
ICANN Transcription
Applicant Support GGP

Monday, 15 May 2023 at 15:00 UTC

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JULIE HEDLUND:

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. Welcome to the GNSO Guidance Process Initiation Request for Applicant Support Call on Monday, the 15th of May, 2023. For today's call, we received apologies from Rosalind KennyBirch and Tom Barrett. Statements of interest must be kept up to date. Does anyone have any updates to share? If so, please raise your hand or speak up now.

And seeing no hands, all documentation and information can be found on the public wiki space, recordings will be posted shortly after the end of the call. Please remember to state your name before speaking for the recording. And as a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multi-stakeholder process are to comply with the expected standard of behavior. Thank you. And over to the chair, Mike Silber. Please begin, Mike.

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MIKE SILBER: Thank you, Julie. Be much appreciated. Happy Monday, everybody, and thanks everybody for joining the participation and the help in the final push towards getting this closed off. I think there's been good engagement, and I think we're ready to move ahead with the remaining item, which is Item 6. Sorry, Task 6. Julie, I think let me hand over to you. I'll facilitate so that you can capture notes and text. But, Julie, I think you would be the best shipper for taking us forward on Task 6, please.

JULIE HEDLUND: Thank you, Mike. This is Julie Hedlund from Staff, and welcome, everyone. I'll go ahead and introduce us to Task 6. We sent a link to this working document with you. Sorry. I accidentally put myself on mute. That's not very helpful. At any rate, we sent the link to this item with the agenda, but I can go ahead and drop the link in the chat as well so you can follow along on your own screens if you'd like. Let me do that here quickly. All right. One moment. There it is. And back to the document.

So, Task 6 as you might recall which we introduced quite some time ago when we were introducing all of the tasks is about recommending a methodology for allocating financial support where there is inadequate funding for all qualified candidates. As a reminder, the implementation guidance in the SubPro Final Report 17.10 is that 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.

And for reference, the rationale for implementation guidance 17.10 is the working group considered that in subsequent rounds, it may be the case that there are not sufficient funds available to provide fee reductions to all applicants that meet threshold scoring requirements. The working group reviewed the 2012 approach to this issue, as well as public comments received on the working group's initial report, but did not come to an agreement on any specific recommendations in this regard.

The working group believes that this topic should be considered further by the dedicated implementation review team. And just as a reminder, there is not a dedicated implementation review team for applicant support. The function of this GNSO guidance process is to provide the guidance to SubPro implementation review team relating to applicant support and relating to this particular recommendation.

So further to this item, I just want to point you to the, for reference, the section of the ODA on this issue as well. Now keep in mind that the approach suggested in the ODA is just one possible approach. And I think it would be helpful if this working group brainstormed a little bit and looked at all possible alternatives or scenarios for providing additional support, should demand overwhelm the availability of the support in the ASP.

So, for reference, the ODA says that ICANN board would need to consider allocating dedicated funds to support the ASP. Should demand overwhelm available funds, ICANN Org would explore the possibility of additional budget allocation and/or opportunities for ASP sponsorship with the goal of providing meaningful levels of support for all eligible ASP applicants. ICANN Org intends to offer

the following assistance to qualified applicants. Reduction of the base application fee. A curated list of pro bono and/or reduced cost providers. Reduction elimination of certain other fees, and there's the reference there on page 202 of the ODA.

So, note again that the ODA does not address Task 6 per se and that the divisions of the availability of additional funding, not that there is inadequate funding. Should such funding be needed, i.e., via an additional budget allocation and/or sponsorship. In addressing Task 6, we suggest the working group might want to account for a scenario where additional funding is not available. And what we've done in this working document is we've set up several possible places to insert recommendation guidance. And then we'll fill in from these discussions, the rationale and assumptions, and the summary of the working group deliberations.

So, this document is ready for your input. And what I'd like to do is pause now and turn things over to Mike to facilitate our discussion. And I'll be taking notes in the background. And I welcome you also if you would like, you can edit the document directly. I just ask that you use the suggestion mode as opposed to the edit mode so that you don't override any other comments that people might be putting in. And I'll pause then and, Mike, I see Rafik has his hand up, so I'll pause here. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER:

That's fantastic. Thanks, Julie. Rafik, please, the floor is yours.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Thanks. Can you hear me?

MIKE SILBER: Yes, we can.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Okay. Thanks. I mean, so as we are starting, now just kind of clarification here about the assumption we should have. So, I assume that we don't have any specific idea about the funding to be available. And I'm not sure how that will impact whatever we'll recommend. So, is there any way to know if that we have some range? Not exact number, just to know if there is any range or estimation to help us in term of what we are trying to do.

Second question or comment here. Since we are talking about the fee reduction. Does it mean here we are going to think about some prioritization or kind of way in how to divide in some fair way between applicant to benefit as much as possible or just we need to create some priority or? I mean, just wondering here if there was some-- I'm not going to say guidance because we are supposed to provide guidance here for implementation, but were there any previous discussion regarding this topic, so we're not supposed to have start from scratch? So just really asking about clarification. Yeah.

MIKE SILBER: Yeah. Thanks, Rafik. I think the whole point of Task 6 is that we are to some extent starting from scratch. But before I give my personal opinion, is there anybody from ICANN Org who wants to

hazard a comment in terms of, is there a thinking around budget at the moment?

JULIE HEDLUND:

So, Mike, this is Julie Hedlund from Staff. And I certainly welcome other ICANN Org staff who are on this call if they want to comment. There was a suggestion in the ODA document that the board could consider additional funding as needed if demand would overwhelm the initial funding for the ASP, but that's just a recommendation in the ODA. My understanding is there is not at this point any plan for funding either through ICANN or through sponsors for the ASP beyond what is accessible to be allocated for the program as an initial start.

So, if that allocation, which, again, I think is a recommendation in the ODA, is over-stripped by demand, I don't think there is any plan at this point as far as how that additional demand will be funded, and indeed, I believe that's the point of Task 6, is that we should make recommendations. And there might be several approaches that we could recommend for ICANN Org to consider on how to fund the additional demand.

And to that end, Rafik, to your other question about fee reduction and prioritization. So yes, of course, we can also consider prioritization if we wish. We can consider, well, really all options are on the table. It's helpful if we give the pros and cons of the options that we suggest and include any assumptions that we may have as well. And I see Rafik says in the chat, "so we can start with the assumption that would be limited funding and use that as a constraint". Yes, I think that's true, Rafik. I don't think we can

assume that there's unlimited funding. I think we should assume that there'll be initial budget and then once that budget is exhausted and if demand continues, then the recommendation guidance from the GGP would come into play. Thank you.

MIKE SILBER:

So, I think just from my perspective, the first issue is are we likely to see a situation where ICANN's actually going to be paying money out? And I think the reality is that that is not the case and that's not contemplated. So instead, what we're looking at is a situation where ICANN is going to be looking at reductions in application fee, or fee reductions or waivers in terms of ongoing fees that take this into consideration. And on that basis, I think that's a reasonable place to start in the sense we're not asking or recommending that ICANN actually lash out any cash.

So, I think what we need to do is we need to make a recommendation that a suitable level should be set which doesn't impact on the viability of the program, but which does allow both for application fee waivers or reductions, and ongoing fee waivers or reductions, whether those are temporary or long term. So, I think that's the first matter of principle, and we'll get some input from you on that.

Then the second issue is, to Rafik's point, is are we looking at prioritization? And here we get into a situation where we need to make a recommendation at least in my view, do we suggest that available funds are spread evenly between all qualifying applicants, or do we recommend a prioritization where some people may get greater access to the available budget than

others? So, I think those are the two key criteria that we should be looking at. Happy to take input from anybody if they disagree or if they have any other criteria that we should be considering.

And, Rubens, I see your comment in the chat that ICANN Org is always very wary about ongoing fee reductions and in a way, and I completely agree with you. I'm not sure if we're talking about a permanent fee reduction or waiver or if we're talking about a temporary fee reduction or waiver to allow a supported applicant to actually get the gTLD launched and underway.

And then I see from Gabriela, she doesn't have access to her mic. She would like to ask if we have any idea of how many applications the Applicant Support Program is intended to approve. Her recommendation is a limit of beneficiaries to have an estimated amount. So, we've had this discussion, but I don't know if anybody wants to hazard a response to that. And, Lawrence, I see your hand, but let's maybe just get a response to Gabriela's question.

Not seeing anybody wanting to take that. We had this discussion over the last several calls. And I think the best we can do is recommend what success looks like. And as Maureen has put in the chat, we're looking at least 10 applicants to us would be success. So, I think over here, we need to make a recommendation that budget needs to be available for at least 10 applications to be supported. I suppose the key question is what if we get more than 10? So, if budget is set at 10, what happens if we get 12 or 15 or 20 fantastic qualifying applications or support coming in? Do we then just spread the support thinner, or do we prioritize?

And, Leon, I see you comment in the chat, but I think we're getting a little off track in terms of what success looks like, but rather a question of how do we spread this budget. What do we do if we decide that success is 10 and we ask or we recommend and Org and the GNSO agree that the program should budget for at least 10? What happens if we get 20? But let me hand over to Lawrence while we contemplate that. Lawrence?

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Thanks, Chair. So, my question more or less bothered around what the scenario that you just painted in the sense that my understanding also is that for applicants, basically, maybe the application fee is reduced to some extent and there is a portion for which they pay, but it's not as if ICANN is providing any financial contribution or support or paying out any sum to them. But it's important to also put into context what it might cost ICANN per application. And I think that's where the scenario that you just spoke about comes to play in the sense if we are projecting to have 10 successful applications, what is our projection or what is ICANN Org's projection of seeing all the process to see 10 applications true? And is that cost supposed to be what we are discussing in terms of budget?

Otherwise, I'm still struggling with the concept of the budget to see this process in terms of applicant support, the budget to see true. Because what I see is basically some form of administrative cost to take the project from the awareness stage to delegation eventually. So, is that what we are actually dealing with here? And if it is, then we definitely will need a lot of support from Staff to be able to come up with what it might basically cost for an

application to be successful and if we are then projecting 10, 15, or 20, we'll definitely have that entire cost laid out and possibly come up with the budget.

The second issue will be do we have any constraints that we should also take note of in terms of the budget for this portion of the applicant support? So, are there metrics that we need to put in mind while talking about costs? And that question, I think I'm just layering an additional question to what Maria had put into the chat early on. But that's my take.

MIKE SILBER:

Thanks, Lawrence. So, my understanding, and I see Kristy has engaged, but my understanding is that ICANN will not be laying out cash for anybody. That there will not be any money paid to any applicant. I think that is contrary to the whole structure of the Applicant Support Program. So, then the key question is, how do we--? It's not for us to set the budget. We're making recommendations of how once a budget is divided, how do we go and deal with it if we have more applicants that are deserving and that warrant consideration than the budget allows. So, Kristy or Julie, I don't know if you want to respond. I see you're both very busy in terms of the ODA design.

JULIE HEDLUND:

Hi, Mike. This is Julie from Staff. I'd like to suggest if Kristy is able to, if she wants to speak a little bit too what's in the ODA with respect to budget. I mean, I think you're correct that we should take as an assumption that ICANN is not going to be providing

cash payments to the applicant, those who qualify for applicant support. But I do know that as Kristy notes on page 334, as she's put in the chat, and I've put the link to the document in the chat, there is some cost estimates. But, Kristy, would you like to speak to that momentarily?

MIKE SILBER: And, Rafik, I do you see your hand, but I'd like to just close off on this topic before I turn back to you.

KRISTY BUCKLEY: Sure. Thanks, Julie. And hello, everyone. Sorry for being late. I was on another call. Thank you, Julie, for the link. And there if you go to that page, I think it's 334, you'll see there's a table that we included just that basically does a cost estimate of not only the initial evaluation fee, but all of the subsequent evaluations that usually cost additional money. And we did it per unit of five applicants just to make it easy so you could say well times two or times three or times four, a rough kind of cost estimate. And these are direct costs to the Org. So, it's not including things like staffing time or the bid credit or auction, those sorts of monies that we're not receiving.

So that might be helpful to consider in relation to this question. And as you know in the ODA, the Org had budgeted \$2 million as a starting point. This is the same number that we used in the 2012 rounds. Under that scenario, I believe 75% fee reduction, we could cover 15 applicants for that amount, and an 85% fee reduction, we cover 10 for that amount.

And so, we also mentioned in the ODA that we would first seek additional funding. There's contingency funding to cover risk and overages such as that, but if it went beyond what we could pull from the contingency funding, then we would need to have a discussion with the board and look for the budget allocation or other measures such as spreading the existing funding more thinly across the applicants that were qualified. So, I hope that is helpful just in terms of further information and context. Thanks.

JULIE HEDLUND: Thanks, Kristy, and back to you, Mike.

MIKE SILBER: Thank you. Just to confirm, does that answer the question that's been raised?

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Yes. This is Lawrence. To some very good extent, it helps. At least knowing that if we have-- I mean, if the percentage of support to the applicant is tweaked, to some extent, it could give leverage to how many applications can be supported. But I believe that very early in the application round, there will have to be some form of guidance going to those who might need the support in terms of what actual support will be available.

So, we may still run into this issue of having a good number of applications coming in and possibly maybe we had even looked at a threshold of 15 good applications and we end up having 25. So whichever way, even with the budget that we have, it still makes a

lot of sense to work on what the contingency plan would look like, where we have much more good applications in the basket compared to what we project for.

MIKE SILBER:

I completely agree with you, Lawrence, but I think we're getting stuck on the 10 applications that we had suggested as a measure of success. So, we said success is at least 10 qualifying competent applications. That means the program is working. What I don't know if we should be doing, we need to decide, should we recommend then that ICANN Org budgets for only 10? Or should our advice be that they need to budget in excess of 10 so that we don't run into a situation where 10 becomes an artificial obstacle if it turns out that we have 15 or 20 fantastic applications that warrant support and need to get it, and then we need to just slash that support budget thinner and thinner for each application, and we get into a prioritization?

So, I think that's the debate rather than saying, well, 10 is it. And apologies, Rafik, I keep bumping you down, but Rubens, you made a very interesting in comment in the chat. Could I bother you to actually explain what your thinking was over there?

RUBEN KUHL:

Yes, Mike. Can you hear me?

MIKE SILBER:

Yes. Loud and clear. Thank you.

RUBEN KUHL:

The ODA detailed not only fee estimates, but also where would that come from. And when it comes to application costs and application fees, it was expected that one would pay the other. But they also made a decision on their own, not supported by the SubPro Report Output, that application support costs would also take funds from application fees, so they even increased a bit the application fees so the application support cost would be taken out of that.

And that's something that was never discussed and specified and even go against what was discussed in the SubPro working group. Most of the times when people discuss that in the working group, the idea was that would come like from ICANN proceeds or any other beneficial fund that ICANN would have. But a decision was made to not specify that in the report, so it wouldn't give IRTs or now the GGP more latitude to decide this. But they went in the ODA and said no, only application fees can bear the cost for applicant support. And this is something that they couldn't do more wrong in my opinion, but that's what in the ODA.

So, if we disagree with that as a group, then I believe we should tell them so somewhere which could or not be related exactly to that discussion. But since the ODA was mentioned, I remember talking about that. Thanks.

MIKE SILBER:

So, I think that's a really interesting comment. I'd like to put a pin on it because I don't think it's directly responsive to the issue we're

dealing with, but I do think that it's something that we need to address. So, if we can get back to it once we've answered some of the other questions in terms of source of funds, then we can then make a decision as a GGP, whether that's something we want to address. So, Rafik, thank you for your patience. Let me hand it back to you.

RAFIK DAMMAK:

Thanks, Mike. I was trying to think about the problem ahead of us and what I'm seeing that we have two variables. It's hard to guess or set with one is how many applications we will get and the other is the budget that will be set to support. Yeah. So, I was thinking if we can work without trying to do any guess estimates is to have different scenario from quite pessimistic, we don't think that we will get, like, let's say, the minimal what we are hoping for to more quiet optimistic so we can have different range. Because with that, we might have different way to divide. So, if we don't get so many, I think the problem is quite solid in how we will split, while if we get-- it's good thing if we get too many applications how we cannot try to split.

So, I'm just thinking is it possible to try to provide guidance in term of and scenario to provide more flexibility than trying to have something that work in any case, which will be complicated since we have those variable or two factor that we were not-- I don't think we are able to guess or estimate right now.

MIKE SILBER:

Rafik, I think you're completely correct. And so, I think what we should be focusing on is-- I think, to me, the big question is do we recommend that ICANN Org tries to prioritize, or do we suggest that they just simply dilute the support, the ultimate budget by the number of qualifying applications? So, my personal view, and here not as chair, my personal view is that one recommendation should be that when budgeting the 10 that we have established as a measure of success, or at least an initial measure of success, should not be used as the determinant or the budget that's allocated. But rather we should there work on a percentage of applications.

Now, I'm conscious of Rubens' comment in terms of where the funding comes from, but for now, let's assume we proceed on the basis that it comes from the application fee. So, I think we need to make that recommendation that Org doesn't budget on 10, because that's then going to stretch that budget very thin if there are more than 10.

The second thing is I'm very conscious that it would look bad and certain bloggers would no doubt have a field day if we gave equivalent funding to a deserving applicant in the developed world and in the developing world. But I think for ICANN and ICANN Org to start getting involved in prioritization of applicants, involves a judgment call that would be extremely difficult for ICANN Org to make, and it almost then puts Org in an incredibly difficult position of judging and having to do an initial prioritization evaluation before it proceeds with the actual application evaluation.

So, in my view, the budget should be stretched as far as possible, but needs to be divided equally between all applicants unless an

applicant has indicated that they don't need full support. So, for an applicant, and maybe this is something that Staff could consider in implementation, that in applying for applicant support, an applicant could tick a box to say, are you applying for 10 or 25, 50, 75 or 100 percent support. Just based on their requirements. But other than that, I don't think Org should be involved in making value decisions on applications except through the formal application process. And, Kristy, I see you hand this up.

KRISTY BUCKLEY:

Thanks, Mike. So, we did explore different levels of support during the ODP. And I think it's possible. Of course, anything is possible. It just gets more complicated to kind of manage that, I think. The other thing that I will mention is that in the ODA, we envisioned having 18-month sort of period before the gTLD application window opens for applicants to learn about the Applicant Support Program, figure out how to apply, apply, and then also receive their decision about whether they got support. Right? Which may, in turn, influence their decision of whether they apply for gTLD.

So, if we were to divide it equally across everyone, that would mean that someone that applied in month one of the Applicant Support Program opening and someone that applied in the last two months of the applicant support window, that we would have to wait to announce the evaluation results of all of those applicants until two months before, somewhere in that window before the gTLD application opening.

So, it doesn't give a lot of time if someone's trying to prepare and advance, say, okay, I really would need this reduction in funding and I need to know now whether I get that. And if I don't get that, I have to try and find other sources of funding. If they don't find out about that until very close to the gTLD application window, it just makes it really hard for them to plan and make contingency plans if they do not qualify for that support. That would be helpful.

MIKE SILBER:

That's an excellent retort. Thank you. Any thoughts or comments? Because that has kicked the knees out of my suggestion. Well, Kristy, couldn't we, on that basis, indicate or structure it on the basis that you-- I don't know. No offense taken, but when you stand very firm and tall and then somebody points out the weaknesses of your foundation, that's very useful. So, could we not come to a situation where we can if somebody applies in month one and they're a very deserving qualifying support applicant, we can confirm to them that they can get x percent support, but there may be further support available depending on the outcome of the support program that we can't commit beyond that?

Because I think it does become a problem if, as you say, somebody who applies in month one, they meet all the criteria we'd want to be able to tell them right away, "yes, you qualify", and we need to give them some guidance as to what they qualify for.

KRISTY BUCKLEY: Mike, is that a question to me, Kristy?

MIKE SILBER: It's just a general thought comment but if you have a view, I'd greatly appreciate it.

KRISTY BUCKLEY: I think that would be possible. I'd have to go back to finance and operations folks just to ask about how that might work from an operationalization perspective. But, yeah, I think that's possible as well.

MIKE SILBER: Because that's the only way that I can think of handling it because otherwise, you're going to give people the jitters if you give fee reductions along the way without knowing the total number of applications that are in. Thoughts? Comments? So, I've seen Gabriela's comment about evaluate and rank proposals, but that doesn't address Kristy's question, which means we need to wait until the end of the process, or we need to have a very complex evaluation and ranking system that would allow us to rank proposals as they come in. As opposed to a qualified, do not qualify, we then need to rank them as they come in.

I'm seeing comments come in, "time frame within which people have to be evaluated". There seems to be unease with the idea that you were mentioning about people actually getting in and getting out, but rather backing everybody up and only making a decision at the end. Which to some extent is contrary to the whole

point that we were trying to raise, that people know their support status beforehand, which allows them to actually make a decision whether to proceed with an application or not. And I'm just worried that if we have to run the Applicant Support Program from beginning to end, then do an evaluation, then come up with a decision and then communicate it, we're just going to delay the overall program instead of running the two in parallel. But, Lawrence, I see your hand is up. Do you have a comment?

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Yes, I do. So, there's a lot of value in this particular scenario that we are kicking into. Thanks, Kristy, for that. This is supposed to be from design, it's supposed to be an 18-month process. That's about a year and a half. And if someone were to put in an application early in the period or in the process, I also see value in them not having to wait for a year and maybe about three months to get a response because we're waiting for all the other applications to come in. Or maybe there's a cutoff date for applications, which might maybe be six months and then we're waiting until all the applications are evaluated for someone to get a response to know if they should start looking for alternative funding for the application.

But again, what's the issue I see this bringing up will be if we have very good applications coming in and even if we're committing to say, I mean, based on the budget's benchmark, probably we're looking at or working with maybe 75% discount. And there's a promise of maybe communicating to them that, well, you can be sure you can get a 50% discount of something of some sort just to

give some buffer for other applications that might also be very good coming in.

At the end of the process where we fall short of the number of applications it will definitely mean going back to tell the person, well, you'll no longer be getting some 50% discount, you're not going to be getting 85. Or we run into that scenario where a lot of applications come in, and we might be stuck on providing a 50% support compared to maybe a 75 that was initially designed.

Definitely, I see value in going back to the operations team to maybe guide what that kind of a scenario looks like if we're going to have to commit-- I mean, if we would want to let people know early in the process that the application has ticked all the right boxes and will definitely enjoy support, then what level of support will now be will be safe to assume can be communicated if we don't want to wait till the entire process is true, leaves us with another issue to deal with.

MIKE SILBER: Thanks, Lawrence. Rafik.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Thanks. I'm just trying here to get some clarification if I got it correctly or not. So, are we talking here about pre-evaluation for applicant to tell them that might they might be eligible or not for getting support, and that's before final decision to be made? Because I don't think we're talking here about first in first out. Yeah. How we will decide how to speed that it need to be done at a later stage, but we can tell them that they might be eligible.

Otherwise, they should consider if it's not the case. Is it the case or did I get it wrong? So, I'm trying to understand clearly.

MIKE SILBER: I don't know, Kristy, did you follow that query?

KRISTY BUCKLEY: Sorry, I cut out for a second. Do you mind just repeating that, please?

RAFIK DAMMAK: Okay. So, I was just asking if we are talking here about pre-evaluation to tell the applicant if they might be eligible to get support or not, and the final decision will be made later. So, we are giving them here the ability to reconsider about applying or not. So, just to understand about time frame and how that decision will be made.

KRISTY BUCKLEY: Thank you.

MIKE SILBER: No, no. Go for it, Kristy.

KRISTI: Thanks, Mike. I wasn't sure if you were waiting for me to respond or not. Thank you for the question, and thanks you for repeating it. I think it's a really interesting idea. Just going through the

qualification process saying, yes, you qualify, no, you don't qualify. And if you do qualify, here's the range that you qualify for support for. Maybe it's a bit broader than 75 to 85. Maybe it's like 50 to 85 or some other range. And then once we gather all the applications, we might need to--

So, another consideration in that though is that how soon do we close the application window for receiving applications for support. We proposed in the ODA four months prior to the gTLD window opening. There were some concerns that that would disadvantage people that find out about this program too late and they miss the opportunity to apply. So, we've talked about advancing that to be two months prior to the gTLD application window. But in that case, we would be notifying applicants of the level of support that they get somewhere between six weeks and three months or so of what level support. So, I think is a question of whether that's adequate time for them to make a decision, what level of support they get. Thanks.

MIKE SILBER:

Yeah. Kristy, my personal view is two months is wholly inadequate. I think, again repeating my metaphor, I think it kicks the chair, the supporting chair out from any applicant to come to two months before to be told, sorry, you're only going to get a 50% fee waiver and they were hoping for 75. Then they've got a scramble. So, I think a good idea is to come up with a range to tell them they're eligible for a minimum of x percent fee waiver. And it might be more depending on the number of applications.

Gabriela, I saw your comment in the chat in terms of approving first applicants will be detrimental to the ones who don't have previous experience. I'm not sure I fully agree. I think you may be onto something that the people who are likely to be at the front of the queue are those who have some familiarity with the process. But I'm hoping if the communications program is good enough, that we've created enough knowledge and information, that it's not just those with prior knowledge who will join the application queue. But I could be wrong, and I do think that's something that we need to recommend. So, Kristy, I think the general feeling here is two months is way too short.

Well, can we go back to the question that Kristy was raising, which is do we wait for all the support applicants to submit their applications for them to be evaluated and then make a single decision, or do we try as has been recommended in the ODA to actually have first in, first out process where people actually get an answer, don't have to wait till the end and can move on with their application?

Because I'm really, I like the idea but we need to get some feedback as you indicated from finance and operations colleagues, whether we can then set a minimum number to say, yes, you qualify, you will get the following support and you may be eligible for more just depending on the number of qualifying applicants that come out by the end of the process. Is that a feasible way? Because I think that's the only way that you can try and combine both.

So, there's a preference from Gabriela that's this is a gating process, but it's not an ongoing process. So, option one is there's

a period in which to submit support applications. Everybody gets them in on time and then Staff goes away and considers the applications, sees whether they're eligible and makes a decision, then we know how many people they are and they can divvy up the funds accordingly. Option two is some sort of rolling process where people come in and they are at as Staff are able to evaluate and they don't need to wait for a closing date.

Okay. So far, we've got two people in the chat who's supporting a single process and three supporting that, and Lawrence and I, who seem to be supporting some sort of conveyor belt rather than a single process, back everything up, wait for everyone to come in. Kristy, how does that sound to you and the team?

KRISTY BUCKLEY:

Thanks, Mike. Yeah. I think what might be helpful is if I could take back both of those options and just check them with finance and operations to get a sense of pros and cons, and we could work with policy to bring that back in the next meeting, if that would be helpful just to further understand the implications of that.

MIKE SILBER:

Yeah, I think that's a good idea. Any objection from the rest of the team? So, Kristy, that's on your head. Sarah, I agree with you. If we do outreach, to me, the only problem then is with a set time application window, it means you've got to bring back the time very significantly so as not to penalize people. Whereas with a rolling conveyor type situation, the idea is people can come in and apply and get out without having to wait for the entire cohort to

catch up. But let's say Kristy come back on the pros and cons of each and see where we get to.

Maureen, I see your message in the chat that there's too much uncertainty for applicants if the process is drawn out. I'm not sure if that means you're supporting the all-at-one go or if that means you're supporting the kind of conveyor system. I don't know if you want to respond, but I'm seeing Steve's hands. Let me take Steve.

STEVE CHAN:

Thanks, Mike. This is Steve from Staff. I'm slightly wary because it seems like we're going into some pretty operational details. And I was going to make an attempt at trying maybe dial it back a little bit and to Rafik's point earlier in this call to try to set some baseline factors that might help us examine the question. And so, I'm going to rely on in part what the ODA says. And for that, I'll ask Kristy to factor me if I get anything wrong.

But the way that it seems to lay out in my head is that they the ODA relies on the two million figure, which is the same as 2012, which I think doesn't preclude that that could actually be a bigger amount once the program actually launches. So based on the percentages in the ODA, that seems to amount at the two million figure to be about 10 to 15 supported applicants.

And then what is also suggested in the ODA is that if there are, say, 20 or 25, so essentially more qualified applicants than funding supports, that the first priority would try to find more money, essentially, to make sure that all the qualified applicants

do in fact get the expected amount of funding that is expected to be communicated in the applicant support handbook.

And then I think those are all the factors that would need to be fulfilled before we even get to the question that this group is considering, if there's too many qualified applicants for the available funding. So, I'm just wondering if it might make sense to just take all those things in totality to help evaluate this question. So, the part I was trying to stress is that what the ODA contemplates is, indeed, if we do run into the problem of too many qualified applicants, there's a first priority to first try to find more money before we actually get to rely on what this GGP will eventually recommend. Thanks.

MIKE SILBER:

Yeah, Steve, I think that's a great point and it ties in with what Maureen has put into the chat as well, which is, and I understand where people are coming from, decide how many, and then not drawing out the process. I'm waiting to hear back from Kristy in terms of pros and cons before I make my mind up in terms of which way I'm going. I was inclined to the conveyor, but maybe I'm wrong. But the one issue that Maureen raises, and it's one that I'm struggling with a bit, is how do we make a recommendation given that this is really a guidance process and we're making recommendations?

Where I keep hearing people saying that we're going to determine who's most deserving, who's most needy, my understanding is that there would be criteria, and applicant support will be determined whether applicants meet the criteria, not who is most

needy. But I think that's a worthwhile discussion for next week, which is are we going to recommend that there needs to be some sort of prioritization of needy applicants or if you meet the criteria, then you get supported. Because otherwise, it's going to involve a far more complex set of scoring in terms of deciding who is more needy, which one is more needy than the other.

But seeing as we've just gone to the top of the hour, I'm a little loath to get into that discussion right now. Maybe we can start off next week with that conversation if that suits everybody. I see Gabriela's comment if we get more than 10 prioritization would be needed. And my view is different, which is if we budget for 20, then if we get more than 10 but less than 20, then prioritization is not needed. Okay. So, Kristy, you've got your homework for next week. We've got some thinking to do. And we'll pick it up next week and take this conversation further.

JULIE HEDLUND:

Thank you, Mike. This is Julie Hedlund from Staff, and thanks everyone for joining. I'll note the action item for ICANN Org and Kristy in the notes. And thank you all for joining this call. Thanks for Charing so well, Mike. And we'll pick up this discussion next week's call on Monday at 20:00 UTC. Thanks all. This meeting is adjourned.

MIKE SILBER:

Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]