

Project Overview for the ICANN New gTLD Program: Next Round Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) Request for Proposal (RFP)

20 August 2025



1 Introduction

1.1 General Instructions

This document provides an overview of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) for the New Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Program: Next Round (the Program). This RFP overview provides background and pertinent information regarding the requirements for RFP respondents. The RFP comprises this document as well as others that are hosted in the ICANN sourcing tool (SciQuest/Jaggaer).

Indications of interest are to be submitted by emailing next-round-community-priority-evaluation-rfp@icann.org with the following information, upon which access will be provided to the RFP:

1. Name of the organization
2. Name of the contact
3. Email address of the contact

Responses to the RFP should be electronically submitted by 23:59 UTC on 13 October 2025 using ICANN's sourcing tool. Responses to the RFP will not be accepted via other means. ICANN will only accept responses provided in English.

1.2 About the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

ICANN's mission is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. To reach another person on the Internet, you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world.

See www.icann.org for more information.

1.3 About the New Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) Program: Next Round

The New gTLD Program is a community-driven initiative that is enabling the continued expansion of the Domain Name System (DNS). Through the introduction of new gTLDs, including domain names in a variety of scripts and languages, the Program aims to encourage innovation, competition, and consumer choice.

Every computer on the Internet has a unique numerical address called an Internet Protocol address. The DNS makes the Internet more 'user-friendly' by allowing users to enter names, rather than having to remember a long string of numbers for the website they wish to visit.

Top-level domains (TLDs) form the last part of a domain name, appearing after the dot. For example, in the domain name icann.org, the characters 'org' identify the TLD.

Through the 2012 New gTLD Program, more than 1,200 new unique names like .futbol and .pizza, and names in other alphabets and languages were added to the Internet, which has helped to encourage innovation, competition, and consumer choice in the domain name industry. The Program gives businesses, communities, governments and other organizations the chance to apply for new gTLDs tailored to fit their organization, community, culture, language, and customer interests.

The next round of new gTLDs will offer even more domain names in longer lengths and different scripts. These are an important part of the expansion of the DNS because they allow speakers of non-Latin-based languages to access the Internet using their own language or writing system. The application window for the next round of gTLDs is expected to open in April 2026.

The Program is being implemented by ICANN in line with community-developed policy recommendations contained in the Generic Names Supporting Organization's [Final Report on the new gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process](#) (“Final Report”).

1.4 RFP Objectives

ICANN is seeking to identify a provider to conduct CPE as part of the application process for the New gTLD Program: Next Round (the CPE Provider). The purpose of the RFP is to invite prospective Providers to submit proposals for ICANN to evaluate capabilities and expertise. Additionally, ICANN is looking for proposals of the overall costs on a per-evaluation basis.

The RFP is open/public and announced on ICANN's website, and anyone may provide a response.

1.5 About Community Priority Evaluation

Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) is a criterion-based evaluation conducted by a third-party panel and is an optional contention resolution mechanism. When invoked, CPE is designed to ensure that when multiple applicants seek the same or similar gTLD, priority can be granted to applications demonstrating a strong and legitimate community claim. Contention resolution is the process by which ICANN determines which application in a set of identical, similar, or variant gTLD strings will proceed, using either CPE or an ICANN auction.

When completing an application for a gTLD in the Next Round, an applicant has the option of designating their application as a community-based application. A community-based application is for a gTLD that will be operated for the benefit of a clearly delineated community. The role of the CPE panel is to determine whether a community-based application fulfills the CPE criteria defined in Section 4.4 of the Applicant Guidebook (AGB). The CPE scoring process looks at a set of criteria related to community establishment, the nexus between the community name and the applied-for string (e.g., .COMMUNITYNAME), gTLD registration policies, and community endorsement. The criteria are designed to prevent false positives—awarding community priority to unqualified applications, and false negatives—excluding qualified community applications.

Prevailing CPE applicants proceed through the remainder of the gTLD application evaluations. Upon successful conclusion of the evaluations, the applicant signs a Registry Agreement with ICANN and is allowed to operate the community gTLD according to their registration policies. If there are two or more community-based applications for the same string that pass CPE, the contention set will need to be resolved through the ICANN New gTLD Auction.¹

Respondents are encouraged to review the processes and challenges from the 2012 Round. A summary can be found on the ICANN [website](#).

1.6 Transparency and Public Comment

ICANN is a bottom-up, multistakeholder organization. As part of adoption of the recommendations that were developed by the ICANN community for the next round of new gTLDs, ICANN has committed to giving the ICANN community an opportunity to provide feedback related to the selection criteria for the CPE Providers, including relevant CPE processes and procedures. ICANN will work with the selected provider to produce an evaluation guide, which will include the processes, procedures, and criteria (as spelled out in the AGB Section 4.4) the Providers will use to conduct evaluations. ICANN has committed to developing this evaluation guide prior to the opening of the application submission period in April 2026.

2 Scope of Work

The CPE Provider is expected to manage and conduct evaluations for approximately 40-60² applications in the Program based upon the processes and procedures agreed upon between ICANN and the selected provider. In line with the AGB and all applicable ICANN policies, the provider must demonstrate the ability to deliver on the following:

A. Project Management

- a. Managing the external evaluation process, including assessing eligibility and qualification requirements, and determining pass/fail decisions according to the evaluation criteria and indicators.

B. Forming and Managing Evaluation Panel(s) to Assess Applications:

- a. Forming one or more panels of evaluators that possess the requisite expertise and qualifications to evaluate applications from a diverse set of communities.

¹ See Section 4.5 of the draft Applicant Guidebook.

² ICANN can only provide estimates of the total number of applicants and applications that will be received in the next round, as this is still uncertain. Consequently the number of applications eligible for Community Priority Evaluation is also unknown. ICANN will provide the total known applicants for CPE within 90 days of the application submission period closing. For context, there were 25 evaluations conducted in the 2012 round; however, ICANN is expecting that there may be more applications participating in CPE in the next round.

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- i. The panel(s) will conduct application evaluations on a rolling basis beginning approximately in Q2 2027 and continuing until a date to be determined, and will report all qualified applicants to the designated ICANN contacts.
 - ii. ICANN is particularly interested in the number of panels proposed by the respondents. Respondents are strongly encouraged to explain, if they plan to use more than one panel, how they will ensure consistent evaluation and results across multiple panels.
 - iii. The provider must specify its intended approach to resource allocation and ensure that all proposed evaluators and/or advisors have the necessary knowledge and experience to conduct high-quality, well-informed evaluations. Additionally, they must be free of any conflicts of interest that would compromise their impartiality.
 - iv. While the process for developing a qualified panel is at the discretion of the provider, ICANN requests that the panel's responsibilities be clearly outlined in the following "Conducting Panel Evaluations" section.

For each evaluation, the panel may decide to identify and consult with experts familiar with the relevant community to obtain input that may assist in verifying the applicant's claims in their community application.

- b. Developing clear processes and procedures as to how the panel will conduct its evaluations in alignment with the policy language and criteria set forth in the Applicant Guidebook (Section 4.4) outlining the following:
 - i. How the panel will carry out the evaluation
 - ii. How the panel will conduct any investigation (or research) required to verify applicant-provided information, responses to applicant, or additional research needed to fairly evaluate the application
 - iii. When and under what circumstances the panel will engage advisors or consultants to supplement the panel for specific expertise
 - iv. Whether such advisors will participate in scoring applications alongside designated panelists
 - v. Any other relevant procedures related to the evaluation process

C. Conducting Panel Evaluations

- a. Reviewing gTLD applications and responses to questions related to the community-based nature of the application and verifying the information as appropriate.³
- b. Reviewing and verifying the authenticity of letters of support or opposition for the application (which may range in number from a few to several hundred).
- c. Reviewing comments of support or opposition provided to ICANN via its Application Comment Forum.

³ As noted in Section 4.4.5 of the draft Applicant Guidebook: "The panel may conduct limited independent research deemed necessary to evaluate the application according to the criteria. The panel is expected to focus its limited research on the fact-checking required to verify information provided by the applicant. Additionally, as part of this research, the panel may consult with relevant community-related experts to gain insight into highly specialized or localized communities."

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- d. Developing guideline and procedure documentation for CPE, which would be published on ICANN's website.
 - e. Reviewing and scoring an application based on the criteria set forth in the [Applicant Guidebook](#) (Section 4.4) and determining whether the application meets the scoring threshold to receive priority in the contention set.
 - f. Documenting the methodology and rationale for the CPE Provider's determinations, i.e., how the panel determined the score based on the CPE criteria.
 - g. Developing questions to be sent to the applicant to clarify material in its application, if needed.
 - h. Developing questions to be sent to any opposition to the application to clarify and verify the opposition and understand the reasoning for opposition.
 - i. Reviewing applications and results, , and providing status updates on ongoing evaluations.

D. Managing the CPE Evaluation Program

- a. Managing the panel's operations to meet required Service Level Agreements, producing and maintaining required documentation, ensuring consistency of evaluations, maintaining active communications with ICANN-designated points of contact, working with ICANN's quality assurance provider as needed.
- b. Reviewing challenges to CPE results, and issuing a determination about such challenges. Evaluation challenges are expected to be addressed by a different set of panelists than those who originally reviewed and scored the application.

Note: the evaluation challenge mechanism generally allows applicants to challenge an evaluation result based on claims of procedural, factual, or system error in the automatic validations run by the TLD Application Management System (TAMS) that may have led to an incorrect evaluation outcome. Such challenges are limited to errors of fact and/or procedural errors. ICANN will review submitted challenges for completeness before sending them to the CPE provider.

- c. Completing individual evaluations within a 3-6 month timeframe. ICANN expects that there may be multiple evaluations occurring simultaneously and notes that the volume of evaluations could impact the time to completion. The provider should be prepared to complete a smaller batch of evaluations in 3-4 months, while a larger batch may take 4-6 months.
- d. Supplying information and documents to ICANN as needed in the case of Accountability Mechanisms filed related to any evaluation.
- e. Retaining all materials and documentation used during the CPE process for a minimum of five years following the completion of the evaluation and providing relevant work product to ICANN upon completion of its work and contract.

E. Managing COI

- a. Ensuring all internal and/or external evaluators participating in the CPE evaluation process comply with Conflicts of Interest (Col) and other policies, as developed in cooperation with ICANN.

F. Maintaining Document Security

- a. Complying with all relevant data protection laws and regulations, and establishing policies and procedures to protect the privacy of any personal information that the provider collects or processes on our behalf. The provider must respect data subjects' right to control their personal information and ensure that their data is kept secure and used only for the purposes for which it was provided. The provider must never sell, rent, or share personal data processed on our behalf with third parties. ICANN expects that the provider will take all necessary steps to ensure the security and confidentiality of any personal data that is processed on its behalf.

2.1 Deliverables

Infrastructure and Procedure Development

Deliverable	Deadline/Milestones
Design, document and maintain standard operating procedures for conducting CPE in accordance with the Applicant Guidebook	Prior to opening of the round in April 2026
Develop an internal review and quality assurance process to ensure scoring consistency and procedure compliance	Prior to the opening of the round in April 2026
Maintain templates for scoring sheets, clarifying questions (CQ template provided by ICANN), research disclosures, and final determinations	Prior to first evaluation; updates as needed

Communications and Reporting

Deliverable	Deadline/Milestones
Issue CPE results to ICANN. Results will include the score (points/percentage), as well as a pass/fail indication from the provider	Following ICANN confirmation and panel determination
Issue Clarifying Questions (CQs) to ICANN for sharing with applicants or opposing	As needed during evaluation

parties	
Track and manage response window for CQs	21 day response window
Deliver a report for ICANN review summarizing all outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations for future rounds of CPE	Within 60 days of last CPE determination

Panelist Management

Deliverable	Deadline/Milestones
Recruit qualified panelists with experience in criteria-based evaluations. This may include the ad hoc engagement of relevant community experts for each evaluation	Must occur with sufficient time to train and onboard panel without delaying evaluation
Train panelists on CPE criteria, scoring methodology, research guidelines, and conflict of interest standards	All Panelists must be trained prior to engaging in any panel-related activity
Complete ICANN Onboarding and obtain access to TLD Application Management System (TAMS) for panelists and provider staff	ICANN and Providers will agree on timing; will occur in coordination with Providers onboarding for this phase of the round
Train panelists on how to use TAMS, including reviewing application materials, submitting clarifying questions, and uploading evaluation scoring	ICANN and Providers will agree on timing; will occur in coordination with Providers onboarding for this phase of the round
Assign panelists to evaluations	By start of each evaluation period
Manage workload, deadlines, and feedback to ensure consistency across all evaluations	Ongoing
Maintain and manage conflicts of interest and recusal process for any conflicted parties participating in an evaluation	Ongoing
Document engagement of any relevant community experts consulted during evaluation and ensure proper disclosure in research report	As needed / ongoing
Maintain internal documentation and a knowledge base to ensure consistency across panel rotations and for new panelist onboarding	Ongoing

Facilitate calibration sessions across panelists (and panels if relevant) to align scoring judgements and improve consistency in evaluations	Prior to launch and as needed in evaluation period
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Compliance

Deliverable	Deadline/Milestones
Apply documented procedures equally and consistently across applications	Ongoing
Adhere to ICANN's Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Service Providers	Ongoing
Verify that any documentation of support or opposition meets the threshold of relevance and legitimacy	During evaluation period
Cooperate with ICANN-designated Quality Assurance provider to ensure consistency of evaluations and adherence to documented processes. Respond to ICANN-generated suggestions for process improvements	Ongoing

Evaluation and Determination Process

Deliverable	Deadline/Milestones
Review and evaluate applications against the four CPE Criteria: Community Establishment, Nexus between Proposed String and Community, Registration Policies, and Community Endorsement	During evaluation period
Review responses to application questions, supporting documentation, application comments, and opposition letters submitted during the comment period	During evaluation period
Conduct limited fact-based research where necessary to verify applicant claims	As needed during evaluation period
Provide ICANN with research findings for sharing with applicant	30 day response period before determination
Finalize scoring based on application, research and responses	Within 180 days of application assignment

Evaluation Challenges

Deliverable	Deadline/Milestones
Administer evaluation challenge proceedings when submitted by applicant	As needed
Form a Challenge Panel (see section 4.4.5.2 of the AGB)	Upon challenge acceptance
Review evaluation for factual, procedural, or systematic errors and re-evaluate as needed	As part of challenge process
Issue evaluation challenge determination	30 days from filing date
Maintain records for all determinations and evaluation challenge outcomes	Ongoing

Providers should be aware that the flow of applications is unlikely to be consistent. Applicants will need to agree to registry commitments with ICANN prior to proceeding to CPE evaluation (see Applicant Guidebook Section 6.8). Other aspects of the process may also impact the rate at which applications will be handed to the CPE provider. ICANN will be in regular communication with the provider to offer updates on pending applications.

2.2 Scope of Work Timeline

ICANN anticipates that work on this scope will begin soon after the string evaluation phase of the Next Round, which is expected to conclude by June or July 2027. Applicants opting to participate in CPE must first complete a Registry Commitments Evaluation (RCE)⁴ for their proposed Community Registration Policies⁵, which typically takes two to three months, absent extraordinary circumstances. In general, ICANN expects that it may take five to nine months for an application to complete both RCE and CPE.

2.3 Quality Control

To assure the community and all applicants that evaluations are objectively conducted and adhere to the processes in the Applicant Guidebook, evaluations and evaluators work may be reviewed by an independent quality control provider. This provider may request information on how an evaluation (or set of evaluations) was performed, how the scoring was determined, work papers, etc. This is being done at the request of ICANN and is intended solely to determine if applications are being evaluated according to the established procedures. The provider may

⁴ The purpose of the RCE is to determine whether a proposed commitment meets all the evaluation criteria set out in RCE Criteria (see Applicant Guidebook section 6.8.3.3) for inclusion in the RA.

⁵ Community Registration Policies are conditions that gTLD registry operators impose upon registrants within community-based gTLDs.

recommend process improvements to ICANN that will be reviewed and may be passed on to evaluators.

3 Provider Selection Criteria

The decision to select a provider as an outcome of this RFP will be based on, but not limited to, the following selection criteria:

1. Project management and review experience
2. Selection of evaluators and advisors/consultants
3. Panel management
4. Evaluation and assessment
5. Document security
6. Conflict of Interest policy and mitigation
7. Responsiveness and flexibility to work with ICANN-specific requirements, agreement terms, etc.
8. Financial health
9. Pricing
10. Reference checks

3.1 Requirements of Providers

The provider must be able to adhere to the complete list of business requirements as listed in SciQuest/Jaggaer. A summary of the key business requirements is set out below:

1. Provider must be a well-established firm or organization with significant demonstrated expertise in the evaluation of applications against a defined set of criteria. Such expertise will include, at a minimum, the following characteristics and capabilities:
 - a. Project management and review experience:
 - i. Ability to identify, and manage employees and/or subcontractors with relevant expertise
 - ii. Ability to develop a systematic approach to consistently and objectively review and evaluate community applications
 - iii. Ability to build a systematic approach for issuing and tracking responses to clarifying questions
2. Provider must be able to convene (either in advance or rapidly on-demand) a diverse panel (e.g., geography, language, expertise) capable of evaluating applications from a wide variety of communities.⁶ A Panel will consist of individuals (“Panelists”) performing the evaluations and any consulting experts who the panel determines as necessary to provide additional related expertise, experience or context to conduct the evaluation. The types of the communities the Panel evaluate may include communities that are:
 - a. local (e.g., regional) or global in scope;

⁶ As noted in the SubPro Final report as well as in the Applicant Guidebook, “a community should be interpreted broadly and will include, for example, an economic sector, a cultural community, or a linguistic community.”

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- b. based on geography, political affiliation, common interests, cultural, linguistic, or other factors (e.g., underrepresented communities such as indigenous peoples, linguistic minorities, marginalized populations, or communities with limited digital infrastructure);
 - c. involve either commercial or non-commercial interests (e.g., represent non-commercial organizations including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, civil society groups, and grassroots movements that may have different organizational structures and documentation practices than commercial entities); and,
 - d. be either objectively defined or self-defining.
 3. Provider must have the necessary capabilities and/or experience to evaluate application and related material and determine whether the applicant has met the criteria established within the Applicant Guidebook.
 - a. It may assist Panelists to have experience in community-focused work across sectors, such as community development, community organization, engagement, or community studies.
 - b. Provider and Panelists will need to determine when the Panel requires supplemental experience and/or expertise in a specific community to appropriately validate the application information and/or comments or letters received related to the application. The Panel may need to perform other limited validating research as required. Any research must be disclosed to the applicant.
 - c. The Provider should demonstrate what processes and mechanisms they've developed for identifying such situations and for acquiring required expertise.
 4. Provider must propose a structure and plan for the Panel that is viable for a range of applications:
 - a. The number of applications, and the percentage of those that will opt into CPE will not be known in advance. It is anticipated that the percentage of applications requiring CPE will be relatively small compared to the total number of applications. ICANN estimates that approximately 3-4% of applications may request evaluation, based on the 2012 round, during which 25 CPEs evaluations were conducted. This would translate to an estimated 40-60 evaluations in the upcoming round. ICANN expects to have a refined estimate of evaluations following the close of the application window, when the number of contention sets and the number of community applications are better known.
 - b. ICANN is interested in hearing from respondents as to the number of panelists and panels the provider proposes and on the background(s) of the proposed panelists. This plan must be made available for review by ICANN within 60 days of contract signing. The plan will be made public and, upon public review, ICANN may propose subsequent changes, subject to negotiation with the provider.
 - c. The provider must also ensure that its evaluation methodology and clarifying questions are documented in plain language.
 5. To avoid the appearance of any conflict of interest, all questions (from the CPE Providers, panel and advisors) (from the CPE Providers, panel and advisors) for the applicant or the person or entity that submitted a letter of opposition to a CPE applicant must be sent directly to ICANN. ICANN will communicate with the applicant and supply any responses back to the Provider. The provider should not have any direct communication with the applicant or any parties interested in the application and must

ensure its processes prevent any such communication. The provider, should it conduct any limited research or consultation with community experts, must document that research or consultation for review and response by the applicant.

6. Considering the CPE criteria defined in Section 4.4 of the Applicant Guidebook, the provider must propose a panel that is capable of:
 - a. using consistent judgment in evaluations, by applying the AGB-criteria as objectively as possible informed by the provided guidelines, while acknowledging that some degree of interpretation may be needed;
 - b. reaching conclusions that are fair and consistent, well-reasoned, clearly documented, and defensible;
 - c. documenting the rationale and approach taken in each evaluation;
 - d. conducting limited research or consultation with community experts to fact-check and/or verify information provided by the applicant in its community application. Such limited research should focus on obtaining additional information or clarity directly related to information or materials provided by the applicant. For example, the panel may wish to conduct general internet research to confirm whether an applicant's claims that an applied-for string matches the general usage of a community name/term;
 - e. bringing diverse approaches to understanding communities, as well as expertise in criteria-based evaluations; and
 - f. Panel should be able to recognize through its own expertise or by consulting with experts the different types and needs of communities, such as communication styles, organizational structures, and documentation practices, especially when evaluating applications from indigenous peoples, linguistic minorities, or other marginalized communities
7. Provider must propose a process for addressing any relevant evaluation challenges invoked by CPE applicants. This should include convening a challenge panel to review and respond to such challenges (see Section 1.2.14 of the AGB). ICANN anticipates that nearly all applicants whose request for CPE designation is rejected will request a challenge panel.
8. The evaluation process for selection of new gTLDs must respect the principles of fairness, transparency, and non-discrimination, and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
9. The provider should recognize that the Applicant Guidebook is comprehensive and satisfactorily expresses all selection criteria.
10. The provider should submit complete responses to the questionnaire along with supporting documentation by the designated due date via ICANN's procurement tool (access will be provided by ICANN upon receipt of your indication of interest). This includes the submission of a complete budget and budget narrative, as well as professional references that attest to the applicant's ability to meet the selection criteria.
11. The provider is expected to enter into a Statement of Work and Service Level Agreement with ICANN.
12. The provider must have the ability to communicate (verbally and in writing) in English.

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13. The provider must have availability to participate in meetings in person or via conference call/remote participation.
 14. The provider must have the ability to maintain data security and integrity of the process, including by incorporating the principles of privacy and security by design into their work, to help ensure that privacy and security are considered throughout the project lifecycle, and that personal data is processed in a secure and compliant manner.
 15. The provider must have the ability to manage evaluation processes of international projects and organizations.
 16. ICANN desires the provider to obtain reference checks. Providers should have relevant references available for ICANN to contact.
 17. All Providers must demonstrate a robust conflict of interest policy for the panelists in place. Eligibility to serve as a CPE panelist will be based on an assessment of potential conflicts of interest. Should any applicants submit community applications that would present a conflict of interest, the provider must have an established process for recusal and provide an alternative evaluation panelist within a reasonable timeframe. Please refer to the [Applicant Guidebook](#) Appendix 7 for Conflict of Interest and Appendix 8 for Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Service Providers which apply to Evaluation Panelists.
 18. Providers must have a demonstrated ability to develop work methods, evaluation/assessment approaches and reporting based on specific objectives and criteria.
 19. The provider will have to show an understanding of and commitment to ICANN's requirements for transparency and accountability. See: <https://www.icann.org/resources/accountability>.
 20. The provider and all employees and/or subcontractors are expected to complete ICANN-led provider onboarding prior to engaging in the contracted effort. This will include information on ICANN, its mission, the New gTLD Program: Next Round as well as any system and process training ICANN deems necessary. ICANN will do its best to contain training to material relevant for the provider's contracted work. ICANN expects this to occur just prior to the start of provider's work.
 21. The provider must be available to support ICANN in addressing any accountability mechanisms described in the AGB to evaluation results and to supply necessary information and documentation to ICANN, as needed, on an ongoing basis.
 22. ICANN wants to understand the aspects of each respondent's pricing. Providers should include all components of their pricing in the pricing worksheet as discrete line items for ICANN's evaluation purposes. Final pricing for this work will be stated in an executed agreement on a per-evaluation price, which includes the price for the initial evaluation, a challenge panel (should that be required), and any other accepted pricing components.

4 RFP Timeline

The following dates have been established as milestones for this RFP. ICANN reserves the right to modify or change this timeline at any time as necessary.

Activity	Estimated Dates
RFP published	20 August 2025
Participants submit any questions to ICANN	8 September 2025 by 23:59 UTC
ICANN responds to participant questions	29 September 2025
Participant proposals due by	13 October 2025 by 23:59 UTC
ICANN reviews proposals	21 November 2025
Final evaluations and selection	15 December 2025
Public Comment on the draft Evaluation Guide	5 January - 13 February 2026
Contracting and award	31 March 2026
Announcement of provider	April 2026
Publish CPE Evaluation Guide	April 2026

5 Terms and Conditions

General Terms and Conditions

1. Submission of a proposal shall constitute each respondent's acknowledgment and acceptance of all the specifications, requirements and terms and conditions in the RFP.
2. All costs of preparing and submitting its proposal, responding to or providing any other assistance to ICANN in connection with the RFP will be borne by the respondent.

All submitted proposals including any supporting materials or documentation will become the property of ICANN. If the respondent's proposal contains any proprietary information that respondent does not want ICANN to disclose or use other than for the purposes of evaluating the proposal, that information should be marked with appropriate confidentiality markings.

3. As a requirement for the provider, ICANN expects that respondent will comply with all relevant data protection laws and regulations and will have policies and procedures in place to protect the privacy of any personal information that respondent collects or processes on behalf of ICANN. Respondent must respect data subjects' right to control their personal information and ensure that their data is kept secure and used only for the purposes for which it was provided. Respondent must never sell, rent, or share personal data they process on ICANN's behalf with third parties. ICANN expects that respondent will take all necessary steps to ensure the security and confidentiality of any personal data that they process on behalf of ICANN, including implementing appropriate technical and organizational measures to prevent unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. Compliance with these requirements will be a key consideration in the selection of a provider.

Discrepancies, Omissions and Additional Information

1. Respondent is responsible for examining the RFP and all addenda. Failure to do so will be at the sole risk of the respondent. Should respondent find discrepancies, omissions, unclear or ambiguous intent or meaning, or should any question arise concerning the RFP, respondent must notify ICANN of such findings immediately in writing via email no later than 10 days prior to the deadline for bid submissions. Should such matters remain unresolved by ICANN, in writing, prior to respondent's preparation of its proposal, such matters must be addressed in respondent's proposal.
2. ICANN is not responsible for oral statements made by its staff members, agents, or representatives concerning the RFP. If respondent requires additional information, respondent must request that the issuer of the RFP furnish such information in writing.
3. A respondent's proposal is presumed to represent its best efforts to respond to the RFP. Any significant inconsistency, if unexplained, raises a fundamental issue of the respondent's understanding of the nature and scope of the work required and of its ability to perform the contract as proposed and may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The burden of proof as to cost credibility rests with the respondent.
4. If necessary, supplemental information to the RFP will be provided to all prospective respondents receiving the RFP. All supplemental information issued by ICANN will form part of the RFP. ICANN is not responsible for any failure by prospective respondents to receive supplemental information.

Assessment and Award

1. ICANN reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw the RFP, make no award, to waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity and to disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.
2. ICANN may request a respondent to provide further information or documentation to support respondent's proposal and its ability to provide the products and/or services contemplated by the RFP.
3. ICANN is not obliged to accept the lowest priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.
4. ICANN will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in the RFP, responses to questions related to those requirements, any further issued clarifications (if any) and consideration of any other issues or evidence relevant to the respondent's ability to successfully provide and implement the products and/or services contemplated by the RFP and in the best interests of ICANN.
5. ICANN reserves the right to enter into contractual negotiations and if necessary, modify any terms and conditions of a final contract with the respondent whose proposal offers the best value to ICANN.