



20 March 2026

Tripti Sinha
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Re: Next Round Applicant Support Program (ASP)

Dear Tripti,

Thank you for your [3 March 2026 request](#) for input on the ICANN Board's consideration of additional funding from the 2012 Round auction proceeds to provide adequate assistance for Next Round Applicant Support Program (ASP) applicants.

The ALAC is encouraged by the news that ICANN org has received 75 applications for ASP spanning all five ICANN regions, as we continue to view the ASP as an essential part of the Next Round that the Board should persist in prioritizing.

In principle, the ALAC is strongly supportive of the Board's intention to allocate additional funding to ensure provision of adequate assistance for up to 75 qualified ASP applicants. However, the ALAC also wishes to draw the Board's attention to two related issues.

1. Level of assistance to qualified applicants

The ALAC joins the GAC in emphasizing that the contemplated increase in funding for the ASP must also take into account the level of assistance provided to qualified applicants, and not just the total number of qualified applicants. To facilitate providing the optimal depth of financial assistance, **we also recommend that this budget enlargement should fully preserve the ability to apply the maximum base application fee reduction of 85% to all qualified ASP applicants.**¹ We believe the difference between applying the ceiling of 85% and the floor of 75% reduction² - as contemplated by the SubPro ASP IRT - will go a long way in assisting qualified applicants in their respective application for a gTLD string, for example, in freeing up funds for applicable Conditional Evaluation Fees.³ This consideration well aligns with our continual support and advocacy for the ASP as an ICANN program to serve the global public interest in encouraging inclusive participation in the Next Round by qualified applicants from underdeveloped and underserved regions and communities.

¹ See: [GAC ICANN85 Mumbai Communiqué](#), Issues of Importance, Item 3a. Applicant Support Program

² See: [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#), section 3.3.1.2

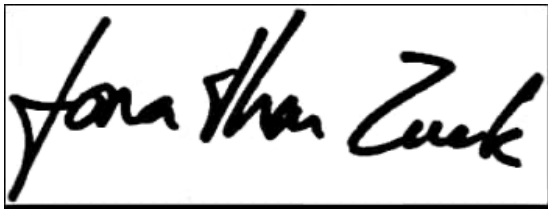
³ See: [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#), section 3.3.2, Table 3.1

2. Use of 2012 Round auction proceeds

We understood that the Board had in July 2024 [proposed](#) to use auction proceeds from the 2012 New gTLD Round to provide **up to half** of the required funding for the ASP, with the remainder funded through application fees under the Next Round's principle of cost recovery. It would be useful for the Board to inform the ICANN community of any future implications to the 2012 Round auction proceeds that the present contemplated budget enlargement for the ASP may carry, for example, whether this drawdown of 2012 Round auction proceeds might be replenished in the event a Next Round Application Volume Refund⁴ were to materialize.

Finally, the ALAC also hopes that the Board will, in reviewing the ASP, continue to press for transparency in reporting on the evaluation, implementation, and outcomes of the ASP as outlined in our [joint letter](#) with the GAC.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Zuck".

Jonathan Zuck
Chair, At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

⁴ See: [New gTLD Program: 2026 Round Applicant Guidebook](#), section 3.3.3.2