**Pro forma GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) Initiation Request**

This pro forma Initiation Request is submitted to the GNSO Council by Kurt Pritz of the Registry Stakeholder Group.

**Issue Origination**

The New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) Final Report required some levels of substantive work on the part of the Implementation Review Team (IRT) scope. For instance, in [Topic 17: Applicant Support](https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/final-report-newgtld-subsequent-procedures-pdp-02feb21-en.pdf), Implementation Guidance 17.5, the report suggests the creation of a dedicated IRT and it be charged “with developing implementation elements of the Applicant Support Program.” This dedicated IRT was to be charged with making substantive decisions on outreach activities and allocation of scarce resources (e.g., when there are more qualified applicants than available funds), among other activities.

Sometime after the submission of the Final Report, some community members made informal requests to the ICANN staff and Board that formation of this “dedicated IRT” be pulled forward in time (i.e., before Board approval of the Final Report) with the rationale that: (1) it would ensure there was sufficient time to competently complete this complex task to design an effective Applicant Support Program; (2) since this was to be a dedicated team, the effort would not unnecessarily extend the effort of the traditional IRT; and (3) regardless of the timing of the Board approval, having developed an effective Applicant Support Program would be of benefit to ICANN.

Coincident or shortly after these requests, the ODP Team, in reviewing the recommendations related to Topic 17, expressed concern that the work recommended by SubPro was potentially out of scope of the role for an IRT, with the expressed idea of returning that work back to the GNSO.

Without opining on whether the Applicant Support Program development is suitable for an IRT, we recognize that this work *could* be accomplished using the [GNSO Guidance Process](https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-5-ggp-manual-24oct19-en.pdf) (GGP). This would accomplish the twin goals of pulling the work forward to avoid becoming the “tall pole” in the next round launch and providing sufficient time and the correct resources to devise an Applicant Support program that would expand the regional and language diversity of the new gTLD Program.

**Scope of the effort**

The SubPro Final Report provided the following implementation advice for the IRT:

Implementation Guidance 17.5: A dedicated Implementation Review Team should be established and charged with developing implementation elements of the Applicant Support Program. In conducting its work, the Implementation Review Team should revisit the 2011 Final Report of the Joint Applicant Support Working Group as well as the 2012 implementation of the Applicant Support program.

Implementation Guidance 17.8: In implementing the Applicant Support Program for subsequent rounds, the dedicated Implementation Review Team should draw on experts with relevant knowledge, including from the targeted regions, to develop appropriate program elements related to outreach, education, business case development, and application evaluation. Regional experts may be particularly helpful in providing insight on the development of business plans from different parts of the world.

Implementation Guidance 17.9: The dedicated Implementation Review Team should seek advice from experts in the field to develop an appropriate framework for analysis of metrics to evaluate the success of the Applicant Support Program. The Working Group identified a non-exhaustive list of potential data points to support further discussion in the implementation phase. The Working Group anticipates that the dedicated IRT will consider how these and other potential metrics may be prioritized: [that non-exhaustive list of metrics followed that included these categories]:

* Awareness and Education:
* Program [Statistics]:
* Success [measures] of Launched gTLD[s]:

Implementation Guidance 17.10: The dedicated Implementation Review Team should consider how to allocate financial support in the case that available funding cannot provide fee reductions to all applicants that meet the scoring requirement threshold.

***GGP Objective:*** Taking into account the Implementation guidance, develop an Applicant Support Program that will support the program objectives of increasing regional, language and business model diversity in gTLDs.

***Tasks***, taking into account the Implementation Guidance, ICANN and the Council will form a team with access to the requisite skill sets to develop a usable Applicant Support Program with the understanding that the requisite studies and modeling might require compensated expertise.

Among other tasks, the team will:

* Analyze the set of suggested metrics provided in Implementation Guidance, and identify which of those metrics and which other metrics have causal effects on the effectiveness of an Applicant Support Program.
  + Use those metrics to evaluate performance of the Applicant Support in the 2012 round and identify next round goals.
  + Determine how these metrics will be measured going forward: which data are to be collected, who will collect the data, etc.
* Include in the program an approach to outreach, education, business case development, and application evaluation assistance. Identify appropriate metrics and measures of success to help in identifying the necessary program elements and measuring program success after the fact
* Recommend a methodology for allocating financial support, including funding sources and considering that the demand for funding and the amount of funding available are uncertain.

**Method of operation, if different from GNSO Working Group Guidelines**

The method of operation will be similar to that of the 2012 round Rights Protection Mechanisms IRT. As with that IRT, the team will call in or retain expert advice as needed. The team will issue preliminary and final reports that will describe the expected outcomes, elements, metrics and approximate budget for the Applicant Support Program. The team will appropriately consider public comment.

Team members will be selected based upon skill set and experience, not affiliation. ICANN staff are expected to contribute expertise and advice. The team should be kept purposely small.

The team will be independently chaired by a person designated by GNSO Council leadership or their designee.

**Decision-making methodology for GGP mechanism**

The team will issue consensus-based reports. Their objective is to develop an effective Applicant Support Program (or substantial elements of that program), and the report will reflect the team’s final decisions.

In accordance with the ICANN Bylaws, the GNSO Council is expected to vote on the recommendations contained in the Final Recommendation(s) Report. Approval of the GGP recommendations contained in the Final Recommendation(s) Report requires an affirmative vote meeting the thresholds set forth at Article 11, Section 1(9) xviii.

However, there is not an acknowledgement that this is not IRT work and the mechanism for approval might be amended upon agreement of the GNSO Council and ICANN Board.

**Desired completion date and rationale for this date**

This work should be completed 15-months after initiation: allowing three months for team formation (including solicitation of professional services), publication of an initial report for public comment; and publication of a final report, which then will be considered for adoption by the Council and turned over to the IRT. This will complete the work in time for final consideration by the IRT, which might have to provide additional implementation details, without compromising the IRT schedule.