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29 October 2026

From : Vant Nexus Technologies LLC

To : ICANN Board Chair and Members

Dear Members of the ICANN Board,

As an applicant for the **.ISLAND** new gTLD, **Vant Nexus Technologies LLC** would like to express its concerns regarding statements made by **Maureen Hilyard** during the ICANN Public Forum on October 22, 2026, concerning what was described as an "Applicant Support Program issue" following the discovery that her application was in contention with our own.

In her remarks, Ms. Hilyard suggested that her organization would have been in a stronger position had it applied as a community-based applicant. However, community-based applications are subject to specific eligibility and evaluation criteria, including the requirement to demonstrate representation of a clearly defined and sufficiently broad community. In the case of **.ISLAND**, this would presumably require evidence of representation extending across the global island community, rather than a limited group of islands or a specific regional interest.

Ms. Hilliard also stated that her organization "didn't study the Applicant Guidebook enough." By contrast, **Vant Nexus Technologies LLC** invested considerable time, effort, and resources in reviewing the Applicant Guidebook and preparing its **.ISLAND** application in accordance with the established rules and procedures.

We are therefore surprised to hear a competing applicant suggest that it has been disadvantaged by circumstances arising from its own application strategy. This is particularly noteworthy given the statement that participation in the Applicant Support Program was facilitated through the assistance of **DotAsia**, a well-known and experienced organization within the ICANN community.

We are also seeking clarification regarding the following statement:

"I have distributed a paper to my networks and to the At-Large New gTLD Applications Review Group."

Specifically, we would appreciate confirmation that ICANN community structures, working groups, and review bodies are not in a position to influence application evaluation outcomes in favor of any applicant, including a chair or representative of an organization involved in an active contention set for **.ISLAND**.

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.nexus

Jean Guillon
Chief Innovation Officer
Tel. +971 55 950 3370
Email: CIO@Vant.Nexus

We would also welcome clarification regarding the reference to another statement:

"Seeking support for SEAG's request for reconsideration of the contention issue with regards to the .ISLAND domain."

From our perspective, statements of this nature may create the appearance that support is being mobilized within the ICANN community on behalf of a particular applicant in an active contention set. Given the importance of maintaining confidence in the neutrality, fairness, and integrity of the New gTLD Program, we believe it is essential that all applicants be treated consistently and strictly in accordance with the established rules and processes.

We would also like to thank **ICANN CEO Kurtis Lindqvist** for reiterating during the Public Forum that the rules set forth in the Applicant Guidebook must be followed and that ICANN does not have the authority to alter those rules or modify the established application process.

Source: ICANN87 Public Forum, Mangupura Hall, Zoom Transcript, October 22, 2026.

Finally, we wish to emphasize that our concerns relate solely to ensuring a fair, transparent, and predictable application process. Once any contention issues have been resolved through the appropriate mechanisms, we remain open to constructive discussions with other applicants regarding opportunities to advance the development, adoption, and success of the **.ISLAND** gTLD.

Respectfully,

Jean Guillon

Chief Innovation Officer
Vant Nexus Technologies LLC

Jean Guillon
Chief Innovation Officer
Tel. +971 55 950 3370
Email: CIO@Vant.Nexus