

Date: Monday, September 21, 2026

From: Jeff Neuman

To: Tripti Sinha, Kurtis Lindqvist, Marika Konings, Theresa Swinehart

Subject: Open Letter to ICANN Regarding New gTLD Program Dates

To: ICANN Board of Directors and ICANN organization

Re: Announce the dates for Reveal Day, String Confirmation Day, and the prioritization draw

Dear ICANN Board and ICANN organization:

ICANN should promptly announce the dates for Reveal Day, the 14-day replacement-string period, String Confirmation Day, and the prioritization draw.

ICANN has had the 2026 round applications since August 12. We recognize that ICANN is still completing its administrative review. But applicants, governments, rights holders, public-interest groups, and others cannot plan around a series of time-sensitive processes without knowing when those processes will begin.

Reveal Day requires preparation before the day arrives

Applicants are awaiting an announcement of the Reveal Day date before deciding whether to attend ICANN 87 in Bali, which begins October 17. That is not a decision that can sensibly be made at the last minute. It affects flights, lodging, meeting schedules, and whether the people who need to make decisions can be present.

If Reveal Day occurs before or during ICANN 87, applicants must be ready from that day forward to comply with the Applicant Guidebook's communications restrictions for applications in the same contention set. Those restrictions apply to applicants, affiliates, and agents, and reach both public and private communications. Applicants also will have only 14 days to decide whether to elect a pre-designated replacement string. That decision is irreversible. A notice issued too late to allow applicants to put compliance protocols and decision-makers in place serves no one.

The public and the GAC also need the schedule

This is not simply an applicant logistics issue. String Confirmation Day triggers the next set of time-limited processes. It begins the public comment period and the GAC Early Warning period. It also begins the periods for singular/plural notifications and formal objections.

The public cannot meaningfully review applications and submit comments if it does not know when the relevant window will open. Governments and the GAC likewise need time to conduct internal review, consult affected stakeholders, and prepare Early Warnings where appropriate. Publishing Reveal Day without providing the expected date for String Confirmation Day would leave those participants in much the same position.

The prioritization draw needs prompt notice

The Guidebook contemplates a live prioritization draw in California no later than 30 days after String Confirmation Day. ICANN also expects to announce the draw's full details at least 30 days in advance.

An applicant that wants to enter the draw must arrange for a designated representative or proxy to purchase a separate ticket in person for each application. This is not a matter of deciding whether to attend a conference. Applicants that do not enter the draw are placed after all applications that do enter it. Applicants need to arrange representatives or proxies, travel, and ticket purchases. International flights and hotel rooms become more limited and more expensive as the date approaches.

NamesCon will take place in Miami on November 11–12. ICANN should avoid a conflict with NamesCon if practicable. At a minimum, applicants should receive enough notice to arrange representation at both events.

Request

ICANN should announce as soon as possible:

- 1 The date and time for Reveal Day.
- 2 The opening and closing date and time for the replacement-string period.
- 3 The expected date for String Confirmation Day.
- 4 The date, California location, ticket-purchase process, and representative or proxy requirements for the prioritization draw.

If a date remains dependent on a specific contingency, ICANN should identify the contingency, publish its best current estimate, and state when it will provide final confirmation. The community does not need perfect certainty today. It needs enough information to prepare for processes that ICANN itself has made time-sensitive.

Please post this letter on the ICANN Correspondence page as soon as possible. We are also posting this on our jjnsolutions.com website.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey J. Neuman

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