**PRESS RELEASE**

**ICANN ANNOUNCES NEW gTLD APPLICANT SUPPORT PROGRAM TARGETING UNDEREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES IN GLOBAL MARKETS INCLUDING KENYA**

*The program will see eligible organisations wanting to operate a registry get a 75-85% reduction in gTLD evaluation fees.*

**Nairobi, Kenya – 20th November 2024**: The [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](https://www.icann.org/) (ICANN), the nonprofit organization that coordinates the Domain Name System (DNS), has today announced the opening of the Applicant Support Program (ASP) for the New Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Program: Next Round.

The New gTLD Program: Next Round is an initiative that will enable the introduction of new gTLDs (including those longer than three characters and in non-Latin scripts) into the Internet’s domain name space. It will be the first opportunity since 2012 to secure a gTLD, and **the ASP makes it possible for lesser-resourced organizations to benefit from this transformation in their presence online**.

“This is an opportunity for Kenyan businesses, communities, and others to apply for new top-level domains tailored to their community, culture, language, business, and customers. A gTLD can be a branding opportunity for a business, but the commercial opportunities are endless, allowing businesses in countries, entire sectors, or niche markets to develop a unique label on the Internet,” says Pierre Dandjinou, ICANN Vice President Stakeholder Engagement, Africa.

Top-level domains are the part of an Internet address that comes after the dot. For example, in the domain name icann.org, the characters ‘org’ identifies the TLD and help to classify the purpose of the domain name. The Internet started with just a handful of TLDs, such as .com, .net., .org and others. As it has evolved, the number of generic TLDs in the DNS has increased to reflect the multidimensionality of its billions of users and to help classify and communicate the purpose of a domain name.

**Discounted fees for applicants**

ICANN appreciates that applying to operate a gTLD can be expensive and out of reach for many organizations. The ASP is intended to make the processes and fees involved in applying for a new gTLD more accessible to entities that may want to operate a gTLD but are unable because of financial and other resource constraints. Supported applicants will be eligible to receive access to pro bono service providers, training, and other resources, and a 75-85% reduction in gTLD evaluation fees.

“The ASP supports that commitment by paving the way for more entrepreneurs, small businesses, governments, and communities around the world to apply to operate a generic top-level domain of their own choosing,” adds Dandjinou.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must meet financial need and financial viability criteria, and fall into at least one of the following entity categories:

* Nonprofits, charities, or equivalent
* Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)
* Indigenous/tribal peoples’ organizations
* Social impact or public benefit micro or small businesses
* Micro or small businesses from a less-developed economy

More information on evaluation and eligibility criteria are described in Section 4: Applicant Eligibility and Evaluation Categories, of the [ASP Handbook](https://newgtldprogram.icann.org/en/application-rounds/round2/asp/handbook).

ASP applicants will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. The first applicants to apply and qualify for support will the first to take advantage of the available resources. The application window will remain open for 12 months. Applicants are encouraged to apply early.

For more information on the New gTLD Program visit. To learn more about the ASP, including eligibility and submission requirements, please visit <https://newgtldprogram.icann.org/en/application-rounds/round2/asp>.

**About ICANN**

ICANN's mission is to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet, you need to type an address – a name or a number – into your computer or other device. That address must be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world. ICANN was formed in 1998 as a nonprofit public benefit corporation with a community of participants from all over the world.