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# Get Involved

There are several ways you can participate in future WHOIS related policy development.

## Public Comment

You can comment on any active issue, including WHOIS issues, being considered by the community or by ICANN. Comments may be shared verbally or in writing during public forums at ICANN public meetings, or in writing via ICANN’s public comment platform.

The Public Comments page lists every issue that is currently open for input from any Internet user around the world. You can also find a list of [upcoming issues](http://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/upcoming-en.htm) that will be available for comment in the near future, and a list of issues for which the Public Comment period has [recently closed](http://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/closed-en.htm).

All comments will be read or heard and seriously considered by the ICANN community and staff.

## Working Groups

You can volunteer to serve on a Working Group to address policies and other issues facing the Internet community and its stakeholders. These groups are made up of interested community volunteers with various types of interest and expertise.

To know when an ICANN Supporting Organization or Advisory Committee is calling for volunteers to form a Working Group or Drafting Team, watch the [Announcements page](http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/) on ICANN’s web site (these also show up on the ICANN.org home page). Finally, you can also learn of groups forming by reading about them in the monthly [Policy Update](http://www.icann.org/en/topics/policy/). Sometimes it may be possible to join a group already in progress, but doing so would require you to catch up with the work, research, and discussion the group has already covered. Your best opportunity is to join a group as it is forming.

In general, anyone can join a Working Group or Drafting Team within ICANN’s At-Large Community or Generic Names Supporting Organization. [Current GNSO Working Groups](http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active) and [At-Large Community Working Groups](http://atlarge.icann.org/working) are kept up-to-date online so you can follow current activities. Other structures, like the [Address Supporting Organization](http://aso.icann.org/), the [Country Code Names Supporting Organization](http://ccnso.icann.org/), the [Root Server System Advisory Committee](http://www.icann.org/en/groups/rssac) and the [Security and Stability Advisory Committee](http://www.icann.org/en/groups/ssac), may require you to be a member or have particular technical expertise.

For more information on active WHOIS Working Groups [see here](http://whois.webchef2.com/en/working-groups).

### Working Groups

The following is a list of Working Groups to focus on various aspects of WHOIS

#### At-Large Working Groups

The At-Large Working Groups are the main entities for individual Internet users to discuss current ICANN policy issues and prepare Statements and Position Papers. The At-Large Advisory Committee regularly asks the working groups to help them develop a formal position for a public consultation and the ICANN Board of Directors. The working groups are composed of members from the ALAC and the wider At-Large community. Learn more about how to become more involved with an [At-Large Working Group](http://whois.webchef2.com/en/at-large-working-groups).

##### At-Large Working Groups

"At-Large" is the name for the community of individual Internet users who participate in the policy development work of ICANN. Currently, more than 100 groups representing the views of individual Internet users are active throughout the world.

###### How to Get Involved with an At-Large Working Group

In general, anyone may join a Working Group within the At-Large community. When you learn of a group you want to join, visit their Working Group page directly for instructions on how to become involved with that particular group.

###### Active At-Large Working Groups

The [At-Large Working Groups](http://community.icann.org/display/atlarge/At-Large+Working+Groups) page details the active Standing,Ad-Hoc, Cross-Constituency, and ICANN related Working Groups of the At-Large community. Current WHOIS related Working Groups include:

* [WHOIS Policy](http://community.icann.org/display/atlarge/At-Large+Whois+Policy)

#### GNSO Working Groups

The Generic Names Supporting Organization fashions (and over time, recommends changes to) policies for generic Top-Level Domains (e.g., .com, .org, .gov). The GNSO strives to keep gTLDs operating in a fair, orderly fashion across one global Internet, while promoting innovation and competition. Their in initiating and managing policy work is substantial and ultimately undertaken by significant volunteer effort within the Working Group model. Learn more about how to become more involved with a [GNSO Working Group](http://whois.webchef2.com/en/gnso-working-group).

##### GNSO Working Groups

Whether you have expertise in an area of GNSO deliberation, or a driving interest in it, or both, you can become part of the solution by volunteering to join a GNSO Working Group or Drafting Team.

To know when the GNSO is calling for volunteers to form a Working Group or Drafting Team, watch the [Announcements page](http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/) on ICANN’s web site (these also show up on the ICANN.org home page), or watch the GNSO’s own [home page](http://gnso.icann.org/). Calls for volunteers show up there regularly. Finally, you can also learn of groups forming by reading about them in the monthly[Policy Update](http://www.icann.org/en/topics/policy/).  Sometimes it may be possible to join a group already in progress, but doing so would require you to catch up with the work, research, and discussion the group has already covered. Your best opportunity is to join a group as it is forming.

###### How to Get Involved with a GNSO Working Group

In general, anyone can join a GNSO Working Group or Drafting Team.  When you learn of a group you want to join, the general procedure to follow is:

* Send an email to the [GNSO secretariat](mailto:gnso-secretariat@icann.org?subject=Working%20Group) expressing your interest in joining the group. The Secretariat is obligated to verify you are a “real person,” and will contact you in return.
* Next, the Secretariat will ask you for a Statement of Interest (SOI). In this document, you publicly disclose who you work for and any other business attachments that might affect how you vote on generic domain name issues. You cannot be disqualified from the group based on your SOI. It is posted so that others in the Working Group can understand what factors may influence your viewpoint. You will also be able to see the SOI of every other person in the Working Group.
* Most Working Groups boast members that are widely dispersed geographically, so the primary means of meeting is via international teleconferences and online resources. The phone calls use conference bridge numbers that usually generate no or low cost to you. Once a new Working Group is ready to convene, the Secretariat will send you dial-in details.

###### What Are My Responsibilities as a Group Member?

In addition to attending meetings, you may be asked to assist in specific tasks such as researching an issue, managing a survey, or drafting a report. Examples of member responsibilities include:

* Develop and draft working-group documents,
* Contribute ideas and knowledge to working group discussions,
* Act as liaisons between the Working Group and their respective stakeholder groups or constituencies,
* Ensure that stakeholder group or constituency statements are developed in an informed and timely way,
* Actively and constructively participate in the consensus decision making process

You should be aware that all Working Groups are normally expected to operate under the principles of transparency and openness, which means that mailing lists are publicly archived, meetings are normally recorded and/or transcribed, and the public will be able to listen to or read your contribution. This is how the public can hold ICANN accountable for its work.

###### How Much Time Must I Commit?

Each Working Group is unique. Most meet either once a week or once every other week. Some work under a tight deadline of mere weeks; others might persist for more than a year. The “Call for Volunteers” announcement will usually indicate the scope of expected service. No one can force you to take on more work than you choose to.

To be clear, Working Groups address tough issues and require a high level of collaboration with people of all types and cultures. You will probably enjoy the work more if you stick to areas of particular interest, and seek to participate in no more than a moderate number of groups. As a volunteer, you will also gain greater insight into how Internet policy is formed; a keen awareness of near-future developments that affect users worldwide; and an opportunity to meet volunteers of similar interest from many different countries.

Further details on how Working Groups are expected to function can be found in the [GNSO Working Group Guidelines](http://gnso.icann.org/council/annex-1-gnso-wg-guidelines-07apr11-en.pdf)which are part of the GNSO Operating Procedures.

###### Active GNSO WHOIS Related Working Groups

The [Active Projects](http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active) portion of the GNSO web site is designed to offer users a chronological view of the documents associated with each of the current Working Group and Drafting Teams created by the GNSO Council.  Once the Council formally adopts a Charter regarding a specific effort, a dedicated page appears in this section of the web site.

* ['Thick' WHOIS Policy Development Process](http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/thick-whois)
* [WHOIS Service Requirements Working Group](http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/whois-requirements)

## Follow a Mailing List

If you don’t have time to participate in a Working Group but want to follow the discussion, you can read the mailing list archive for the latest dialogue and deliberation of policy topics and activity. Many are publicly accessible online.

Some lists permit only Working Group members to read or actively contribute, so that their deliberations are not interrupted by comments that might be uninformed or off-topic.

Mailing lists are organized online by ICANN structure. Each ICANN organization has its own set of mailing lists that show all the emails previously written to and from people working on that topic.

[Address Supporting Organization mailing lists](http://aso.icann.org/contact/aso-mailing-lists/)

[At-Large Community mailing lists](https://atlarge-lists.icann.org/mailman/listinfo)

[Country Code Names Supporting Organization mailing lists](http://ccnso.icann.org/resources/cctld-community-list.htm) (membership required)

[Generic Names Supporting Organization mailing lists](http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/mailing-lists)

[Root Server System Advisory Committee mailing list](https://mm.icann.org/mailman/listinfo/rssac-caucus) (membership required)

Security and Stability Advisory Committee mailing list (not sure this exists; checking)

## Attend a Public Meeting

For a full immersion into the ICANN community, you can join thousands in the community three times a year at meetings worldwide. [Attending an ICANN Public Meeting](http://meetings.icann.org/) in person or via remote participation is a great way to collaborate on the latest issues, policy development, and operations of ICANN.