Registries Stakeholder Group Statement

Issue: **Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model – Next Steps**

Date statement submitted: **31 July 2020**

Reference url: https://www.icann.org/public-comments/multistakeholder-model-next-steps-2020-06-04-en

Background[1]

Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model - Next Steps (4 June 2020)
https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/enhancing-effectiveness-multistakeholder-model-next-steps-04jun20-en.pdf

Previous RySG comments on the issue:
- RySG Comment on the Evolving ICANN's MSM Work Plan (February 2020)
- RySG comment on Next Steps to Improve the Effectiveness of ICANN's MSM (October 2019)
- RySG comment on Evolving ICANN's MSM Issues Report (June 2029)

Input requested by the ICANN Board on:
- The Work Plan
  - Are the identified work processes or mechanisms and actions sufficient to address the gaps that may not be addressed by the work already underway?
  - Are there gaps and related actions that may address those gaps that should be included in the Work Plan?
- Remaining Work Areas
  - Are there any actions that your community group would like to initiate or coordinate?
  - Additionally, are there any community efforts missing from this list?
- Evaluations
  - Do you support the idea of using existing mechanisms to evaluate progress on the three work areas, including the actions already underway and those proposed to address the identified gaps?

---

[1] *Background: intended to give a brief context for the comment and to highlight what is most relevant for RO's in the subject document – it is not a summary of the subject document.*

Registries Stakeholder Group comment:

I. Introduction / Overarching comments

The Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the "Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model – Next Steps" published by ICANN Org in furtherance of its larger effort to improve the MSM. This is a topic of significant interest to the RySG and we have provided considerable feedback during the various stages of this effort, as detailed and linked above. We are eager to continue to support improvements to the MSM and offer our feedback on this Next Steps document below.

II. Feedback on the Work Plan

A. Prioritization of work and efficient use of resources

- The suggestions made in the Next Steps document reinforce SO/AC/SG/C/ICANN discussions. The RySG generally supports the direction ICANN is moving with the proposed processes/mechanisms listed, as we outlined in our comment on the "Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model Work Plan" document from February 2020: "The prioritization of work should be community-led: in the hands of the SO and AC Leaders, based on bottom-up input from their respective communities and in dialogue with the ICANN Org CEO and ICANN Board Chair to assure that staff and budget constraints are fully taken into account." We would, however, appreciate recognition that the responsibilities of the Chair of the GNSO Council do not extend to the GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies and that efforts be made to consult SG/C Leaders on matters that stretch beyond the GNSO Council.

- However, in that comment we also raised concerns about the workload that it would place on SO/AC leaders: "We fear, however, that expecting SO/AC Chairs to establish a fully detailed overview of all ongoing work in the community and adequately prioritize in the shortest possible time is too complex and demanding next to their other responsibilities." The RySG went on to suggest establishing an ad hoc alumni group of former leaders who could come together to work on prioritization of all already ongoing work, in support of the SO/AC leaders.

- The RySG would also like to reiterate its position that greater efforts to prioritize work must also be supported by the community committing to undertaking "smaller, concrete and overlapping projects" to make it easier to keep an overview and make prioritization easier: "(...) the RySG sees value in a more natural and streamlined prioritization process in which ongoing work is designed as a spiral, with small concrete projects (better scoped, budgeted and managed) that people can participate in as time allows but that overlap to avoid decisions being made in a vacuum. Such an approach would be easier to manage by SO/AC Leaders."

- We suggest that ICANN should explore the possibility of providing some external support to help with project prioritization, such as possible mediation to facilitate agreements across what could be very different opinions about priorities between different community groups.

- Finally, we suggest that work on prioritization would need to be done in tandem with better SO/AC/SG/C leader participation in planning and budget processes because these two items are inherently linked.

B. Precision in scoping the work

- The RySG has noted in multiple instances that this is a paramount issue to the effectiveness of ICANN's MSM. Unfortunately, just as with the Work Plan document, this Next Steps document lacks details for how more precise scoping can be instituted across the community. Specifically, the proposed processes/mechanisms only address Reviews, something for which the ATRT3 has already made a fairly revolutionary recommendation, and on which the RySG will also be submitting comments.

- This document does not address how to give the community resources or support in setting precise and realistic scopes for other work efforts, which is very much needed.

C. Consensus, representation, and inclusivity

- The processes/mechanisms suggested to address the gaps are actions to raise awareness and stimulate adoption throughout the community of GNSO Consensus playbook, PDP 3.0 and ICANN Learn, which is something for which the RySG has expressed support in prior comments.

- However, as we mentioned in our comments on the Next Steps, one of the key issues facing the community when it comes to building consensus is that participants in the process often lack the authority, incentives and/or the willingness to compromise on issues, or often seek to preserve the status quo at the expense of reaching compromises to achieve new recommendations or advance policies. While we are hopeful that the Consensus Playbook can help provide community leaders with tools for how to get around those challenges, we believe this is a core issue that continues to pose challenges to ICANN's MSM.

III. Remaining work areas

- The RySG did not mark these three areas as High Priority Issues in its previous comments, and as such, we agree with ICANN's suggestion to prioritize work on these behind the other areas listed above.

- We are very concerned that the work identified is incomplete as it does not appear to include current GNSO PDPs and IRTs. These work projects are considerable in terms of time and resources and should be factored into any prioritization of work efforts. The RySG is also engaged in an RA amendment process that impacts GDD staff resources as well as volunteers from the RySG. In fact, the time and effort spent by GDD Staff in engaging with Contracted Parties is an important work stream for ICANN Org that should also be considered in the larger context of prioritization.

- There also seems to be a lack of focus on how to bring work efforts to a close and whether there is value in placing some work efforts 'on hold' pending the completion of other efforts. Volunteer and ICANN staff alike are finite resources - especially in the current moment when impacts of the global coronavirus pandemic have placed new and increased demands on everyone's time - yet this doesn't appear to be taken into account when discussing prioritisation. Continually adding to a list of work products without closing any out is only a recipe for failure.

IV. Evaluations

- The RySG has some concerns about the lack of clarity around how progress/success will be evaluated going forward, especially when some of the interrelated efforts already underway that were mentioned in the document have indeterminate timelines. As ICANN works to develop work plans to implement these steps going forward, we encourage the organization to give substantial thoughts to this matter.