



ICANN New gTLD Program Registry Services Initial Evaluation Process

Registry Services Evaluation

The evaluation process for registry services that are proposed by new gTLD applications is described in Section 2.2.3 of the *Applicant Guidebook*. Proposed services will be identified and evaluated by the Registry Services Panel (RSP). The RSP includes many members of the current ICANN Registry Services Technical Evaluation Panel (RSTEP) who are experts in DNS services and TLD registries. It also includes members who are not also RSTEP members.

For each application, the registry services evaluation will produce either a “pass” or a “fail” result. During the Initial Evaluation of an application, the RSP may determine that it cannot definitively resolve one or more security or stability issues with the proposed registry services, and that further study would be required in order to assign a “pass” or “fail” result. At that point, the applicant must either withdraw the application (in which case the formal result of the registry services review is “fail”) or agree to proceed with a registry services Extended Evaluation, which will be conducted by a registry services review team (RSRT) selected specifically for that purpose. The RSRT may include members of the RSP, members of the RSTEP, or other individual experts as necessary based on the issues involved. To ensure no conflict of interest with respect to a decision to recommend Extended Evaluation, no RSP member who participates in the Initial Evaluation of an application may be selected for a subsequent RSRT for Extended Evaluation of that application.

Initial Evaluation Process

The registry services Initial Evaluation proceeds through the following 5 steps:

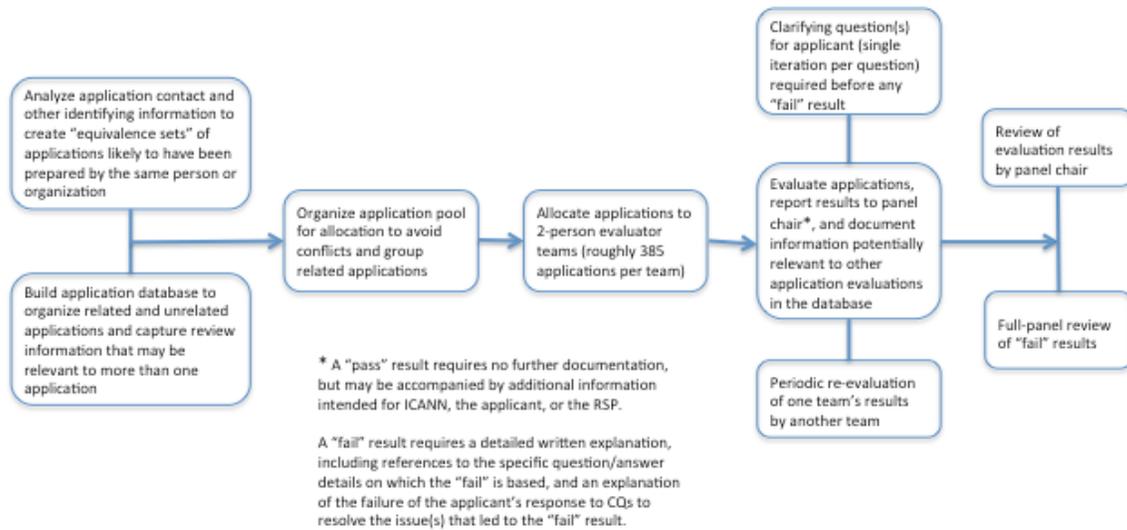
1. For each application, the RSP makes an initial determination of the necessity for individual review. Individual review might not be necessary, for example, if an application is identical (with respect to proposed registry services) to an application that has already been reviewed. If a “pass” or “fail” evaluation result can be assigned based on this initial determination, the circumstances are documented, and no further analysis is required.
2. For each remaining application, the RSP determines whether or not any of the proposed or implied registry services could present security or stability issues that require additional scrutiny, considering their novelty, consistency, and potential impact on other parties (including both providers and users of DNS-related components of the Internet), and past experience with the evaluation of registry services. Registry services will be identified and scrutinized by the RSP whether or not they have been explicitly declared by the applicant in the answer to Question 23.
 - a. Each application is assigned to a team consisting of two RSP members. Because the registry service provider, not the applicant (unless they happen to be the same), is most relevant to the registry services evaluation, the teams discuss issues that are common across providers, rather than focussing individually on specific applications. They are then responsible for applying the whole-panel consensus on these issues to the applications assigned specifically to them.
 - b. Application comments are considered through the following process:
 - i. Organize the comments into the following groups:
 - (a) Non-substantive (general comments in favor of or opposed to TM/IP protection, general statements of support for or opposition to specific applications, and spam)
 - (b) Substantive (relevant comments on specific registry services)
 - (c) Replies (comments from applicants that are responses to

other comments)

- ii. Incorporate any comments in groups (b) or (c) into the evaluation of the applications to which they correspond or refer.
 - iii. Include in the evaluation results the effect, if any, of application comments on the outcome of the evaluation.
 - c. During the discussion of registry service issues described in (a), the panel may decide that it requires additional information in order to resolve an issue. In that case a “clarifying question” (CQ) is drafted. Each team then determines which of the applications for which it is responsible should receive the CQ, and whether the CQ requires any editorial modification to fit the specific textual circumstances of an individual application. As a quality control measure, CQs are reviewed prior to submission by the panel chair and by an automated string-matching algorithm to ensure that the CQ does in fact apply correctly to the particular application.
 - d. Responses to CQs are incorporated into the evaluation of the applications to which they apply by the teams responsible for those applications, after a whole-panel review of the CQ response to ensure that it is interpreted consistently by every team that will need to apply it to a specific application.
3. If the RSP identifies no significant security or stability issues that require additional scrutiny, the application receives a “pass” evaluation result and no further analysis is required.
 - a. If both members of an evaluation team agree on the “pass” result, no further review is necessary. As a quality control measure, all “pass” results are reviewed by the panel chair before submission.
 - b. If the members of an evaluation team disagree on the “pass” result, they present their arguments to the full panel, which reaches a consensus decision mediated by the panel chair. (This is similar to the process that is followed when an evaluation team reaches a “fail” result.)
4. If the RSP identifies one or more significant security or stability issues that require additional scrutiny, the application is referred to ICANN with a recommendation that it be subjected to an Extended Evaluation. In making such a referral, the RSP will recommend either a 3-person/30-day

Extended Evaluation or a 5-person/45-day Extended Evaluation (see "Extended Evaluation" below), based on the complexity and significance of the issue(s) identified.

- a. If both members of an evaluation team agree on a "fail" result (see 3(b) for the case in which the members disagree), they present their consensus argument to the full panel, which either confirms or disputes the result.
 - b. If the full panel confirms the "fail" result, the reasons for the "fail" are documented and the process proceeds to (5) below.
 - c. If the full panel disputes the result, the arguments for and against are debated by the full panel mediated by the chair. The result of the debate is either consensus or a decision by the panel chair, leading to either a "pass" result (as in 3(b)) or a "fail" result (as in 4(b)).
5. Depending on the results of the process described above, the outcome will be one of the following recommendations to ICANN from the Registry Services Evaluation Panel:
- a. The application passes the registry services Initial Evaluation based on the criteria described in Section 2.2.3 of the Applicant Guidebook. The applicant is approved to operate the services described in the application, as modified by any answers the applicant may have provided to Registry Services clarifying questions (if applicable).
 - b. The application fails the registry services Initial Evaluation because it does not satisfy all of the criteria described in section 2.2.3 of the Applicant Guidebook for reasons that must be described in detail in the response to the applicant. The application is eligible for Extended Evaluation.
6. ICANN staff will evaluate the RSP's recommendation and determine whether or not to accept it. If ICANN decides not to accept the recommendation, the application receives a "pass" evaluation result from ICANN and no further analysis is required.



Registry Services Initial Evaluation Process Flow