

New gTLD Program in Brief

ICANN is the organization responsible for coordinating the Internet’s unique identifiers, including the domain name system. One of ICANN’s core values is promoting competition in the domain-name market while ensuring Internet security and stability. Introducing new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) will help achieve that commitment. ICANN is removing barriers and opening doors to innovation, paving the way for increased consumer choice by facilitating competition among registry service providers. Soon entrepreneurs, businesses, governments and communities around the world will be able to apply to introduce and operate a generic Top-Level Domain of their own choosing. What will be the next big .thing? You name it!

Fast Facts



WHAT are gTLDs?

gTLD stands for generic top-level domain. A gTLD is an Internet extension such as .COM, .ORG, or .INFO. It is part of the structure of the Internet’s domain name system (DNS). There are roughly two dozen gTLDs now, but soon, there could be hundreds.

WHO can apply for a new gTLD?

Any established public or private organization located anywhere in the world can apply to form and operate a new gTLD Registry.

WHEN can I apply?

An upcoming application period will be announced as soon as possible, with a specific opening and closing date and time. Monitor www.icann.org for the official launch dates.

HISTORY

Eight gTLDs predate ICANN’s creation —.COM, .EDU, .GOV, .INT, .MIL, .NET, .ORG, and .ARPA

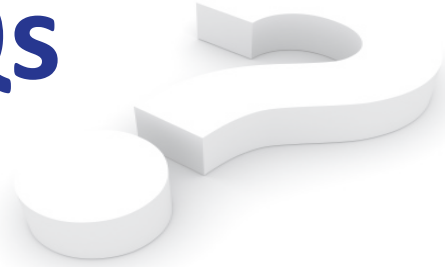
ICANN successfully carried out two previous application rounds for new gTLDs: 2000 (.AERO, .BIZ, .COOP, .INFO, .MUSEUM, .NAME, and .PRO); and 2004 (.ASIA, .CAT, .JOBS, .MOBI, .POST, .TEL, and .TRAVEL).

ICANN’s Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) developed policy recommendations that serve as the foundation to the New gTLD Program criteria and processes. The policy work started in 2005 and concluded in 2007.

In June 2008, during ICANN’s Paris meeting, the ICANN Board approved the GNSO recommendations for introducing New gTLDs to the Internet’s addressing system.

The Proposed Final Applicant Guidebook is the fifth version of the publication and is the result of years of careful implementation of GNSO policy recommendations and thoughtful review and feedback from the ICANN stakeholder community. Each version of the Applicant Guidebook was posted for public comment. More than one thousand public comments have been reviewed and considered, making the program what it is today.

FAQs



Will the introduction of new gTLDs change how the Internet operates?

The increase in number of gTLDs into the root is not expected to affect the way the Internet operates, but it will, for example, potentially change the way people find information on the Internet or how businesses plan and structure their online presence.

Is this the only opportunity to apply for a new gTLD?

No. ICANN plans to hold additional application rounds in the future. The exact dates for these future rounds are not yet available.

How and when can I see which gTLDs are being applied for and who is behind the application?

After the application period closes, ICANN will verify all of the applications for completeness and will then release on its website the list of strings, applicant names, and other application data.

I have an idea for a new gTLD. Can I register my idea with ICANN in advance of the next application period?

No, ICANN does not accept reservations or preregistrations of new gTLDs. ICANN also does not endorse any third parties to do so.

What is the “Applicant Guidebook”?

The Applicant Guidebook provides a step-by-step procedure for new gTLD applicants. It specifies what documents and information are required to apply; the financial and legal commitments; and what to expect during the application and evaluation periods.

Can I apply for more than one gTLD?

Yes. Each applied-for gTLD string requires its own application.

Can I apply for any kind of gTLD or are there any specific restrictions?

ICANN has a set of specific technical rules that apply to all proposed gTLD strings. All the specific restrictions are outlined in the Applicant Guidebook.

Can I simply reserve a gTLD and decide later whether or not to use it?

ICANN expects all new gTLDs to be operational. gTLDs are expected to be delegated within one year of signing a registry agreement with ICANN.

What will happen during the application window and how long will it last?

The application window will likely last for three months. Applicants will use a dedicated web-based application interface named ‘TLD Application System’ (TAS) to apply, where they will answer questions and upload supporting documents. After the application window, there are several evaluation stages, each with its own estimated duration.

How long will the evaluation process take?

The evaluation process is expected to last from 8 to 18 months. There are several stages that an application might be required to pass through prior to a final determination being rendered.

How will gTLD applications be assessed?

The Applicant Guidebook outlines the criteria and requirements. All applications will be assessed against these published criteria. Pre-selected evaluation panels will be responsible for determining whether applicants successfully meet these pre-established requirements.

What happens if there are multiple applications for the same string?

It is not feasible for two or more identical strings to occupy the Internet space. Each name must be unique. If there are two or more applications for the same string (or confusingly similar strings), the String Contention procedures would come into effect.

What happens after a new gTLD application is approved?

Once an application is deemed to satisfy the Applicant Guidebook criteria and passes all evaluation and selection processes, including objection processes and final approval, the applicant is required to conclude an agreement with

ICANN and pass technical pre-delegation tests before the new gTLD can be delegated to the root zone.

If I want to apply for two similar or related TLDs, for example, “.thing” and “.thething” would that be two applications or one? And if two, do I have to pay \$185,000 for each?

If an applicant applies for .thing and .thething, those would be considered two separate applications. (Applicants should note carefully that the application process is currently designed to not allow two strings that are “confusingly similar” to each other to both be delegated into the DNS – please refer to the full text of the Applicant Guidebook for details.) If both applications were approved, they would result in two separate TLDs. Each application will be treated individually and there is no discount on application fees based upon the filing of multiple applications.

How can I object to an application?

After the list of all TLD applications has been published on ICANN’s website, there will be a period of time for third-parties to file a formal objection using pre-established dispute resolution procedures. In all but exceptional circumstances, objections will be administered by independent Dispute Resolution Service Providers (DRSP), rather than by ICANN.

What can I do if someone applies for a string that represents my brand or trademark?

You can file an objection with the DRSP selected to administer “legal rights” objections. Details about these procedures, such as who has standing, where and how objections are filed, and how much objections will cost can be found in Module 3 of the Applicant Guidebook and the related New gTLD Dispute Resolution Procedure.

How much is the evaluation fee?

The evaluation fee is estimated at US\$185,000. Applicants will be required to pay a US\$5,000 deposit fee per requested application slot when registering. The US\$5,000 will be credited against the evaluation fee.

Are there any additional costs I should be aware of in applying for a new gTLD?

Yes. Applicants may be required to pay additional fees in certain cases where specialized process steps are

applicable, and should expect to account for their own business start up costs. See Section 1.5.2 of the Applicant Guidebook.

Next Steps



- Review the current version of the Applicant Guidebook.
<http://icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/dag-en.htm>
- Review the full set of FAQs.
<http://icann.org/en/topics/new-gtlds/strategy-faq.htm>
- Visit the New gTLD site.
<http://icann.org/en/topics/new-gtld-program.htm>
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ICANN

The launch of the new gTLD Program is dependent upon ICANN Board approval of the final Applicant Guidebook