

7 January 2026

Jeffrey J. Neuman
Founder & CEO
JJN Solutions, LLC

RE: An Open Letter to ICANN: If the Public Forum Matters, the Responses Must Matter Too

Dear Jeff,

Thank you for your 3 December 2025 [letter](#) and for your continued engagement on the implementation of the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

We appreciate your feedback related to the issues you raised during the ICANN84 Public Forum. The Public Forum is an important cornerstone of ICANN's transparency and accountability. As with any engagement activities, we continuously evaluate how to improve them and any follow-up processes relating to such engagements.

We agree that the success of the 2026 Round depends on effective, trust-based cooperation between the ICANN Board, the community, and the organization. Therefore, we also value the opportunity to clarify several of the concerns you raised in your letter.

We agree that we must be as transparent as possible and share the timelines we know. The current target date for publication of the list of successfully evaluated Registry Service Providers (RSP) remains 30 January 2026. To be clear, the Registry System Testing (RST) timeline we shared during the meeting in Dublin was based on our knowledge at the time. As soon as all environments were brought back online and the team could confidently confirm a new publication date, we released an [announcement](#) on 19 November 2025. At that time, we also contacted all RSP applicants to ensure they were aware immediately of the change.

The registry system testing platform is a new technical environment and, as is typical with newly deployed systems, issues have arisen after deployment. We have published a [public list of known issues](#) and continue to update it as developments occur.

We are also taking all steps to assess the causes of the identified issues and are working closely with the vendor to resolve them and mitigate future risks to the extent possible. At this time, we do not expect any changes to the 30 January timeline.

The Registry Agreement approval timeline has been set for ICANN85. This approach was supported by the Next Round Board Caucus when, following the Dublin meeting, we discussed the value in an earlier, partial Board adoption of the RA with its members as well. As a reminder, drafts of the Registry Agreement are already available to the community. While the

timeline has changed, the March date still aligns with all applicable SubPro policy recommendations and we do not believe that this represents a material change to applicants' ability to understand the requirements as gTLD operators.

As part of ICANN's efforts to keep the community apprised of any developments in a transparent and accountable way the 2026 Round Program Team publishes regular written updates that are presented to the community during ICANN meeting Prep Weeks. Any unforeseen events affecting the Program have been and will continue to be communicated as soon as practicable. In relation to additional ways to keep the community informed, we appreciate your suggestion to include relevant Program updates in the Community Digest and will do so going forward.

ICANN continues to be committed to transparency and to sharing updates with the community when we have them. We thank you again for your engagement on this matter and suggestions for ongoing process improvements. We look forward to continuing to work with the community to deliver a successful 2026 Round.

Best regards,



Kurt Erik Lindqvist
President and Chief Executive Officer
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)