

# Voting Process: Frequently Asked Questions

2023 Global Amendments to the Base New gTLD Registry Agreement, Specification 13, and the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement

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## Background

In October 2019, ICANN Organization (org) initiated negotiations with the gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group ([RySG](#)) and the Registrar Stakeholder Group ([RrSG](#)) to develop amendments to the base gTLD Registry Agreement (base RA) and the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) to specify the operating requirements for the Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) and to define the plan to sunset obligations to provide Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) via the WHOIS protocol. In [June 2021](#), ICANN org and the contracted parties also began discussing the desire to extend the [Domain Abuse Activity Reporting \(DAAR\)](#) project metrics to the registrar level, and reached agreement in principle on the concept in [October 2021](#). The resulting proposed amendments (Global Amendments) incorporate:

- The reporting requirements and service level requirements for RDAP.
- The requirement for both registries and registrars to comply with the [gTLD RDAP Profile](#) to ensure registries and registrars provide responses via RDAP in a standardized format and consistent with the ICANN Consensus Policies.
- The sunset of certain obligations to provide RDDS via the WHOIS protocols (i.e., WHOIS port-43 and web-based WHOIS) 18 months after the Global Amendment effective date.
- The allowance for ICANN to use an existing data set provided by registries for research purposes. This change will enable ICANN to extend the DAAR project metrics to registrars to study DNS security threat concentrations across registrars.
- Updated definitions for RDDS related terms in Specification 13 (Spec 13).

Following agreement between ICANN org and the Contracted Party House Negotiating Team (CPH NT), the proposed changes to the base RA, Spec 13, and the RAA were published for [Public Comment](#) on 6 September 2022. On 16 December 2022, ICANN org published the [Public Comment Summary Report](#).

According to the process described in Section 7.7 of the base RA, Section 11 of Spec 13, and Section 7.4 of the RAA, in order to enact the changes, the proposed base RA, Specification 13, and RAA Global Amendments (respectively, the base RA Global Amendment, Spec 13 Global Amendment, and RAA Global Amendment) must be approved by Applicable Registry Operators, Applicable Brand Registry Operators, and Applicable Registrars, respectively. The proposed Global Amendments also require the approval of the ICANN Board.

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On 4 January 2023, ICANN org sent a [legal notice](#) to registry operator and registrar primary contacts and the legal (notice) contacts informing registries and registrars that the **voting period will open at 17:00 UTC on 19 January 2023**.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. Who is eligible to vote?

**Proposed base RA Global Amendment:** Applicable Registry Operators are eligible to vote on the proposed base RA Global Amendment. Section 7.6(j)(i) of the base RA defines Applicable Registry Operators as “collectively, the registry operators of top-level domains party to a registry agreement that contains a provision similar to this Section 7.6, including Registry Operator.” Therefore, if your Registry Agreement contains the applicable provision, you are eligible to vote.

**Proposed Spec 13 Global Amendment:** In addition to the vote above, Applicable Brand Registry Operators are also eligible to vote on the proposed Spec 13 Global Amendment. Section 9 of Spec 13 defines Applicable Brand Registry Operators as “collectively, the registry operators of top-level domains party to a registry agreement that contains this Spec 13, including Registry Operator.”

**Proposed RAA Global Amendment:** Applicable Registrars, those registrars with a currently effective RAA, are eligible to vote on the proposed RAA Global Amendment.

ICANN org expects **each vote to be cast by the primary contact**. Please review and ensure that your primary contact information in the [Naming Services Portal](#) (NSp) is current and is the appropriate individual with the authority to cast a vote on behalf of the registry operator or registrar prior to the voting period. Should you need to update your primary contact, please submit a General Inquiry case in NSp.

### 2. Who is not eligible to vote?

**Proposed base RA Global Amendment:** Registry operators whose registry agreements do not contain Section 7.6 of the base RA or a provision similar to Section 7.6 of the base RA are not eligible to vote.

**Proposed Spec 13 Global Amendment:** Registry operators whose registry agreements do not contain Specification 13 are not eligible to vote.

**Proposed RAA Global Amendment:** Entities, such as resellers, that are not ICANN-accredited registrars on the RAA are not eligible to vote.

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### 3. When is the voting period?

The voting period opens on 19 January 2023 at 17:00 UTC and closes on 20 March 2023 at 23:59 UTC.

### 4. How will ICANN administer the vote?

ICANN org is using eBallot, a third-party voting platform operated by Votenet Solutions, Inc., for this campaign. Votenet Solutions, Inc. has implemented secure voting solutions over the past 19 years, holding more than 37,000 voting events and serving over 2,700 clients across the United States, Canada, Asia, Africa, and Europe. This is the same vendor and system used for the annual registrar fee vote and contracted parties survey.

### 5. How will I be notified that voting has started?

Three communications will be sent to inform registries and registrars:

1. Roughly two weeks in advance of the start of the voting period, ICANN org will send an email to the **primary contact** and **legal (notice) contact** – as specified by the registry operator or registrar – to formally announce the voting period.
2. Roughly an hour prior to the voting period opening, a reminder email will be sent to the primary contact informing them of the voting period opening.
3. At the start of the voting period, eBallot (the voting platform operated by Votenet Solutions, Inc.) will send an email to the primary contact with an invitation containing a direct link to an online ballot that will permit the primary contact to vote.

### 6. How do I access the voting system?

At the start of the voting period, the eBallot platform will send an email to the primary contact – as specified by the registry operator or registrar – with an invitation containing a direct link to an online ballot that will permit the primary contact to vote. The online ballot can be accessed from any smartphone or device that has full browser capabilities.

### 7. If I am the primary contact for multiple gTLDs or multiple ICANN registrar accreditations, how many ballots should I receive?

**For registry operators**, if the registry primary contact's email address is associated with multiple gTLDs within the same registry operator account, the vote will apply to each gTLD that is associated with the registry primary contact's same email address. The registry primary contact will receive one email invitation per registry operator account, unless unique registry primary contact email addresses are associated with gTLDs under the registry operator account. In such instances, separate invitations will be sent to each unique registry primary contact email address associated with the registry operator account.

*Registry operator example 1:* A registry primary contact that uses the same email address for each registry agreement under the same registry operator will receive a single ballot request to cast a vote once.

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*Registry operator example 2:* A registry primary contact that uses multiple, different email addresses for registry agreements under the same registry operator will receive multiple ballot requests by TLD Registry Agreement and associated email address.

**For registrars**, if the registrar primary contact's email address is associated with more than one registrar within a registrar family, the vote will apply to all associated registrars.

*Registrar example 1:* A registrar primary contact that uses the same email address for each registrar accreditation within the same registrar family will receive a single ballot request to cast a vote.

*Registrar example 2:* A registrar primary contact that uses multiple, different email addresses for registrar accreditations within the same registrar family will receive multiple ballot requests by accreditation and associated email address.

## 8. What if I do not receive the email at the start of the vote?

The email from the eBallot platform will be sent to voters at the same time the vote opens. If you do not receive the email notification(s) for the vote shortly thereafter, please check your spam folder(s). If you still cannot find the email notification(s), please take the following steps:

1. Whitelist the following email addresses (you may need to reach out to your IT Department or Internet Service Provider (ISP) for assistance):
  - a. [noreply@eballot.com](mailto:noreply@eballot.com): electronic ballots are sent from this address
  - b. [help@eballot.com](mailto:help@eballot.com) and/or [support@votenet.com](mailto:support@votenet.com): voter inquiry and support related response emails are sent from these addresses.
2. Submit a General Inquiry case in the [Naming Services portal](#) (NSp) or email [globalsupport@icann.org](mailto:globalsupport@icann.org) with the subject line "Need Email Ballot for RDAP Global Amendment".

## 9. How do I submit my vote?

Click on the link provided in the email notification from eBallot, and approve or disapprove of the proposed Global Amendment by selecting one of the following options and submitting your selection in the eBallot platform:

1. **"Yes"** - voting "yes" means that you **approve** the proposed Global Amendment.
2. **"No"** - voting "no" means that you **do not approve** the proposed Global Amendment.

## 10. How many votes do I get?

Applicable Registry Operators receive one vote per gTLD registry agreement. Applicable Brand Registry Operators receive one vote per gTLD registry agreement for the proposed base RA Global Amendment, and separately, one vote per gTLD registry agreement with Spec 13 for the proposed Spec 13 Global Amendment. Applicable Registrars receive one vote per RAA.

Voting weights are calculated according to the respective agreement provisions:

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- [Base RA Section 7.6\(j\)\(ii\)](#)
  - [Spec 13 Section 9](#)
  - [RAA Section 1.18.1](#)

### **11. Will I receive confirmation of my vote?**

Yes. After their vote has been cast, voters will be brought to a confirmation screen displaying the date and time their vote was received, along with a confirmation number.

### **12. I submitted my vote incorrectly, can I change my vote?**

After you've initially cast your vote, you may then change your vote at any time while the voting period is open. There is no limit to the amount of times a vote can be changed. To change your vote, click on the link provided in the original voting email you received and resubmit your vote.

### **13. Can someone vote on my behalf?**

As previously mentioned in question 1. above, ICANN org expects each vote to be cast by the primary contact. Please review and ensure that your primary contact information in the [Naming Services Portal](#) (NSp) is current and is the appropriate individual with the authority to cast a vote on behalf of the registry operator or registrar prior to the voting period. Should you need to update your primary contact, please submit a General Inquiry case in NSp.

### **14. How will ICANN verify the results of the vote?**

ICANN org will be using a secure, online voting platform called eBallot, that is administered by Votenet, which will authenticate eligible voters and tabulate submissions for the voting campaign. After the voting period closes, Votenet will complete an audit process and provide a written certification, which will be shared with contracted parties via email and posted to the [2023 Global Amendment webpage](#).

### **15. Who will have access to voting data?**

The ICANN org voting administrator, Votenet, will have access to voter data. During the 60-day voting period, ICANN org will publish data relating to the progress of the vote including whether a registry operator or registrar has voted, but ICANN org will not publish data regarding how individual registry operators or registrars have voted except to the extent required by law, the ICANN Documentary Information Disclosure Policy, or other applicable policy.

### **16. Will ICANN provide updates about the vote?**

Yes, ICANN org will post updates of current voting results roughly once every two weeks on the dedicated [2023 Global Amendment webpage](#). Updates will report on the status of votes reaching the applicable approval thresholds and share which registry operators and registrars have and have not voted.

ICANN org will not publish data regarding how individual registry operators or registrars voted except to the extent required by law, the ICANN Documentary Information Disclosure Policy, or other applicable policy.

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## 17. How do the Global Amendments reach approval?

**Base RA Changes:** In order for the proposed base RA Global Amendment to be approved, it must be submitted to and receive approval from Applicable Registry Operators and the ICANN Board of Directors. Pursuant to [Section 7.6\(j\)\(ii\)](#) of the base RA, two thresholds are required for this vote to achieve Registry Operator Approval:

1. Approval from the Applicable Registry Operators (as such term is defined in Section 7.6(j)(i) of the base RA) whose payments to ICANN in the immediately preceding calendar year accounted for two-thirds of the total amount of fees paid; and
2. Approval from the majority of the Applicable Registry Operators, where each Applicable Registry Operator shall have one vote for each gTLD operated by such Registry Operator pursuant to an Applicable Registry Agreement.

**Spec 13 Changes:** In order for the proposed Spec 13 Global Amendment to be approved, it must be submitted to and receive approval from Applicable Brand Registry Operators and the ICANN Board of Directors. Pursuant to Spec 13 of the base RA, two thresholds are required for this vote to achieve Brand Registry Operator Approval:

1. Approval from the Applicable Brand Registry Operators (as such term is defined in [Section 9](#) of Specification 13 of the base RA) whose payments to ICANN in the immediately preceding calendar year accounted for two-thirds of the total amount of fees paid; and
2. Approval from the majority of the Applicable Brand Registry Operators, where each Applicable Brand Registry Operator shall have one vote for each gTLD operated by such Registry Operator pursuant to an Applicable Brand Registry Agreement.

**RAA Changes:** In order for the proposed RAA Global Amendment to be approved, it must be submitted to and receive approval from Applicable Registrars and the ICANN Board of Directors. Pursuant to [Section 1.18.1](#) of the RAA, the following threshold is required for this vote to achieve Registrar Approval:

- Approval from the Applicable Registrars accounting for 90% of the total registered domain names under management (TDUM) by the Applicable Registrars. Per the RAA the TDUM by each Applicable Registrar Family cannot exceed the TDUM of the 5th largest Applicable Registrar Family (measured by number of registered domain names under management) for both the numerator and the denominator. This means the TDUM of the 5th largest Applicable Registrar Family will replace that of the four (4) larger Applicable Registrar Families, and the TDUM will be updated accordingly.

The final calculation for Applicable Registrar voting weight will be based on the most recent Per-Registrar Transactions Report available prior to the conclusion of the voting period.

## 18. What happens after the conclusion of the voting period?

**For the proposed base RA Global Amendment:** The voting period will be open for 60 days.



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Following the voting period, the vote will be tabulated and then verified by Votenet. For the base RA Global Amendment to be approved it must receive Registry Operator Approval and approval from the ICANN Board of Directors. If approved, the base RA Global Amendment shall be effective and deemed an Approved Amendment to the base RA following a 60-day notice from ICANN to Registry Operators. If the Global Amendment is not approved, it will go back to the negotiating teams to discuss next steps.

**For the Spec 13 Global Amendment:** The voting period will be open for 60 days. Following the voting period, the vote will be tabulated, and then verified by Votenet. For the Spec 13 Global Amendment to be approved, it must receive Brand Registry Operator Approval and approval from the ICANN Board of Directors. If approved, Spec 13 Global Amendment shall be effective and deemed an Approved Amendment following a 60-day notice from ICANN to brand registry operators. If the proposed Spec 13 Global Amendment is not approved, it will go back to the negotiating teams to discuss next steps.

**For the proposed RAA Global Amendment:** The voting period will be open for 60 days for Registrar Approval. Following the voting period, the vote will be tabulated, verified by Votenet. For the Global Amendment to be approved, it must receive Registrar Approval and approval from the ICANN Board of Directors. If approved, the RAA Global Amendment shall be effective and deemed an Approved Amendment (as defined in the RAA) by the Applicable Registrars to the RAA following a 60-day notice from ICANN to registrars. If the proposed amendment is not approved, it will go back to the negotiating teams to discuss next steps.

### **19. If approved, when will the amendment be effective?**

If the base RA Global Amendment receives Registry Operator Approval and ICANN Board Approval, it will be deemed an Approved Amendment and shall be effective and deemed an amendment to each affected Registry Agreement following a 60-day written notice from ICANN org to registry operators. This notice will be provided via email to the primary contact and legal notice contact and will be posted on [ICANN's website](#).

If the proposed Spec 13 Global Amendment receives Brand Registry Operator Approval and ICANN Board Approval, it will be deemed an Approved Amendment and shall be effective and deemed an amendment to each affected Registry Agreement following a 60-day written notice from ICANN org to brand registry operators. This notice will be provided via email to the primary contact and legal notice contact and will be posted on [ICANN's website](#).

If the RAA Global Amendment receives Registrar Approval and ICANN Board Approval, it will be deemed an Approved Amendment and shall be effective and deemed an amendment to each affected RAA following a 60-day written notice from ICANN org to registrars. This notice will be provided via email to the primary contact and legal notice contact and will be posted on [ICANN's website](#).

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## 20. If the Global Amendment is approved, will contracted parties be required to sign the Global Amendment?

No, signatures will not be required if the Global Amendment is approved. As noted in response to question 19, if a Global Amendment received approval from the applicable parties (in the case of the base RA, registry operators and the ICANN Board; in the case of the RAA, registrars and the ICANN Board; and in the case of Specification 13, brand registry operators and the ICANN Board), it will be deemed an Approved Amendment and shall be effective and deemed an amendment to the affected agreement following a 60-day notice from ICANN org to the applicable party.

## 21. Where can I find the Global Amendment once it is effective?

ICANN will publish the effective Global Amendment accordingly:

- **For the base RA Global Amendment:** The effective Global Amendment will be published on the [Registry Agreements](#) webpage. Additionally, ICANN will post the Global Amendment to each Applicable Registry Operator's Registry Agreement page on [ICANN.org](#).
- **For the Spec 13 Global Amendment:** The effective Global Amendment will be published on the [Registry Agreements](#) webpage. Additionally, ICANN will post the Global Amendment to each Applicable Brand Registry Operator's Registry Agreement page on [ICANN.org](#).
- **For the RAA Global Amendment:** The effective Global Amendment will be published on the [RAA webpage](#).

## 22. What happens if the base RA Global Amendment doesn't meet the approval thresholds but the Spec 13 Global Amendment does?

If the base RA Global Amendment does not meet the approval thresholds but the Spec 13 Global Amendment does, Spec 13 would not be amended - as indicated in Spec 13 Section 11 (iii).

## 23. Where can I find additional information?

Please reference [Sections 7.6 and 7.7 of the base New gTLD Registry Agreement](#), [Section 9 of Specification 13](#), and Section [7.4 of the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement](#) for additional information. ICANN org has also established the [2023 Global Amendment webpage](#), which provides background information, relevant resources, and upcoming dates.

## 24. If I still have questions, who can I contact?

To submit questions regarding the voting process, open a General Inquiry case in the Naming Services portal (NSp) or send an email to [globalsupport@icann.org](mailto:globalsupport@icann.org) with "Inquiry - RDAP Global Amendment" in the subject line.



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