



TOP NEWS

Preview of the March Board Workshop and ICANN85

By Tripti Sinha, ICANN Board Chair



The ICANN Board will hold its next three-day workshop in Mumbai, India, alongside the first ICANN Public Meeting of the year. At this workshop, which begins on Friday, 6 March, the Board will prepare for [ICANN85](#) and make progress across several areas of our work.

As part of our preparations for ICANN85, Board Vice Chair Sajid Rahman, President and CEO Kurtis Lindqvist, and I will meet with the leadership of ICANN's Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees to discuss topics that are of shared interest to the ICANN community, Board, and organization.

Read my [blog](#) for an overview of the workshop agenda and a preview of the Board's activities next week.

A Preview of the ICANN85 Community Forum

*By Russ Weinstein, Senior Vice President,
Policy Development Support*



ICANN and its community will soon convene for the ICANN85 Community Forum. Please allow me to be the first to welcome you to Mumbai, India – which is hosting an ICANN Public Meeting for the first time!

As we approach the first ICANN meeting of 2026, I encourage you to visit the [ICANN85 website](#). There, you can register and find important information about the meeting schedule, travel, hotel, transportation, health, and safety.

As you prepare for ICANN85, I also recommend that you read two complementary reports: the [ICANN85 Policy Outlook Report](#), which the Policy Development Support team develops to help all participants prepare for work sessions, and the [briefing](#) from our colleagues in the Global Domains and Strategy function for the latest information about policy implementation and reviews. We have evolved our approach to these publications with the intent of providing greater visibility and clarity on the status of policy and

governance work, and we hope they continue to be relevant and timely resources for you. Materials such as the presentations and recordings from [Prep Week](#), which was held 23–25 February 2026, also will be available.

ICANN85 comes at an exciting time for ICANN! Read my [blog](#) to learn more.

Welcome to ICANN85!

By Samiran Gupta, Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement and Managing Director, APAC



As a native Indian and the Managing Director of ICANN's Asia Pacific region, I am pleased to welcome the ICANN community back to India for the first time since ICANN57, held 10 years ago.

India has experienced a lot of changes in the past decade. The country now has more than one billion Internet users and its digital economy is projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030. This exponential growth and dynamic landscape provides the perfect background for dialogue that will help shape the Internet's future.

With a youth population of over 700 million, ICANN85 presents an ideal opportunity for the next generation of Internet governance stakeholders to participate and be heard.

Whether you join us at the Jio World Convention Center in Mumbai or online, I encourage everyone to utilize the sessions to expand on conversations and enhance collaboration. I wish everyone a productive and fruitful ICANN85.

ICANN NEWS

New 2026 Round Resources



List of Evaluated Registry Service Providers (RSPs)

The [initial list](#) of organizations participating in the RSP Evaluation Program to support 2026 Round applicants is [available](#). The list includes organizations that have cleared both technical screening and technical testing, as well as those that have cleared technical screening but are still in the process of clearing technical testing. The list is updated on an ongoing basis as ICANN continues to test and qualify providers.

Applicant Guidebook (AGB) in Six Languages

The 2026 Round AGB is now available in all six ICANN Languages in PDF and HTML formats:

- Arabic
 - [PDF](#)
 - [HTML](#)
- Chinese
 - [PDF](#)
 - [HTML](#)
- French
 - [PDF](#)
 - [HTML](#)
- Russian
 - [PDF](#)
 - [HTML](#)
- Spanish
 - [PDF](#)
 - [HTML](#)
- English
 - [PDF](#)
 - [HTML](#)

Note: The English version is the authoritative version of the AGB.

The AGB is the official rule book for the 2026 Round, laying out the requirements, procedures, and processes that govern all gTLD applications. The document is organized by the milestones and stages in the "applicant journey" throughout the evaluation processes.

Reminder: ICANN85 Registration Deadlines

ICANN85 will take place **7–12 March 2026** both virtually and in person in Mumbai, India. In-person registration closes **tomorrow, 6 March**, while virtual registration closes on **12 March**. On-site registration will not be available.

[Register now!](#)



Enhancing Visibility into ICANN Community Work and Outcomes

BLOG: Enhancing Visibility Into ICANN Community Work and Outcomes



Russ Weinstein

SVP, Policy Development Support



Theresa Swinehart

SVP, Global Domains Strategy

By Russ Weinstein, Senior Vice President, Policy Development Support, and Theresa Swinehart, Senior Vice President, Global Domains and Strategy

In accordance with [ICANN's FY2026–2030 Strategic Plan](#), ICANN is committed to building a culture of continuous improvement and excellence to better serve the global Internet community. As part of this effort, we are working to improve the visibility and transparency of how work across the ICANN community is tracked and reported.

This effort is part of a broader set of improvements aimed at increasing awareness and community engagement. Longer-term options under consideration include improving how updates about the multiple community initiatives are presented on the ICANN website, developing more intuitive visuals to facilitate better understanding of the work, and introducing additional or enhanced key performance indicators to better track progress.

Read our [blog](#) to learn more.

The Many Layers of Mumbai: 10 Things to Know Before You Go



Mumbai is a city that moves fast and thinks big, and where centuries of history are visible in everyday life. ICANN85 takes place in a city that plays an outsized role in India's economy, culture, and global connections. It offers a perfect backdrop to conversations about a global Internet that connects people everywhere.

As ICANN85 brings the global Internet community to India's financial and cultural capital, a little local context can go a long way. Read our [blog](#) to discover the 10 things worth knowing before you arrive, each offering a glimpse into what makes Mumbai unique.

How it Works Sessions at ICANN85

How it Works sessions at ICANN Public Meetings provide a practical introduction to the technical and policy foundations that shape the ICANN community's work. Designed for newcomers and experienced participants alike, these learning sessions help attendees build the context needed to fully engage in discussions throughout the meeting week.

The ICANN85 series begins on **Sunday, 8 March**, with [How it Works: Introduction to Identifiers](#) (9:00–10:00 UTC), followed later that day by [How it Works: DNS Fundamentals](#) (11:00–12:00 UTC). On **Monday, 9 March**, participants can attend [How it Works: The IETF](#) (11:00–12:00 UTC).

On **Tuesday, 10 March**, the program continues with [How it Works: Internationalized Domain Names](#) (9:00–10:00 UTC) and [How it Works: The RIRs](#) (5:00–6:30 UTC). Following the lunchbreak at 13:15, a new session called [How it Works: Policy at ICANN: From Idea to Implementation](#) (7:45–9:00 UTC) is being offered. This special session will walk through how community-developed

policy becomes operational reality. The programming wraps up with [How it Works: Root Server Operations](#) (9:30–10:30 UTC).

Together, these sessions will help build a shared knowledge base that empowers participants to follow debates, ask informed questions, and contribute meaningfully to ICANN85's multistakeholder discussions.

Bridging Innovation and Inclusion at ICANN85



The ICANN85 Community Forum will feature a dynamic collaboration between ICANN's Office of the Chief Technical Officer (OCTO) Technical Engagement team, the Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers (ISPCP) constituency, and the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC), focusing on the transformative power of artificial intelligence (AI). This two-part hybrid outreach session is designed to equip the community with the tools and insights needed to navigate the next generation of Internet infrastructure.

The [first session](#), AI and Machine Learning in Domain Name System (DNS) Security, will dive into the technical frontlines drawing on SSAC's expertise in Internet security and stability. Attendees will explore how machine learning can enhance threat detection and resilience, and help ISPs, operators, and the broader community stay ahead of increasingly sophisticated DNS-based attacks.

Shifting the focus to global accessibility, the [second session](#)—Universal Acceptance, Digital Inclusion, and the AI Factor—will examine how AI can serve as a catalyst for a truly multilingual Internet. This discussion will highlight innovative ways to bridge the digital divide and ensure that users everywhere can navigate the web in their native scripts.

Don't miss these essential conversations on building a secure, stable, and inclusive future. Join us in person or virtually and be part of shaping the digital landscape.

ICANN85 Sessions Related to the 2026 Round

If you're interested in applying for a new generic top-level domain (gTLD), or in other ways participating in the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, [ICANN85](#) offers eight opportunities to learn about the process.

Join program leaders for a walk through the first stages of the applicant journey over two plenary sessions, taking place on 9 and 10 March. The first meeting will focus on preparing to submit an application and include an overview of the application submission process. The second will delve more deeply into the TLD Application Management System and provide a video demonstration of the system user experience.

Other sessions throughout the week will explore unique pathways on the applicant journey based on specific application types – .brand applicants, applicants for Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and variants, communities, and geographic names. All meetings will include a dedicated time for questions and answers.

Providers of gTLD backend technical services that are interested in supporting new gTLD applicants are invited to attend a session dedicated to the Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation Program on Saturday, 7 March. With a second RSP evaluation period opening in conjunction with the new gTLD application window, now is the time to prepare so that your organization is ready to participate.

There is a 2026 Round-related session wrap-up on Thursday morning with a general question-and-answer session for all interested participants.

The new gTLD-related sessions at the ICANN85 Community Forum are part of a series of live workshops and recorded webinars devoted to preparing applicants and other community members to participate in the 2026 Round. Participants can attend ICANN85 in person or virtually; all sessions are recorded and available after their conclusion on the meeting webpage.

ICANN85 Sessions Related to the 2026 Round

- [2026 Round: Registry Service Provider \(RSP\) Evaluation Program](#)
 - Saturday, 7 March | 11:00–12:00 UTC
- [2026 Round: 2026 Round Internationalized Domain Name and Variant Applicant Journeys with Q and A](#)
 - Sunday, 8 March | 11:00–12:00 UTC
- [2026 Round: 2026 Round Application Submission Overview](#)
 - Monday, 9 March | 7:45–9:00 UTC
- [2026 Round: 2026 Round .Brand Applicant Journey with Q and A](#)
 - Monday, 9 March | 11:00–12:00 UTC
- [2026 Round: TLD Application Management System Introduction and Demo](#)

- Tuesday, 10 March | 7:45–9:00 UTC
- [2026 Round: Geographic Names and Reserve Names Applicant Journeys with Q and A](#)
 - Tuesday, 10 March | 11:00–12:00 UTC
- [2026 Round: 2026 Round Community Applicant Journey and Registry Voluntary Commitments/Public Interest Commitments with Q and A](#)
 - Wednesday, 11 March | 11:00–12:00 UTC
- [2026 Round: 2026 Round Wrap Up and Open Q and A](#)
 - Thursday, 12 March | 3:30–4:30 UTC

Universal Acceptance: Upcoming Events and ICANN85 Sessions

ICANN, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and entities globally are teaming up to hold more than 30 UA Day events in over 30 countries. Since its launch in 2023, tens of thousands of people in dozens of countries around the world have helped champion UA through participation in UA Day events. As in years past, both in-person and virtual participation is offered. Everyone interested in achieving a more multilingual Internet is invited to participate in one or more of the events. This year's schedule is available at <https://www.icann.org/ua-day-2026-events-en>.



UA Day
#Internet4All

ICANN85 will also feature several UA-related sessions. Check the meeting schedule at <https://icann85.sched.com/> for details, and if you can't attend, recordings will be available.

Join the Conversation at the ICANN Engagement Booth

ICANN Public Meetings provide an opportunity for the community to talk with ICANN's Global Stakeholder Engagement team members. Stop by the booth from Sunday, 8 March through Wednesday, 11 March to share your ideas on how best to raise awareness and encourage participation in capacity development around issues that are of importance to ICANN.

Whether you're new to ICANN and Internet governance, or involved in academic research, we welcome your insights and participation!

Engagement Booth Schedule

Internationalized Domain Names (IDN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDN Coffee 10 March, 2.30pm to 2.50pm 	Universal Acceptance (UA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UA Engagement 9 March, 10.30am to 12pm
Academia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Engagement 8 March, 10.30am to 12pm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Coffee 11 March, 2.30pm to 2.50pm

All timings stated are in Indian Standard Time (IST), UTC +5:30.

Read the ICANN85 Policy Outlook Report and PRSP Briefing

Prepare for discussions at ICANN85 by perusing the latest news and progress reporting on community-facing projects supported by the Policy Research and Stakeholder Programs (PRSP) team. The [PRSP Briefing](#) includes an overview of Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) policy development process (PDP) working groups, team updates, and information on GNSO policy-related activities including PDP Implementation Review Teams.

➤ PRSP Pre-ICANN85 Briefing



➤ ICANN85 Policy Outlook Report

Also, ICANN org's Policy Development Support team has published the [ICANN85 Policy Outlook Report](#). The report provides an overview of the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees' planned activities.

Review the Prep Week Materials



ICANN85 Prep Week

23–25 February 2026

ICANN85 Prep Week took place 23–25 February 2026. If you missed any of the sessions or would like a recap, you can find the materials on the [Prep Week schedule](#).

Click on a session title; the available resources are listed under "Files."

ICANN LEARN SPOTLIGHT

707.1 ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Training

ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Training enables ICANN's global community to understand how to identify and address harassment, including the different forms harassment can take, from disrespect to bullying, and is recommended for all participants at ICANN84.

[Enroll today!](#)

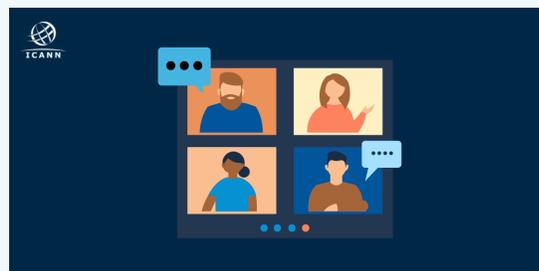
PREP WEEK RESOURCES

Review the ICANN Public Meeting Participation Guides

Is ICANN85 your first ICANN Public Meeting? Are you unsure of how to use Zoom, interpretation services, or transcription services?

The [ICANN85 Participation Tools page](#) has all the information you

need, including virtual and in-person participation guides, which are available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.



Explore the ICANN Acronyms and Terms Tool

ICANN uses hundreds of acronyms and terms, which can be confusing. We created a multilingual tool to help explain what these terms mean and to support your work within the ICANN community.



Use the ICANN [Acronyms and Terms tool](#) to find the definitions you need.

PUBLIC MEETING STANDARDS



[Click here to review our Expected Standards of Behavior when participating in ICANN Meetings.](#)

[Click here to view the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.](#)



[Want to talk to ICANN's Ombuds?
Email \[ombuds@icann.org\]\(mailto:ombuds@icann.org\) to set up a meeting.](#)

ICANN PUBLICATIONS



[Read latest OCTO Publications](#)

ICANN's Office of the Chief Technology Officer creates and publishes research papers and technical briefings for ICANN's diverse technical community.



[Read latest Government Engagement Publications](#)

ICANN's Government Engagement publications summarize the discussions taking place within governments and intergovernmental organizations.

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