it will submit the proposed charter amendments to the appropriate ICANN Board committee as a report, identifying any fiscal, legal, or governance concerns for its consideration.

Phase 3: Public Comment

When the appropriate ICANN Board committee approves the ICANN organization report of the proposed charter amendments, it then directs the ICANN organization to open a Public Comment proceeding. The Public Comment proceeding will include an overview of the proposed charter amendments. The ICANN organization will prepare a Public Comment summary report of all submissions for the consideration of the appropriate ICANN Board committee.

Phase 4: ICANN Board Review

The appropriate ICANN Board committee will review the proposed charter amendments, the report by the ICANN organization, and the Public Comment summary report then make a recommendation for the consideration of the ICANN Board. At any point in its consideration, the ICANN Board may engage with the GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency for more explanation and information about the proposed charter amendments.

The ICANN Board can either:

1. Recognize the proposed charter amendments by a simple majority vote; or
2. Reject the proposed charter amendments by a supermajority (⅔) vote and provide specific rationales for its concerns.

Phase 5: Adoption

ICANN Board recognition of the proposed charter amendments constitutes approval. The GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency shall adopt the amended charter and publish it.

21 January 2026

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.03.12.1b

TITLE: **Interpretation Equipment and Technical Support**

PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Board is being asked to approve contracting with the preferred vendor to provide interpretation equipment and related technical support during the various meetings ICANN holds throughout the year. The contract with the provider is not intended to exceed Confidential Negotiation Information over a period of Confidential Negotiation. Although ICANN will not be signing a contract with a set amount, according to the rate sheet which determines the approximate cost for each meeting, ICANN expects the expense to exceed US$750,000 Confidential Negotiation Information, under ICANN's Contracting and Disbursement Policy, the Board is required to approve entering into, and making disbursements in furtherance of, the contract.

ICANN STAFF AND BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATION:

ICANN staff and the BFC recommend that the Board authorize the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all necessary actions to enter into, and make disbursement in furtherance of, a new contract for interpretation equipment and related technical services for the period of Confidential Negotiation Information in the amount not to exceed Confidential Negotiation Information

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN has a need for interpretation equipment and related technical support during its various meetings, to provide much needed language support for the community.

Whereas, ICANN has a need to, per its sourcing strategy, occasionally revisit the market and evaluate if a current supplier still provides the best value to ICANN.

Whereas, ICANN conducted a request for proposal to select an established provider with a global footprint; technical expertise; remote simultaneous interpretation capabilities; and adequate equipment.

Whereas, the proposed contract does not obligate ICANN to any upfront financial commitment, as it is simply an agreement of terms and pricing (rates), Confidential Negotiation Information Confidential Negotiation Information

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make disbursement in furtherance of, a new contract for interpretation equipment and related technical services for the period of Confidential Negotiation Information in the amount not to exceed Confidential Negotiation Information

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), specific items within this resolution shall remain confidential for negotiation purposes pursuant to Article 3, section 3.5(b) of the ICANN Bylaws until the President and CEO determines that the confidential information may be released.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

ICANN holds a variety of meetings each year, in-person as well as virtually. The business language in which these meetings are conducted is English, with simultaneous interpretation in the remaining languages in the ICANN Language set (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish), plus Portuguese, when required for GAC sessions, and the local host language when conducting a meeting in a region where the language is spoken. The types of ICANN meetings are:

- ICANN Public Meetings
- ICANN Regional Meetings
- ICANN Prep Week

The ICANN Public Meetings are held three times each year in different regions of the globe to enable attendees from around the world to participate in person. Each ICANN Public Meeting held throughout the year has a different focus and duration. In order throughout the year, the meetings are known as the Community Forum (CF), Policy Forum (PF), and Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Additionally, regional meetings as well as a series of meetings that precede the ICANN Public Meetings, are held to complement ICANN's outreach and community work.

Many community members prefer communication in their native language during the meetings described above. While many are able to follow a discussion or a presentation in English, lack of fluency may prevent them from participating or speaking up during Public Meetings. ICANN's Language Services Department is responsible for bridging this gap by arranging simultaneous interpretation during these meetings. Interpretation supports the global ICANN community and significantly lowers the barrier to participation for those who are not proficient in English. This contributes to improving the effectiveness of the multistakeholder model. Having the ability to communicate in one's language is essential for the success of ICANN's global, multistakeholder community.

While on-site simultaneous interpretation is the default service for ICANN Public Meetings, Language Services also supports regional meetings, webinars, and Prep Week sessions via Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI) to accommodate factors such as location, budget considerations, venue limitations, technical capabilities and safety issues among others. Both types of interpretation require equipment and technology rental, as well as related technical support to be provided by an outside provider.

Confidential Negotiation Information

Executing a new contract with Confidential Negotiation Information is now necessary to ensure the continued success of language interpretation at ICANN meetings Confidential Negotiation Informatior

Per ICANN's sourcing strategy, it is necessary to occasionally revisit the market
Confidential Negotiation Information

ICANN launched a request for proposal (RFP) in 2025 to identify one or more provider(s) qualified to supply interpretation equipment as well as the corresponding technical support related to that equipment.

In addition, the objective of this RFP was also to:

1. Adhere to best practices, including transparency
2. Provide the ICANN community and meeting participants with reliable and cost effective multilingual support during ICANN meetings

After the extensive RFP evaluation process, Confidential Negotiation Information

The decision to select the preferred vendor to support ICANN's needs for interpretation equipment and the corresponding technical support was based predominantly on the following factors:

Confidential Negotiation Information

ICANN now seeks to enter into a Confidential Negotiation Information with the preferred vendor with a total cost not to exceed Confidential Negotiation Informa The contract does not obligate ICANN to anything, as it is simply an agreement of terms and pricing (rates), not explicit engagement of service. The total expected amount is the estimated spend over the Confidential Negotiation of the contract, based on the planned service to be provided over several meetings/events. Confidential Negotiation Information

Both ICANN staff and the BFC recommended that the Board authorize the President and CEO to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, a new contract with the preferred provider, covering the period of Confidential Negotiation Information

This action is within ICANN's Mission and is in the public interest as it is important to ensure that, in carrying out its Mission, ICANN utilizes available funding in the most effective and efficient manner to support the diverse ICANN community to be in the best interests of ICANN and the global Internet community.

This decision will have a fiscal impact, but the impact has already been accounted for in the FY26, and will be accounted for in the FY27 and future ICANN Operations budgets.

This is an Organizational Administrative Function that does not require public comment.

Signature Block:

Submitted by:	Sally Newell Cohen
Position:	SVP, Global Communications
Date Noted:	21 January 2026
Email:	sally.newellcohen@icann.org

21 January 2026

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.03.12.1c

TITLE: **IT Security Vendor Contract**
PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

ICANN staff is seeking Board approval to contract with the preferred cyber-security vendor Confidential Negotiation Information

. The value of the contract to be signed with the provider

Because the proposed contract exceeds US$750,000, under ICANN's Contracting and Disbursement Policy, the Board is required to approve entering into, and making disbursements in furtherance of, the contract.

ICANN STAFF AND BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATIONS:

Both ICANN staff and the BFC recommend that the Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all necessary actions to enter into, and make disbursement in furtherance of, a new contract for the preferred vendor for the period Confidential Negotiation Information in the amount not to exceed Confidential Negotiation Information

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, combining contracts for Confidential Business Information

capabilities will improve efficiencies by giving ICANN a unified contracting approach with the same terms for these products.

Whereas, the ICANN staff and the Board Finance Committee recommended that the Board approve the below resolution.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make disbursement in furtherance of, a new contract with the preferred vendor, for a term of Confidential Negotiation, for a total amount not to exceed Confidential Negotiation Information

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), specific items within this resolution shall remain confidential for negotiation purposes pursuant to Article 3, section 3.5(b) of the ICANN Bylaws until the President and CEO determines that the confidential information may be released.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

21 January 2026

ICANN's current infrastructure must evolve to keep pace with the rapidly expanding cyber-threat landscape. Confidential Negotiation Information

During this time, ICANN realized notable improvements in threat visibility, defensive capabilities, and the overall security of end-user devices through event and incident escalations.

Confidential Business Information

Over the past several years, ICANN has expanded its cybersecurity protection suite by adding individual products, which resulted in multiple separate contracts with the same vendor. ICANN is now seeking to bundle all services into Confidential Negotiation Information

Executing the new single contract with the preferred vendor would total US Confidential Negotiation Information term that includes all of the above mentioned products and services.

The Confidential Negotiation Information is justified by the strategic direction of the ICANN Engineering & IT (E&IT) function to procure best-in-class cybersecurity tooling at a reasonable price point.

The decision to consolidate all products and services of the current provider under a single contract that ICANN uses today was based on several factors. First, ICANN engaged an independent external research firm to assess and benchmark multiple leading providers in the cybersecurity space.

Confidential Negotiation Information

Consequently, ICANN is now seeking to enter into a Conf dent a Negot at o contract with the preferred provider with a total cost not to exceed Conf dent a Negot at on Inform. Both ICANN staff and the BFC recommended that the Board authorize the President and CEO to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, a new contract with the current provider, covering the period of Confidential Negotiation Information. The Board agrees with these recommendations.

This action is within ICANN's Mission and is in the public interest as it is important to ensure that, in carrying out its Mission, ICANN utilizes available funding in the most effective and efficient manner to be in the best interests of ICANN and the global Internet community.

This decision will have a fiscal impact, but the impact has already been accounted for in the FY26, and will be accounted for in the FY27 and future ICANN Operations budgets.

Further, this decision is intended to have a positive impact on the security, stability or resiliency of the domain name system. The decision also supports and increases the information security risk management capabilities of ICANN.

This is an Organizational Administrative Function that does not require public comment.

Submitted by: Andre Abed, CIO, Head of Engineering and Information Technology
Date: Noted: 21 January 2026
Email” andre.abed@icann.org

ICANN BOARD SUBMISSION No. 2026.03.12.1d

TITLE: **Asset Manager and Custodian Selection Approval**

PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Board is being asked to approve engaging with various firms to serve as asset managers and custodians for ICANN's funds under management following the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select such firms. The Board's approval is requested considering that each of the firms will either be acting as the asset manager or custodian of US$200 million or more of ICANN funds. After conducting the RFP,

Confidential Negotiation Information

that staff recommended should be engaged.

BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATIONS*:*

The BFC recommends that the Board authorize the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, contracts with the selected asset managers and custodians for investment management and custody of ICANN's investments

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN staff issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking asset management and custodian services to manage and hold ICANN's funds under management.

Whereas, ICANN received 17 responses to the RFP from qualified asset management and custodian firms.

Whereas, staff reviewed all responses to the RFP, interviewed eight asset management and custodian firms, and recommended that

Confidential Negotiation Information

Furthermore, staff also recommended that

Confidential Negotiation Information

Whereas, the Board Finance Committee (BFC) recommended that the Board pass the below resolution.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the ICANN Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all necessary actions to contract with the selected asset managers and custodians for investment management and custody of ICANN's investments.

Resolved (2026.03.12.XX), specific items within this resolution shall remain confidential for negotiation purposes pursuant to Article 3, section 3.5(b) of the ICANN Bylaws until the Interim President and CEO determines that the confidential information may be released.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

In accordance with the Board approval of the revised Investment Policy on 21 November 2025, staff issued an RFP to select asset managers and custodians. After reviewing the proposals of 17 candidates and interviewing eight candidates, ICANN staff determined that three of its current asset managers Confidential Negotiation Information are best in class and thus should be retained. Due to the expected size of funds to be managed based upon estimates for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, staff and the BFC also recommended that ICANN add Conf dent a N as it demonstrated strong market knowledge and capabilities. Furthermore, staff and the BFC recommended that Confidential Negotiation Information as they demonstrated strong custodian capabilities. Additionally, staff and the BFC recommended that ICANN should retain the custodial services of the Conf dent a Negot at on Informat on as it demonstrated strong global custodian services. All firms have demonstrated their ability to perform in compliance with ICANN's Investment Policy. The Board agrees with staff and the BFC's recommendations.

This action is consistent with ICANN's Mission and is in the public interest as it is vital to ensure the management and safeguarding of the funds ICANN utilizes to carry out its mission in an effective and cost efficient manner, with the best interests of ICANN and the global Internet community in mind.

The suggested change is not expected to have any fiscal impact, or any impact on the security, stability and resiliency of the Domain Name System.

This is an Organizational Administrative Function that does not require public comment

Submitted by:	Xavier Calvez; SVP, Planning and Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Dated Notes:	27 February 2026
Email:	xavier.calvez@icann.org

11 February 2026

ICANN BOARD SUBMISSION No. 2026.03.12.1e

TITLE: **October/November 2027 ICANN Meeting Venue Contracting**

PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Board is being asked to authorize the ICANN President and CEO to take all steps necessary to complete contracting for the host venue in Adelaide, Australia for the October/November 2027 ICANN Public Meeting. While it is management's responsibility to identify and select sites for ICANN Public Meetings in accordance with the Board-approved strategy, per the ICANN Contracting and Disbursement policy the Board must approve any contracts that will exceed US$750,000, as this will. The Reference Materials for this paper summarize the steps taken to locate a site for the October/November 2027 Public Meeting and outline various meeting costs. The amount of Board approval being sought for the host venue is not to exceed

Confidential Negotiation Information

ICANN ORGANIZATION AND BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATIONS:

Both ICANN staff and the BFC recommend that the Board authorize the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all actions necessary to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, contract(s) for the host venue in Adelaide, Australia for ICANN's October/November 2027 Public Meeting in an amount not to exceed

Confidential Negotiation Information

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN intends to hold its October/November 2027 Public Meeting in the Asia Pacific region.

Whereas, selection of the Adelaide, Australia location adheres to the geographic rotation guidelines established by the Meeting Strategy Working Group.

Whereas, ICANN staff has completed a thorough review of the venue and finds the one in Adelaide, Australia to be suitable.

Whereas, both ICANN staff and the Board Finance Committee have recommended that the Board authorize the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, contract(s) for the host venue in October/November 2027 ICANN Public Meeting in Adelaide, Australia.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all actions necessary to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, contract(s) for the host venue for the October/November 2027 ICANN Public Meeting in Adelaide, Australia in an amount not to exceed Confidential Negotiation Information

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), specific items within this resolution shall remain confidential for negotiation purposes pursuant to Article 3, section 3.5(b) of the ICANN Bylaws until the President and CEO determines that the confidential information may be released.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

As part of ICANN's Public Meeting strategy, ICANN seeks to host a meeting in a different geographic region (as defined in the ICANN Bylaws) three times a year. ICANN90 is scheduled for 30 Ocotber - 4 November 2027. Following a search and evaluation of available venues, the organization identified Adelaide, Australia as a suitable location for the ICANN Public Meeting.

The organization performed a thorough analysis of the available locations that met the Meeting Location Selection Criteria (see https://meetings.icann.org/en/host). This analysis included ICANN's health, safety and security assessment including mitigation plans for ICANN meeting participants. Based on the proposals and analysis, ICANN has identified Adelaide, Australia as the location for ICANN90. Selection of this Asia Pacific location adheres to the geographic rotation guidelines established by the Meeting Strategy Working Group.

The Board Finance Committee (BFC) has carried out its standard due diligence in reviewing the proposed Board decision to recommend approval to the Board. As part of this diligence, the BFC has reviewed the financial risks associated with the proposed decision and the information provided by the org on the measures in place to mitigate those risks. The BFC has found these financial risks and the mitigation in place reasonable and acceptable.

The Board has reviewed the staff's briefing for the costs of hosting the meeting in Adelaide, Australia and agrees with the BFC's recommendation that the proposal meets the significant factors of the Meeting Location Selection Criteria, as well as the related costs for the facilities selected, for the October/November 2027 ICANN Public Meeting

ICANN conducts public meetings in support of its mission to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems and acts in the public interest by providing free and open access to anyone wishing to participate, either in person or remotely, in open, transparent, and bottom-up, multistakeholder policy development processes.

There will be a financial impact to ICANN in hosting the meeting and providing travel support as necessary, as well as to the community in incurring costs to travel to the meeting. However, such impact would be faced regardless of the location and venue of the meeting and will be accounted for in the FY28 budget.

This action will have no impact on the security or the stability of the Domain Name System.

This is an Organizational Administrative function that does not require public comment.

Submitted by:	Sally Costerton
Position:	Sr. Advisor to President and SVP
Date Noted:	11 February 2026
Email:	sally.costerton@icann.org

REFERENCE MATERIALS TO BOARD SUBMISSION No. 2026-03-12-1e

TITLE: **October/November 2027 ICANN Meeting Venue Contracting**

DETAILED ANALYSIS:

1. Background:

ICANN staff conducted a search and analysis of available venues in the Oceania region. After considering all options, staff has selected Confidential Negotiation Information for ICANN90 in October/November 2027, and is recommending contracting with Confidential Negotiation Information for this meeting.

2. Site Visit:

- Confidential Negotiation Information In July of 2025, staff conducted a site survey and found the Confidential Negotiation Information to be suitable for a large ICANN meeting.

3. Discussion of Issues:

- Meeting Rooms: The Confidential Negotiation Information has excellent conference facilities for an ICANN Public Meeting.
- Host Hotels: The Confidential Negotiation Information , will serve as the host hotel for the ICANN90.
- Host: ICANN is currently in discussion with Conf dent a Neg to be the local host. Additionally, ICANN will receive logistical and financial support from Confidential Negotiation Information
- Area Hotels: Many other area hotels that are accessible via walk, taxi, ICANN shuttle, or free tram offer a wide variety of guest room accommodations at varying price points.
- Food & Beverage Outlets: The Confidential Negotiation Information will provide food for sale for meeting delegates at a reasonable cost. In addition, there are many restaurant options in close proximity to the Confidential Negotiation Information
- Air Travel: Air access to Conf dent a Negot at on In is good, with flights arriving from all large Conf dent a Negot at on Inform cities as well as a good selection of international hubs. A majority of international itineraries will require only one stop in route although some may require two.
- Ground Transportation: Confidential Negotiation Information is seven kilometers/15 minutes from the meeting venue. Taxi fare is approximately US$18 - 25.
- Safety & Security: A risk assessment by ICANN security has not identified any areas of concern with Confidential Negotiation Information in general, that would require other than standard security measures provided for an ICANN Public Meeting.

***** Confidential Proposal Information Set Forth Below*****

Confidential Negotiation Information

***** Confidential Proposal Information Set Forth Above*****

Submitted by:	Sally Costerton, Sr. Advisor to President and SVP, Global Stakeholder Engagement
Dated Noted:	10 February 2026
Email:	sally.costerton@icann.org

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.03.12.2a

TITLE: **System for Standardized Access/Disclosure Policy Recommendations**

PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The objective of this paper is to provide the rationale for ICANN Board action on the 18 consensus policy recommendations for a System for Standardized Access/Disclosure (SSAD), as delivered to the Board in 2020. The accompanying resolution outlines the rationale for the Board's decision not to adopt the recommendations and instead request the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council to undertake additional policy work. The Board action on the SSAD policy recommendations triggers additional community work on Supplemental Recommendations that would enable the Registration Data Access Service (RDRS), or a successor system, to serve as a long-term solution for third parties requesting access to generic top-level domain (gTLD) nonpublic registration data. The Board resolution also outlines desired outcomes for community evaluation of the existing policy recommendations, as well as related policy work on timelines for urgent requests and requests for underlying registration data for customers using privacy and proxy services. The Board notes the important parallel community work on an enforceable timeline for urgent requests and the related efforts by ICANN org and the community on identifying authentication mechanisms for law enforcement requestors.

As background, the two-year pilot period for RDRS closed in November 2025. In October 2025, the ICANN Board adopted a resolution to continue RDRS operations for up to two additional years while the community continues related policy work on consensus policy recommendations for a SSAD, requests for underlying customer data for registrants using privacy and proxy services, an enforceable timeline for urgent requests that are authenticated, as originally envisioned in the SSAD recommendations, and other relevant procedures. The SSAD consensus policy recommendations have been outstanding since the GNSO Council adopted them in 2020. Following the organization's Operational Design Assessment on how an SSAD may be implemented, the GNSO Council asked the Board to postpone consideration of the policy

recommendations until a two-year pilot service could be tested and provide data to inform a Board decision about the SSAD recommendations.

CAUCUS RECOMMENDATION:

At its 24 January 2025 workshop, the Board agreed to adopt a resolution that clearly explains why the Board is choosing not to adopt the SSAD recommendations at this time. Specifically, the Board believes that the GNSO's work on Supplemental Recommendations (as described under the Bylaws, Annex A, Section 9d) will allow for modifications to the existing policy recommendations to align them with the necessary enhancements identified by the Board and community, and will ultimately yield a long-term solution for requesting access to generic top-level domain (gTLD) nonpublic registration data.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, on 24 September 2020, the Generic Names Supporting Organization Council (GNSO Council or Council) voted to approve all of the recommendations in the Final Report on the Expedited Policy Development Process on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data (EPDP) Phase 2, and the report notes that the Council and ICANN Board should consider the recommendations as one package;

Whereas, on 25 January 2022, the ICANN organization published the System for Standardarized Access/Disclosure (SSAD) Operational Design Assessment (ODA) to aid the ICANN Board in its consideration of GNSO policy recommendations as a result of the EPDP Phase 2 work;

Whereas, on 17 November 2022, the GNSO Council confirmed that "pending the implementation and subsequent running of the Whois Disclosure System for a period of up to two (2) years, the SSAD recommendations should remain paused for consideration by the ICANN Board."

Whereas, on 27 February 2023, the ICANN Board adopted a resolution directing the President and CEO, or her designees, to implement what was then named the WHOIS Disclosure System for a period of up to two years;

Whereas, the ICANN Board noted in its resolution that the metrics from system usage and observation of trends would inform future discussions the GNSO Council requested about the future of outstanding SSAD policy recommendations;

Whereas, on 28 November 2023, the ICANN organization launched the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS), previously called the WHOIS Disclosure System, for requestors and for voluntary registrar participation;

Whereas, during the pilot, the ICANN organization published monthly usage metrics, quarterly satisfaction survey results from both requestors and participating registrars, and has discussed and documented enhancements to the service with the GNSO Standing Committee on RDRS;

Whereas, the GNSO Standing Committee has completed its Findings Report on the RDRS and recommended that the service continue to operate while further GNSO policy work on a successor system is pending;

Whereas, the GNSO Standing Committee, in its Findings Report, recommended that the GNSO Council in turn recommend that the ICANN Board reject the SSAD recommendations as a package and send them back to the GNSO Council for further action and Supplemental Recommendations;

Whereas, the GNSO Standing Committee also recommended that the ICANN organization continue working on potential system enhancements while policy work continues, including, but not limited to, possible law enforcement authentication mechanisms developed in collaboration with the Governmental Advisory Committee's Public Safety Working Group (GAC PSWG);

Whereas, on 30 October 2025, the ICANN Board adopted a resolution directing the ICANN President and CEO, or his designee(s), to continue operations of the RDRS for a period of up to two years, until December 2027, while the community continues its deliberations regarding the future of the service and related policy recommendations;

Whereas, on 30 October 2025, the ICANN organization concurrently published the RDRS Policy Alignment Analysis for public comment, to obtain feedback on the proposed options for aligning policy work on requests for underlying customer data for registrants using privacy and proxy services, an enforceable timeline for urgent requests that are authenticated, as originally envisioned in the SSAD recommendations, and other related procedures with the Board and community's requested enhancements for RDRS or successor system, and the Board is expected to give full consideration to public comments during its consultations with the GNSO Council;

Whereas, the RDRS pilot period ended in November 2025;

Whereas, the Board and the GNSO Council discussed the resolution of the SSAD policy recommendations at the Council’s 12 February 2026 meeting and agreed that nonadoption of the SSAD recommendations would open the path for community work on Supplemental Recommendations;

Whereas, the ICANN Bylaws, Annex A, Section 9d, foresee that in the event the Board finds that PDP recommendations are not in the best interest of the ICANN community or ICANN, "the Council shall review the Board Statement for discussion with the Board as soon as feasible after the Council's receipt of the Board Statement".

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the Board finds, based on discussions with the GNSO Council and the broader ICANN community, that the System for Standardized Access/Disclosure (SSAD) Recommendations in the EPDP Phase 2 Final Report are not in the best interests of the ICANN community or ICANN, and therefore does not adopt these recommendations at this time, having determined that its rationale for not adopting the original recommendations, as detailed in the Board Statement, remains valid;

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the ICANN Board urges the GNSO Council to ensure that future policy work on the SSAD recommendations is aligned with other relevant policy work; and is completed within the Board’s two-year operational extension for RDRS, which ends in November 2027.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the Board extends its great appreciation to the community, RDRS Standing Committee, and GNSO Council, all of whom have invested considerable time and resources in participating in the RDRS pilot, providing feedback and aligning on next steps for the SSAD policy recommendations.

Rationale for Resolutions 2026.03.12.xx – 2026.03.12.xx

Why is the Board addressing the issue?

The RDRS pilot concluded in November 2025. Over the course of two years of operations, the ICANN Board has considered and evaluated input from the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council, RDRS Standing Committee, Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), Registrars Stakeholder Group (RrSG), Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG), and the ICANN community and extensively reviewed all of the SSAD-related materials including EPDP Phase 2 Final Report, SSAD Operational Design Assessment, RDRS Standing Committee Findings Report, RDRS Policy Alignment Analysis and Public Comment Summary, and Timeline for Urgent Requests Public Comment Summary to determine the next steps for the SSAD recommendations. The Board also directed the ICANN organization, in the resolution adopted in October 2025, to continue operating RDRS for up to two years while policy recommendations for a long-term solution for requests for nonpublic gTLD registration data are adopted, implemented, and aligned with other open policy issues, including the disclosure of underlying data for domains registered under privacy/proxy service providers, as well as a timeline for responses to urgent requests from law enforcement authorities.

What are the proposals being considered?

The ICANN Board plans to not adopt the 18 SSAD policy recommendations as a package. The EPDP Phase 2 team indicated that the Board must consider the recommendations as a single package: “Only in relation to the SSAD related recommendations, the EPDP Team considers these interdependent and as a result, these must be considered as one package by the GNSO Council and subsequently the ICANN Board.” (See p. 11 of the Final Report.) The Board requests the community to evaluate how to move forward with SSAD policy recommendations.

Which stakeholders or others were consulted?

The Board has reviewed the EPDP Phase 2 Final Report, SSAD Operational Design Assessment, RDRS Standing Committee Findings Report, RDRS Policy Alignment Analysis and Public Comment Summary, and Timeline for Urgent Requests Public Comment Summary. The Board has also engaged with the Standing Committee and consulted with the GNSO Council on the SSAD policy recommendations, as well as with the GAC on the timeline for urgent requests.

What concerns or issues were raised by the community?

The GNSO Standing Committee encouraged the GNSO Council to consider modifying parts of the EPDP Phase 2 policy recommendations, as referenced on page 13-29 of the RDRS Standing Committee Findings Report. Some community members have expressed concerns about the timeline and pace of work required to align the relevant policies for a timeline for urgent requests, including implementation of law enforcement authentication mechanisms, and requests for underlying customer data for domains using privacy and proxy service providers. Others also noted that resourcing and operational burden should be carefully considered given the original SSAD recommendation concerns, emphasizing that next steps should be deliberate, well-scoped, and explicitly tied to established policy mechanisms.

What significant materials did the Board review?

The ICANN Board reviewed the EPDP Phase 2 Final Report, SSAD Operational Design Assessment, RDRS Standing Committee Findings Report, RDRS Policy Alignment Analysis and Public Comment Summary, and Timeline for Urgent Requests Public Comment Summary**.** The Board has also engaged with the Standing Committee and the GNSO Council on the anticipated consultation on the SSAD policy recommendations.

What factors did the Board find to be significant?

The expectation that the SSAD recommendations are considered as a package was referenced by the Standing Committee, EDPD Phase 2 Team, and others in the community. As such, the Board is taking action on all 18 recommendations as a package in this resolution in order to trigger the GNSO's Supplemental Recommendation process as defined in the Annex A, Section 9 of the ICANN Bylaws.

Are there positive or negative community impacts?

The ICANN Board's plan to not adopt the 18 SSAD policy recommendations is predicated upon the lessons learned from two years of the RDRS pilot, and community feedback that has regularly emphasized the need to revisit the SSAD policy recommendations. In addition, the community expressed positive views of the collaborative experience in revisiting Subsequent Procedures policy recommendations, which the Board also did not adopt, and the procedural flexibility it allowed ICANN org. However some community members (GAC) voiced concerns that some recommendations could be lost should the Board not adopt them at this stage, which is not the Board's intention in choosing not to adopt the recommendations..

Are there fiscal impacts or ramifications on ICANN (strategic plan, operating plan, budget); the community; and/or the public?

This decision will have no direct fiscal impact or ramification on ICANN, the community or the public. A financial assessment of continued RDRS operations while the community continues its policy work was considered when the Board adopted a resolution in October 2025. That resolution noted that continued operation of the RDRS can be supported with existing ICANN operational resources as the community continues policy work.

Are there any security, stability or resiliency issues relating to the DNS?

There is no negative impact to security, stability, and resiliency of the Domain Name System should the Board not adopt the 18 SSAD policy recommendations. Supplemental Recommendations will offer similar or improved benefits for DNS security, stability and resilience by providing a streamlined mechanism for parties to request access to nonpublic gTLD registration data.

Is this decision in the public interest and within ICANN's mission?

The decision not to adopt the SSAD recommendations and subsequently request Supplemental Recommendations is in the public interest, as it will allow the community to make the modifications necessary to align the recommendations with the relevant policies outlined in the RDRS Policy Alignment Analysis and include the enhancements both the community and ICANN Board have indicated are important for RDRS or a successor system that offers third parties a platform to submit requests for nonpublic registration data to contracted parties.

Is this either a defined policy process within ICANN's Supporting Organizations or ICANN's Organizational Administrative Function decision requiring public comment or not requiring public comment?

This decision does not require public comment.

Signature Block:

Submitted by: Eleeza Agopian

Position: Vice President, Strategic Initiatives

Date Noted: 8 March 2026

Email: eleeza.agopian@icann.org

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.03.12.2b

TITLE: **Nominating Committee Standing Committee Charter Updates**

PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In 2023, the ICANN Board approved a group of proposed improvements for the Nominating Committee (NomCom) arising out of the Second Organizational Review of the NomCom. One of those items was a charter for the NomCom Standing Committee, a new body to provide continuity on certain organizational and process related items across different NomCom Cycles. The NomCom Standing Committee charter, which was drafted in accordance with the Board-approved recommendations, anticipates that the ICANN Board will comprise the Standing Committee, and that all four appointed members would have prior NomCom service and come from different parts of the ICANN community. After running two cycles seeking expressions of interest for service, the eligibility limitations yielded few candidates who did not collectively meet the diversity composition. The Board Governance Committee has recommended that the Board initiate a public comment on an updated Standing Committee Charter that would expand membership eligibility.

BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (BGC) RECOMMENDATION:

The BGC recommends that the Board initiate public comment on a proposed update to the NomCom Standing Committee Charter that would extend eligibility to those who have experience with entities receiving appointments from the NomCom. This update is proposed to widen the pool of candidates available for service on the NomCom Standing Committee, while maintaining a focus on continuity in process.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, as part of its consideration of the recommendations from the second Organizational Review of the Nominating Committee (NomCom2 Review), on 10 September 2023, the ICANN Board approved the inaugural Nominating Committee

Standing Committee (Standing Committee) Charter, after receiving public comment on the same.

Whereas, ICANN has attempted to comprise the Standing Committee through two calls for Expressions of Interest, issued on 10 December 2024 and updated on 25 February 2025. Of the nine expressions received, only eight met the eligibility requirements, and among those eight, ICANN could not reach a composition that also accounted for members being from different parts of the ICANN community.

Whereas, the ICANN Board continues to support the goal of the Standing Committee, to bring more continuity and predictability into NomCom processes and relieve each NomCom from having to attend to administrative manners that might divert its attention from its annual appointment tasks. The restrictive eligibility requirements combined with diversity considerations have made the task of comprising the Standing Committee difficult.

Whereas, as the NomCom is comprised of and provides service to groups across ICANN, and has regular interactions with those groups, NomCom processes could benefit from reflections from those involved in those processes as part of the entities that receive appointments from the NomCom.

Whereas, the Board Governance Committee has identified a proposed update to the Standing Committee charter to expand eligibility requirements while still supporting the goals anticipated for the Standing Committee.

Resolved, (2026.03.12.xx) the ICANN Board directs the ICANN President and CEO (or his designee) to post for public comment the proposed update to the NomCom Standing Committee Charter. The Board will consider next steps with the Charter after receiving community feedback.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

What is the proposal being considered?

The Board is considering an update to the charter for the Nominating Committee (NomCom) Standing Committee, a new body chartered as part of the outcomes of the Second Organizational Review of the Nominating Committee. The Board seeks public comment on a proposed updates to the Standing Committee charter that have been developed to make the Standing Committee easier to comprise while still respecting the fundamental purpose of the Standing Committee. Specifically, the proposed updates balance the need for expertise and sustainability in comprising the Standing Committee by:

- Maintaining preference for at least two seats for those who have served previous terms on the NomCom, which maintains the Charter's recognition that prior NomCom service as a preferred qualification for appointment; and
- Broadening the pool of qualified candidates to long-standing ICANN community members that have both: (a) a minimum of five years' active involvement in ICANN; and (2) recent service in one of the ICANN community groups that receive appointments from the NomCom and in a role that included coordination with the NomCom.

The Standing Committee Charter can only be changed after public comment and ICANN Board approval.

Background and Purpose of the Standing Committee

In the final report of the second Organizational Review of the Nominating Committee (NomCom2 Review), published on 5 June 2018, the independent examiner conducting the review found that there was a lack of continuity in processes across different years within the NomCom, such that the operational performance of each annual NomCom was routinely impacted. The independent examiner recommended that a Standing Committee be formed to suggest and assist in implementing changes to NomCom processes, since the NomCom itself operates on a tight timeline and needs to focus on its recruiting and evaluation activities.

In September 2023, in relation to Recommendation 24 of the NomCom2 Review, the Board approved the standard Bylaws amendments on Article 8 on the implementation of the NomCom Standing Committee and the NomCom Standing Committee Charter, as revised to address public comments.

The NomCom Standing Committee Charter currently defines the Standing Committee composition as five members: four appointed members and one ex-officio observer. The term of all four appointed members shall be three years. The ICANN Board, or a subset thereof, is responsible for the selection of candidates to the NomCom Standing Committee. As the Charter currently stands, the four members are each required to have served one full term on the NomCom. There are also stated preferences for the diversity of Standing Committee members, trying to avoid overlaps in the entities that named the delegates to the NomCom in the first instance.

The purpose of the NomCom Standing Committee is to:

- Support continuous improvement to the NomCom Operating Procedures and associated processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the NomCom while enhancing the NomCom’s commitment to transparency and accountability to the overall ICANN community.
- Provide continuity across annual NomCom cycles and to build the institutional memory of the NomCom.

The NomCom Standing Committee does not participate in, oversee, or influence the decision-making processes of the annual candidate evaluation and selection activities. The NomCom Standing Committee is also prohibited from participation in, oversight of, or influencing the selection of delegates to serve on the NomCom, which is the sole responsibility of the appointing bodies. The NomCom Standing Committee will not have access to any confidential information available to the NomCom.

The experience in trying to comprise the first iteration of the NomCom Standing Committee demonstrates the limitations of the current eligibility criteria. The first call for expressions of interest to serve on the Standing Committee, issued in December 2024, yielded five responses for the four seats, but did not allow for composition that would meet the diversity expectation of the group. The second call, in February 2025, resulted in four additional applicants. Of the nine applicants, one did not have prior service on the NomCom, and among the remaining, it was still difficult to comprise the Standing Committee to the terms defined in the Charter. The limited pool of candidates available after two calls highlights the need to broaden the eligibility criteria to secure enough qualified candidates while still retaining a preference for NomCom alumni.

Continuing to proceed with a narrowly constituted committee could limit credibility, inclusiveness, and effectiveness, and may constrain the Standing Committee's capacity to fulfill its mandate.

In considering the issues with comprising the Standing Committee, the ICANN Board Governance Committee recommended a path to the Board that could make composition easier while still respecting the purpose for the group. Notably, while the Standing Committee requires some specialization in experiences with the NomCom, there are other sources of experience that could bring both innovation and continuity to the design of NomCom processes. The NomCom serves a unique role that is for the benefit of the broader ICANN community. The NomCom not only receives delegates from across groups in the ICANN community, but it also makes appointments to many of those same groups. While much of the NomCom's processes are internal, there are important community-facing portions of those processes, including coordination with the groups to which the NomCom is making appointments. The experiences of those receiving entities in dealing with the NomCom's recurring processes is very important and is a component of review and improvement that could otherwise be absent from the Standing Committee's work.

As a result, having a narrow expansion of eligibility for Standing Committee members to encompass this community experience could broaden the available pool of applicants to serve on the Standing Committee while also enhancing the impact of the Standing Committee's work. The expansion would allow at least one, but not more than two seats on the Standing Committee to be filled by individuals who have held active roles in coordinating with the NomCom regarding appointments to entities across ICANN.

Which stakeholders or others were consulted? What concerns or issues were raised by the community?

The Board is interested to hear the ICANN community reaction to this proposal through Public Comment.

What significant materials did the Board review?

The Board reviewed the proposed updates to the NomCom Standing Committee Charter.

Are there positive or negative community impacts?

This action can have a positive impact as it is anticipated to reduce the challenges in comprising this important group and ultimately providing better support to the NomCom across different years. The community reaction will be important to identify if there are further impacts.

Are there fiscal impacts or ramifications on ICANN (strategic plan, operating plan, budget); the community; and/or the public?

There are minimal impacts on ICANN and the community in initiating this Public Comment. Ultimately, the Board anticipates that an update to the NomCom Standing Committee charter can better support the ability to actually seat a Standing Committee, which in turn is expected to support better operations of the NomCom.

Are there any security, stability or resiliency issues relating to the DNS?

There are no security, stability or resiliency issues to the Internet's DNS anticipated as a result of this decision.

Is this decision in the public interest and within ICANN's mission?

The initiation of public comment on the NomCom Standing Committee charter advances the public interest by addressing challenges faced in implementing community recommendations. Supporting strong functioning of the NomCom is essential to how ICANN can fulfill its mission, as the NomCom makes key appointments across ICANN.

Is this either a defined policy process within ICANN's Supporting Organizations or ICANN's Organizational Administrative Function decision requiring public comment or not requiring public comment?

The next step Charter amendment process is to seek public comment.

Signature Block:

Submitted by: Samantha Eisner

Position: Deputy General Counsel

Date Noted: 13 February 2026

PROPOSED UPDATES: Nominating Committee Standing Committee Charter

Approved by the ICANN Board 10 September 2023

Preamble

Recognizing the Nominating Committee (NomCom) Standing Committee has a role to play in supporting continuous improvement of the NomCom and that various NomCom2 Review recommendations and subsequent implementation steps (Recommendations 2-9; 12, 14, 15, 16; 18-23; 25-27) indicate potential roles for the NomCom Standing Committee, those implementation steps have been deferred to be considerations for a work plan once the NomCom Standing Committee it is established.

I. Background

In the final report of the Second Organizational Review of the Nominating Committee (NomCom2 Review), published on 5 June 2018, the independent examiner conducting the review found that there was a lack of continuity in process across different years in NomCom such that the operational performance of any individual NomCom was routinely impacted. The independent examiner recommended that a Standing Committee be formed to suggest and assist in implementing changes to NomCom processes since the NomCom itself operates on a tight timeline and needs to focus on its recruiting and evaluation activities.

For reference, the Nominating Committee (NomCom) is responsible for appointing a number of seats to the ICANN Board of Directors, the Public Technical Identifiers Board of Directors, the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), and the Councils of the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) and the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO). The NomCom is an independent body that acts on behalf of the interests of the global Internet community and within the scope of ICANN's mission and its responsibilities in the Bylaws. The NomCom consists of 18 voting delegates along with a number of non-voting leaders, advisors, and delegates.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the NomCom Standing Committee is to:

- Support continuous improvement to the NomCom Operating Procedures and associated processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the NomCom while enhancing the NomCom's transparency and accountability to the overall ICANN community.
- Provide continuity across annual NomCom cycles and to build the institutional memory of the NomCom.

The NomCom is ultimately responsible for ongoing coordination and communication across ICANN. The NomCom Standing Committee is an external complement to support the NomCom's continuous improvement. The NomCom and NomCom Standing Committee are supported by ICANN org NomCom support staff, who focus on standardization of NomCom processes and also provide continuity. In serving its purpose, the NomCom Standing Committee may coordinate with other entities within ICANN to inform a set of processes to standardize.

The NomCom Standing Committee is not intended to be involved in the work of each annual NomCom. For the avoidance of doubt, the NomCom Standing Committee does not participate in, oversee, or influence the decision-making processes of the NomCom's annual candidate evaluation and selection activities. The NomCom Standing Committee is also prohibited from participation in, oversight of, or influencing the NomCom delegate selection process which is the sole responsibility of the appointing bodies. The NomCom Standing Committee will not have access to any confidential information available to the NomCom.

III. Scope of Responsibilities

A. Provide continuity across annual NomCom cycles

In collaboration with ICANN org NomCom support staff (section III.C), the NomCom Standing Committee will support the standardization of the work across NomCom cycles including but not limited to the planning, documentation, and the review of the NomCom's processes. Examples of this work could include:

- Providing input on the publication of process maps and reports regarding the goals and accomplishments of the NomCom's Continuous Improvement program.
- Reviewing, assessing, and providing inputs on updates to documentation or on NomCom process enhancements.

The NomCom Standing Committee is also charged with participating in ICANN's annual budget and planning processes on behalf of the NomCom.

B. Build the institutional memory of the NomCom

In collaboration with ICANN org NomCom support staff, the NomCom Standing Committee will be responsible for reviewing, assessing, and providing input on the website and systems used for maintaining a historical archive for processes and procedures used by the NomCom.

The NomCom Standing Committee will be responsible for reviewing, assessing, and providing input to NomCom support staff and NomCom on:

(a) The website and systems used for maintaining a historical archive for processes and procedures used by the NomCom.
(b) The process for community outreach on proposed changes to the NomCom Operating Procedures.
(c) The processes of identifying, collecting and timely publication of publicly available data on the candidate pool.
(d) The publication of regular reports regarding the goals and accomplishments of the NomCom's Continuous Improvement program.

C. NomCom Standing Committee engagement with ICANN org

In fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities with ICANN org NomCom support staff, especially with regard to the review of each NomCom cycle, the NomCom Standing Committee will work in consultation with ICANN org NomCom support staff to help assess the previous NomCom cycle. This will be based upon all end-of-cycle feedback received by NomCom support staff, not designated as confidential. The NomCom Standing Committee will provide feedback on whether processes worked properly and determine any potential changes needed for future NomCom cycles. Activities encompassed in the relationship between the NomCom Standing Committee and ICANN org NomCom support staff may include but not be limited to:

(a) In coordination with ICANN org NomCom support staff, reviewing the previous NomCom planning cycle projects against the adopted budget to inform the NomCom Standing Committee's recommendations into future budgeting cycles.
(b) Reviewing the end-of-cycle feedback and providing recommendations for improvements.
(c) Supporting the assessment and effectiveness of NomCom training to improve training of incoming NomCom delegates and Leadership.
(d) Supporting the continuous improvement of the NomCom online knowledge base and tools.
(e) Engagement within the ICANN annual budgeting and planning cycles.

D. NomCom Standing Committee Role with Respect to Bodies That Appoint Delegates to the NomCom

In fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities, the NomCom Standing Committee will be available to provide information/guidance to bodies appointing delegates to the NomCom regarding the diversity needs, in line with the ICANN community agreed upon definitions and goals for diversity considerations.

IV. Composition

(a) The NomCom Standing Committee shall be composed of five seats: four members and one ex- officio observer. The four members will be selected from a pool of eligible candidates (see ~~VII~~Section IV(d) below ~~(h)~~ for Membership Requirements) based upon a public Expression of Interest (EOI).

(i) Each of the four member seats will be filled on a rotational basis as follows:
  (1) The initial term for Seats 1-4 shall begin upon the conclusion of ICANN's Annual General Meeting ~~[TBD]~~ 2026 and rotate as follows:
    a) Seats 1 and 3 will conclude after year two.
    b) Seats 2 and 4 will conclude after year three.

(ii) The current NomCom Associate Chair[1] serves ex-officio in the fifth seat as a non-voting liaison between the NomCom Standing Committee and the current NomCom.

(b) The existence of any vacancies shall not affect the ability or obligation of the NomCom Standing Committee to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it in this Charter.

(c) NomCom Standing Committee Chair:
  (i) Once formed, the NomCom Standing Committee will select a Chair from the NomCom Standing Committee membership. The Chair will convene and facilitate NomCom Standing Committee meetings and support the will of the group to ensure no unilateral or minority led action. A Chair will be selected annually.

[1] There is no obligation for the Nominating Committee Chair to appoint an Associate Chair. If there is no Associate Chair selected, then the Chair-Elect could serve as the Standing Committee liaison for that term.

(d) Membership Requirements:

(i) At least two NomCom Standing Committee members ~~-~~shall have each completed at least one full ~~year~~ term on the NomCom prior to being appointed to the NomCom Standing Committee.

~~(d)~~(ii) At least one NomCom Standing Committee member, but no more than two Standing Committee members, shall be long-standing members of the ICANN community, demonstrated by at least five-years' activity, which activity shall include recent (i.e., within 2 years of appointment) service in one of the ICANN community groups that received appointments from the NomCom and in a role that included coordination with the NomCom. The members selected under this clause are not required to have prior service on the NomCom.

~~(i)~~(iii) There cannot be overlap between service on the NomCom Standing Committee and service on the NomCom, other than the NomCom Associate Chair who serves only as a liaison and observer between the NomCom Standing Committee and on behalf of the current NomCom.

~~(ii)~~(iv) No person who is an employee of or paid consultant to ICANN (including the Ombudsman) shall serve on the NomCom Standing Committee.

~~(iii)~~(v) Preference for new member appointments will be given to:

- Prior experience on a NomCom Leadership Team (comprised of the NomCom Chair, Chair-elect, and NomCom Associate Chair).
- Incoming members who are not currently involved in the same SO/AC as outgoing members.
- Consideration of the WS2 diversity criteria.

(e) Selection of NomCom Standing Committee members

(i) The ICANN Board, or a subset thereof, is responsible for the review of candidates and selection of ~~candidates~~ members to the NomCom Standing Committee~~.members.~~ Each candidate must provide a ~~conflict of interest~~ statement of interest as part of the information provided to the ICANN Board for NomCom Standing Committee member selection

V. Terms

A. The term of all four members, excluding the liaison, shall be three years, with initial terms staggered as described above in Composition (VII; ii).

B. All regular terms shall start upon the conclusion of an ICANN Annual General Meeting.

C. A member may serve at most two successive three-year terms, after which at least two years must elapse before the individual is eligible to serve another term.

D. The initial staggered terms are considered a full term. Non-performing members may be removed by an affirmative vote of all other members of the Committee. The determination of Non-Performance can be due to a variety of factors, including, but not limited to, attendance and participation in the NomCom Standing Committee. When a NomCom Standing Committee member fails to attend two regularly scheduled meetings consecutively without prior notification to the group, NomCom Standing Committee ICANN org NomCom support staff shall reach out to the absent member, on behalf of the NomCom Standing Committee, to confirm if the absent member is able to continue participation on the NomCom Standing Committee. Any vacancy that arises during a term shall be filled according to the selection process under IV. Composition. A person elected to fill a vacancy in a term shall not be deemed to have served that term.

E. The NomCom Associate Chair shall serve in their liaison capacity on the NomCom Standing Committee coinciding with their Associate Chair term.

VI. Meetings

The NomCom Standing Committee will meet by remote participation (using appropriate technology) as frequently as necessary, but no fewer than six times per year.

A. Regular meetings may be called upon no less than fourteen (14) days' notice by either (i) the Chair or (ii) any two members of the NomCom Standing Committee acting together.
B. Meetings to address urgent issues may be called in a manner calculated to provide as much notice as possible to the members of the NomCom Standing Committee.
C. NomCom Standing Committee meetings require a majority of members, in order to achieve quorum and proceed to hold a meeting.
D. Outcomes and actions of the NomCom Standing Committee shall be taken by consensus. All outcomes and actions will strive for full consensus, or unanimous agreement. Where full consensus is not possible, outcomes and actions require a majority of NomCom Standing Committee members' support in order to proceed, as opposed to a decision by the Chair.
E. Email discussions do not replace regular meetings, though outcomes and actions can be determined via internet-based discussions (email).
F. The NomCom Standing Committee may elect to meet face-to-face but there will be no travel support associated with this activity.

VII. Accountability and Transparency

The NomCom Standing Committee shall operate openly and transparently. NomCom Standing Committee meetings shall be recorded. The meeting recording, minutes, and other records of the meetings shall be publicly posted to a publicly available webpage as soon as possible following approval by the committee.

Outcomes and actions shall be documented and may be determined via Internet-based discussions without the need for a meeting. The NomCom Standing Committee will use a public mailing list for any matters related to its remit. The Committee will be empowered to suggest recommendations, while noting that any suggestions will be provided to the ICANN community for Public Comment.

NomCom Standing Committee members must adhere to ICANN's Community Participant Code of Conduct ~~conflict-of-interest policy~~ by providing and updating statements of interest that identify potential ~~conflicts of~~ interest that might bear in their NomCom Standing Committee service.

VIII. Review & Continuous Improvement

Any entity that appoints delegates to the NomCom, or receives appointees from the NomCom, may propose amendments to this Charter. All proposed changes shall be subject to ICANN's Public Comment processes and Board approval of charter amendments.

This Charter of the NomCom Standing Committee shall be reviewed at least every 5 years, preferably as part of the NomCom's Organizational Review as per Section 4.4 of the Bylaws (or successor section).

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ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.03.12.2c

TITLE:	New gTLD Program: 2026 Base Registry Agreement
PROPOSED ACTION:	For Board Consideration and Approval

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Board is being asked to approve the form of registry agreement that successful applicants in the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round (2026 Round) would enter into with ICANN (2026 Base RA).

The Board, with its 16 March 2023 resolution, directed ICANN org to commence its work on the implementation of the majority of the policy outputs included in the Final Report on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process ("SubPro Final Report") and to take concrete steps towards the opening of the 2026 Round.

Since the Board's March 2023 resolution, ICANN org has been working with the community to develop the 2026 Base RA. As part of the New gTLD Program: Next Round, ICANN org conducted four Public Comment proceedings: two on the proposed 2026 Base RA, one on Specification 14 incorporated as part of the 2026 Base RA for Variant gTLDs, and one on the Trademark Clearinghouse Requirements also incorporated by reference in the 2026 Base RA.

The reports summarizing and analyzing the public comments are available here.

BOARD CAUCUS ON NEW GTLD PROGRAM NEXT ROUND RECOMMENDATION [*Subject to Next Round Caucus approval*]:

The Next Round Caucus recommends that the Board approve the New gTLD Program: 2026 Base Registry Agreement.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

Whereas, to implement the next round of the New gTLD Program (New gTLD Program: 2026 Round), the Board approved policy recommendations concerning the development of a base contract to be provided to applicants at the beginning of the application process. (*See* Report of Board Actions and Responses to Policy Recommendations concerning the New gTLD Program: Next Round (January 2025)).

Whereas, ICANN org developed a form of registry agreement for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round (2026 Base RA) in consultation with the community through an iterative process.

Whereas, the New gTLD Program: Next Round Board Caucus Group (Next Round Caucus) has recommended the Board approve the 2026 Base RA.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the ICANN Board approves the New gTLD Program: 2026 Base Registry Agreement, and directs the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all necessary steps to incorporate the 2026 Base RA into the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

Today, the Board is taking action to approve the form of registry agreement that successful applicants in the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round (2026 Round) would enter into with ICANN as contemplated in the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook (Applicant Guidebook). This action is a key step for the planned launch of the 2026 Round on 30 April 2026 as it provides prospective applicants with the form of registry agreement prior to the opening of the application window.

Consistent with the outputs of Topic 36 in the Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process (SubPro Final Report), the 2026 Base RA maintains the structure of the existing Base gTLD Registry Agreement with specifications detailing technical and operational requirements. In addition, the 2026 Base RA:

- includes operational criteria to ensure compliance with ICANN policies;
- has an initial term of a commercially reasonable length (10 years); and
- includes a renewal expectancy.

ICANN org used the Base gTLD RA that was approved by the Board on 21 January 2024 as the starting point to develop the 2026 Base RA. By doing so, the 2026 Base RA incorporates all global amendments to date, including the latest DNS Abuse Global Amendment and the Global Amendment to add Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP).

ICANN org consulted with the Subsequent Procedures Implementation Review Team (SubPro IRT) to ensure the Board-approved policies from the following policy development processes were integrated into the 2026 Base RA as appropriate (PDP Final Reports):

- Final Report on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process
- Phase 1 Final Report on the Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in All gTLDs Policy Development Process
- Phase 1 Final Report on the Internationalized Domain Names Expedited Policy Development Process

ICANN also took the opportunity to integrate Consensus Policy obligations (Registration Data Policy and Protection of IGO and INGO Identifiers in all gTLDs) to ensure this is the most up-to-date 2026 Base RA once available. In addition, the 2026 Base RA includes operational updates based on ICANN's experience since launching the 2012 Round of the New gTLD Program. These operational changes are intended to create efficiencies within ICANN and for registry operators.

The 2026 Base RA also takes into account input received from the various public comment periods, held from 4 June-21 July 2025 and 30 September-17 November 2025 on the full 2026 Base RA then 10 December 2025-27 January 2026 on Specification 14 (Variant TLDs) then 18 December 2025-27 January 2026 on the TMCH Requirements. The reports summarizing and analyzing the public comments are available here.

In addition to the PDP Final Reports and reports of public comments referenced above, the Board also considered the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook in reaching its decision today.

The adoption of this resolution will have a positive impact on the community as it will permit successful applicants to move forward to the contracting phase of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round and eventually toward the goal of delegating new gTLDs into the root zone.

While there are no anticipated fiscal impacts with the Board's approval of the form of agreement for the 2026 Round, as successful applicants sign on to the agreement, there will be fiscal impacts that will be accounted for as part of the annual budget process. The fee provisions in the 2026 Base RA are intended to provide additional resources for ICANN's compliance and registry engagement services in furtherance of ICANN's ongoing coordination, and security and stability role. In addition, the approval of the 2026 Base RA is not expected to create any security, stability, or resiliency issues related to the DNS, and the Board notes that it previously considered issues of security, stability and resiliency of the DNS issue when approving the 2026 Round.

This action by the Board is in the public interest and within ICANN's mission to "coordinate the allocation and assignment of names in the root zone of the Domain Name System…." and further carries out the Board's previous commitment to opening subsequent rounds of the New gTLD Program. As discussed above, the 2026 Base RA has been the subject of several public comment periods.

ICANN BOARD SUBMISSION No. 2026.03.12.2d

TITLE: **Contractor Extension Approval Requests for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round**

PROPOSED ACTION: **For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In order to manage the size, scope, and complexities of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, several contractors have been in place to support the implementation efforts and have been determined to be key resources as the program moves into the processing phase. The contractors were sourced from consulting firms that specialize in providing resources for long-term transformation projects and an agency that subcontracts candidates from various businesses to provide a breadth of options. The contractors were selected based on an optimal balance of the needed skill set given risk to the program and rates. This paper relates to contract extensions and disbursement approval requests that are expected to exceed US$750,000, which require Board approval. The contract amounts for approval are an estimation with a not-to-exceed amount per consulting firm for the provided services. Although the amounts are being requested for

Confidential Negotiation Information

BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATION*:*

The BFC recommends that the Board authorize the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make all disbursements pursuant to, all contracts for vendors supporting the implementation and processing phases for contracts expected to exceed US$750,000 for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN has a continued critical need for qualified vendors with specialized expertise and capabilities for services to support the implementation and processing phases of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

Whereas, to date ICANN has identified vendors for contractor services to address critical needs for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, including program management, operation model and training, vendor sourcing and oversight, and product management and training.

Whereas, ICANN's Contracting and Disbursement Policy requires Board approval for contracts of more than US$750,000.00 per obligation.

Whereas, the Board Finance Committee has recommended that the Board pass the below resolution.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the ICANN Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to approve the commitment of funds for contracting, and disbursements in furtherance of the contract with vendors for contractor services for a total amount not to exceed Confidential Negotiation Information

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), specific items within this resolution shall remain confidential for negotiation purposes pursuant to Article 3, section 3.5(b) of the ICANN Bylaws until the Interim President and CEO determines that the confidential information may be released.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

To ensure ICANN does not lose key vendors for contractor services to facilitate resource planning for the processing phase, ICANN has sought approval for extending those contracts to the extent the extensions exceed US$750,000 for these resources through the majority of the processing phase.

Noting that there is uncertainty regarding the number of gTLD applications that will be received in the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, statements of work for these contractor services will be set for specific timeframes (e.g., 6-9 months) to allow adjustments as needed. ICANN maintains the ability of early contract termination should resources not be needed for the full estimated duration. Additionally, plans are being put in place to ensure that knowledge is transferred to ICANN staff as well as succession planning, so that when and where possible and needed, work can be transferred to ICANN staff when the workload allows and necessary skills are available.

ICANN's Contracting and Disbursement Policy limits ICANN Officers from contracting for or disbursing more than US$750,000.00 per obligation without Board approval. The table below shows a breakdown of the services in this request and the not-to-exceed contracts, noting that the amounts include a contingency factor to cover small rate increases. The total approval request for Confidential Negotiatio in potential contract and related disbursements is included in the budget estimate.

Confidential Negotiation Information

ICANN Board's approval of entering into these contractual obligations is in the furtherance of ICANN's mission and the support of public interest to support the security, stability and resiliency of the domain name system by ensuring that ICANN can timely contract with and pay the Service Providers that are supporting the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round in a fiscally responsible and accountable manner.

This decision will have a fiscal impact, but the impact has already been accounted for in the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round overall budget and set application fee.

This action is intended to have a positive impact on the security, stability, or resiliency of the domain name system.

This is an Organizational Administrative Function that does not require public comment.

Submitted by:	Theresa Swinehart
Position:	SVP, Global Domains and Strategy
Date Noted:	25 February 2026
Email:	theresa.swinehart@icann.org

ICANN BOARD SUBMISSION No. 2026.03.12.2e

TITLE:	**Advance Contracting and Disbursement Approval Request for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round - Batch #3**
PROPOSED ACTION:	**For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Implementation of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round will require a significant number of external vendors (Service Providers) that will perform work throughout the course of the program. Many of these Service Provider contracts will exceed US$750,000, which under ICANN's Contracting and Disbursement Policy require Board approval.

In May 2025, the Board authorized the President and CEO to take all steps needed in relation to a first set of contracts (Batch #1) and in January 2026 for a second set of contracts (Batch #2) for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round. This paper relates to "Batch #3" of the advance contracting and disbursement approval requests, which includes contracts for services that are expected to be needed in the next six to 12 months and that are expected to exceed US$750,000. The contract amounts for approval are an estimation with a not-to-exceed amount per Service Provider.

BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATION*:*

The BFC recommends that the Board authorize the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make all disbursements pursuant to, all contracts set out in Batch #3 of the advance contracting and disbursement approval requests for contracts expected to be needed in next six to 12 months and that are expected to exceed US$750,000 for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, so long as those contract amounts are within previously Board-approved budget amounts for the program.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN staff has delivered to the Board the Batch #3 external vendor details for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, which are vendors with which contracts are expected to be needed in the next six to 12 months and that are expected to exceed US$750,000 (Service Providers).

Whereas, Batch #3 of Service Providers includes services for maintaining the trademark database, performing background screenings, and ensuring quality control of application evaluations.

Whereas, ICANN's Contracting and Disbursement Policy requires Board approval for ICANN to contract for or disburse more than US$750,000.00 per obligation.

Whereas, the Board Finance Committee has recommended that the Board pass the below resolution.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), the ICANN Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make all disbursements pursuant to, all contracts set out in Batch #3 of Service Providers contracts expected to be needed in the next six to 12 months and that are expected to exceed US$750,000 for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, estimated a not-to exceed total of Conf dent a Negot at on Infor so long as those contract amounts are within previously Board-approved budget amounts for the program.

Resolved (2026.03.12.xx), specific items within this resolution shall remain confidential for negotiation purposes pursuant to Article 3, section 3.5(b) of the ICANN Bylaws until the Interim President and CEO determines that the confidential information may be released.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

Implementation and operation of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round will require a significant number of external vendors (Service Providers) that will perform work throughout the course of the program. Some of these Service Provider contracts likely will exceed US$750,000.

ICANN's Contracting and Disbursement Policy limits ICANN Officers requires Board approval for ICANN to enter into and make disbursements pursuant to contacts with more than US$750,000.00 per obligation. With the potential level of expenses that ICANN might incur with any one or more of the Service Providers, US$750,000could be exceeded frequently during the implementation and operations of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

Accordingly, to ensure that timely obligations are made and satisfied with the Service Providers, it is appropriate to take this action now and have the Board's advanced approval to undertake contractual obligations for contracts that are not yet ready to review individually, so long as the contract amounts are covered by the previously Board-approved budget amounts. With this action, the President and CEO, or his designee(s), can enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, all contracts in Batch #3 of Services Providers so long as the contract and disbursement amounts are included in Batch #3 of the advance contracting and disbursement approval requests.

The table below shows a breakdown of the services included in Batch #3,

Confidential Negotiation Information

The total approval request for up to Confidential Negotiation Information in potential contract and related disbursements is included in the budget estimates for 2,000 applications.

2026 Round External Service	Service Provided	Contract Spend Not to Exceed
Name Collision: Temporary Delegation	For the purpose of temporary delegation of applied-for strings, provide a zone management system, a reporting tool and servers set up for data collection using the four methods for data collection outlined in appendix 2 of the NCAP2 study report.	Confidential Negotiation Information
Name Collision: Initial Assessment of Applied-for Strings	Identify high-risk strings using both quantitative data from the name collision observatory and qualitative analysis to determine potential end-user impacts. For each assessed string, an Initial Evaluation Report shall be submitted describing the outcome of the assessment, its methodology and the findings.	
Name Collision: High Risk String Mitigation Plan Review	Review applicants' mitigation plans for high-risk strings, ensuring effective strategies are in place before being approved for contracting and delegation.	
Financial Capability	Assess the financial stability of applicants, ensuring they possess sufficient resources to operate a gTLD registry.	
Geographic Names and Reserved Names	Determine whether each applied-for gTLD string represents a Geographic Name, and verify the relevance and authenticity of the supporting documentation where necessary. Evaluate the geographic	

	string check and the geographic verification for those names determined to be geographic. Determine whether an applied-for gTLD string represents a reserved name and verify the relevance and authenticity of the supporting documentation.
Independent Objector	Independent third-party vendor to assess and, where appropriate file objections as part of the New gTLD Program dispute resolution process, which is designed to protect certain interests and rights.
Auctions	Facilitate auctions for contention sets where multiple applicants apply for the same gTLD, ensuring a fair and transparent resolution process.
Total	

ICANN Board's approval of entering into these contractual obligations is in the furtherance of ICANN's mission and the support of public interest to support the security, stability and resiliency of the domain name system by ensuring that ICANN can timely contract with and pay the Service Providers that are supporting the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round in a fiscally responsible and accountable manner.

This decision will have a fiscal impact, but the impact has already been accounted for in the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round overall budget and set application fee.

This action is intended to have a positive impact on the security, stability, or resiliency of the domain name system.

This is an Organizational Administrative Function that does not require public comment.

Submitted by:	Theresa Swinehart
Position:	SVP, Global Domains & Strategy
Date Noted:	25 February 2025
Email:	theresa.swinehart@icann.org