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SPECIAL EDITION · NEW gTLD PROGRAM

ICANN 2026 public comments

The free procedure, step by step

How to comment on a new Internet extension application: the timetable, the official form and the difference between a free comment and a paid objection.

1. The procedure and verified timeline

2. Official access and the 13 submission steps

3. Writing rules and real archive examples

4. Free comment or paid objection?

5. Official sources

Aapokalypto

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1. The procedure at a glance

Anyone can submit a free comment on a 2026 new gTLD application through ICANN's Application Comment Forum (ACF). Reading comments does not require an account; submitting one requires a free ICANN account and multi-factor authentication.

What this is about

ICANN's 2026 round concerns applications for new Internet extensions, such as .shop or .paris. More than 1,600 applications were filed between April 30 and August 12, 2026, then published on October 7, 2026 (Reveal Day). From November 17, individuals, companies and associations can provide information or raise concerns about a specific application. Comments are brought to the attention of ICANN, applicants and evaluators.

What a comment can do

A comment alone does not block an application. Evaluators may consider it when it is relevant to their evaluation criteria. The Independent Objector can only file an objection against an application if at least one public comment opposes it: a relevant public comment can therefore matter.

A comment is not a formal objection. The comment procedure is free; a formal objection is a separate, paid dispute procedure available only to parties with standing.

This edition reformats the supplied information document dated November 17, 2026. Dated observations remain observations at that time, not a live guarantee that the forum is open. See the official sources at the end.

2. The timeline

April 30 - August 12, 2026

Application filing period, now closed. More than 1,600 applications received.

October 7, 2026

Reveal Day: publication of the applications and requested extensions.

November 17, 2026

String Confirmation Day: final strings confirmed; opening date announced for the ACF comment forum.

November 17, 2026 - March 16, 2027

Official comment window for comments passed to evaluators, announced by ICANN on September 29, 2026. ICANN also describes this as 104 days. Its December 19, 2026 - January 4, 2027 year-end office closure pauses operations; the source document explains that the pause is compensated in this window.

After the window closes

Applicants can respond through the ACF for up to 30 days. Certain application changes or .Brand changes open additional 30-day comment windows.

File within the official window. A late comment can remain publicly visible but is not passed to the evaluators.

3. Find the application and forum

Start on the official program website

The ACF is reached from ICANN's Application Comments page. Identify the application on the Application Publication and Statistics site (APS): requested extensions, applicants and public application material are listed there.

Application Comments

Application Publication and Statistics

Opening-day observation

At the source document's check on November 17, 2026 at 09:42 UTC, the Application Comments page still said coming soon. APS had a Comments tab without an active link, and no direct forum address had been published. The forum was not publicly accessible at that check. If the official link is still inactive, try again later.

Read the official guide

The English ACF user guide is version 1.0.0, dated October 13, 2026. From the forum, use Login at the top right to create or access a free ICANN account. ICANN also requires multi-factor authentication.

ACF user guide (PDF)

Privacy warning: your full name, affiliation and statement of interest are displayed publicly with your comment in real time. Do not submit information you do not want made public.

4. Complete the form

The 13 steps below follow the official ACF user guide.

1. **Open the forum's View Comments section.**
2. **Choose Add Comment.**
3. **Enter the requested extension (string) and any variants covered by the comment.**
4. **During the official period, select the confidentiality option only if the comment concerns confidential parts of the application.**
5. **Choose whether to reuse your profile information: affiliation, statement of interest, relationships with applicants and financial interests. Otherwise enter it again.**
6. **Select the applicant linked to the extension.**
7. **Select Area of Comment: the relevant evaluation area or specific process.**
8. **Enter a Subject summarizing the issue.**
9. **Write the comment and explain why it is relevant to the selected area.**

4. Complete the form · continued

10. If useful, attach up to two PDF files, each under 5 MB.

11. Tick the attestation box confirming the comment's intent.

12. Complete the reCAPTCHA checkbox.

13. Choose Submit.

Before you submit

Comments may be written in any language. Public comments are published as submitted. The confidential option is only accepted for comments about confidential parts of an application; otherwise ICANN asks for republication as a public comment.

Check the exact application, applicant and comment area. Check every attachment. Your full name, affiliation and statement of interest will be public.

No action taken by this guide

This is an information document. Preparing and publishing it does not submit a comment, create an ICANN account or contact an applicant.

5. Write a useful comment

Stay within the evaluation criteria

A comment is considered only if it relates to the chosen area. An off-topic comment is ignored. Be factual and cite your sources: evaluators can check alleged facts and request clarification.

Keep it reasonable

Avoid comments that are manifestly frivolous, factually misleading, unreasonable or vexatious. They can be dismissed, and ICANN can remove comments that breach its rules of conduct.

Make a clear request

A useful structure is: identify yourself and explain your connection to the subject; give facts and figures with sources; explain the link to the evaluation area; finish with a clear request to ICANN.

Do not confuse forceful wording with useful evidence. Explain the issue, show the source and state the outcome you are asking ICANN to consider.

The next page gives examples from the public 2012 archive. They are drafting references, not a guarantee of the 2026 forum's layout or a recommendation to repeat their arguments.

6. Real public archive examples

The 2026 forum was not accessible at the source document's 09:42 UTC check. The 2012 archive was accessible on November 17, 2026. Its records show name, affiliation, applicant, extension, comment area, subject, date and text. The new guide confirms public display of full name, affiliation and statement of interest, but the new layout had not yet been observed.

.VODKA · August 13, 2012

CITC, Saudi Arabia's telecoms regulator, in the Community Objection Ground area. It introduces the organization and its role, cites WHO data and ends with an explicit request that ICANN not award the extension.

Read the .VODKA example

.ISLAM · August 12, 2012

The same author discusses a sensitive religious extension using figures, a community-representation argument and a concrete request for written evidence of support.

Read the .ISLAM example

.GAY · September 24, 2012

The Trans-Fuzja Foundation offers a civil-society example: shorter, more direct language, criticism based on the application's own promises, and a clear conclusion.

Read the .GAY example

7. Comment or formal objection?

Public comment (ACF)

Free. Anyone may submit. It goes through the Application Comment Forum and brings information to evaluators' attention. It has no direct blocking effect by itself.

Formal objection

Paid. Filing fees are charged by the designated dispute-resolution providers. Only parties with standing may file, depending on the ground. It is a dispute procedure that can block an application.

This guide covers the free comment procedure only. A formal objection requires a separate review of the applicable ground, standing, provider, fees and deadlines.

Public, not private

Do not include personal, financial or other sensitive information in a public comment unless you are prepared for it to be published. The author name on this guide does not change ICANN's identity-disclosure rules for commenters.

Prepared from the supplied November 17, 2026 information document. No submission, account registration or contact has been made as part of this guide.

8. Official sources

Use these clickable official sources to check the current rules and opening status before taking action.

Application Comments · program page

ACF user guide · v1.0.0, October 13, 2026

2026 Applicant Guidebook · module 4, section 4.1

ICANN milestones · September 29, 2026

Application Publication and Statistics

ICANN Reveal Day announcement · October 7, 2026

2012 public comment archive

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