GAC-GNSO Consultation Group on

GAC Early Engagement in GNSO Policy Development Processes

A Briefing Note (June 2014)

Background

The GAC-GNSO Consultation Group is established to address the issue of GAC early engagement in GNSO policy development process; as identified by, the GAC-Board Joint Working Group (JWG), as well as both ICANN Accountability and Transparency Review Teams (ATRT1 & ATRT2).

Working Method

The Consultation Group comprises approximately equal numbers of representatives from each of the GAC and the GNSO to a total number of approximately 12 active members. ICANN staff support is provided by both GAC and GNSO secretariat / policy staff members. The group is co-chaired by Manal Ismail (GAC co-chair of the Board-GAC Recommendations Implementation working group – BGRI-WG) and Jonathan Robinson (GNSO Council Chair). The work is divided into two work streams, the first concentrating on Mechanisms for day to day co-operation and the second on the detail options for GAC engagement in the GNSO policy development process (PDP). The Consultation Group holds weekly conference calls, alternating between team leads calls and calls for the whole consultation group.

Work Progress

- **Work Track I (Team 1):** Mechanism for day-to-day ongoing cooperation

This work track has identified 6 potential opportunities to enhance GAC and GNSO day-to-day cooperation for further consideration. Some opportunities (options) may be mutually exclusive while others may be complimentary. The pros and cons of each option are being studied and evaluated in terms of how each achieves the target objectives, how each may work in practice, potential issues that need to be considered and addressed, whether the option needs funding and whether it would be possible to implement the option as a pilot. The ultimate goal is to come up with an overall proposed scenario of complimentary options. This scenario may be comprised of one or more of the evaluated options, with the objective of reaching a day-to-day cooperation mechanism, which ensures an ongoing smooth and timely information exchange between the GAC and the GNSO.

The 6 options being evaluated are:

A. GNSO Liaison(s) to the GAC
B. Regular interaction at the GNSO Council leadership / GAC leadership level
C. Topic Leads / Buddy System
D. Rethinking recurring joint meetings / conference calls
E. Further develop / expand early awareness & notification notices
F. Group of existing GNSO Council PDP WG liaisons interacting with the GAC (Currently considering Council WG liaisons supporting GNSO Liaison to the GAC)

- **Work Track II (Team 2):** Mechanism for GAC early engagement in GNSO PDP

This work track is studying the 6 phases of the GNSO PDP in terms of their steps, whether they provide an opportunity for GAC input, current method for seeking such input, proposals for additional opportunities or enhanced means of seeking GAC input, and finally potential issues that need to be considered and addressed. The ultimate goal is to accommodate the different working methods of the GAC and the GNSO, and come up with a smooth procedure for GAC early engagement in GNSO PDP.

The 6 phases of the current GNSO PDP are:

1. Issue Scoping
2. Issue Report
3. Working Group
4. Council Deliberations
5. Board Vote
6. Implementation

Expectations for London

Survey

An on-line survey will be prepared for GAC members to complete during or around the ICANN meeting in London. The objectives of the survey are twofold:

1. To inform GAC members of existing opportunities to be informed on and interact with GNSO policy development processes**.**

2. To permit members of the GAC / GNSO Consultation Group to be as well-informed as possible in understanding perspectives on the current position whilst aiming to develop the improvements.

Work Track I

Recent work has focused on refining and developing three of the six options (introduced above) as follows:

1. **Option A**: GNSO Liaison(s) to the GAC. Funding to support travel to ICANN meetings has been secured for the next financial year. It is proposed that this option is introduced, subject to detailed specification, on a trial basis for one year in order to test its efficacy. In London, we will seek to obtain GAC and GNSO support to move ahead with this option on an initial (one year) trial basis.

2. **Option F**: Group of Existing GNSO PDP Liaisons Interacting with the GAC. The proposal here is to make good use of existing GNSO Council Liaisons to PDP Working Groups and to ensure that they are available, primarily to support the GNSO Liaison to the GAC, but also through direct interaction with the GAC if necessary / desirable to support the GNSO Liaison to the GAC. In London, we will seek to obtain GAC and GNSO support to move ahead with this option as it provides support for 1 above.

3. **Option E**: Further develop / expand early awareness and notification notices. Here the proposal is to use the survey described above to better measure awareness and understanding of current mechanisms. In London we will advertise and seek participation in the survey from GAC members in order to best inform the work of the Group.

Work Track II

The plan is to present and discuss further detail on the first two phases of the GNSO PDP since, by definition, early engagement should be focused on the initial phases of the PDP and where opportunities for GAC input should be introduced and fully utilized.

Beyond London

The Consultation Group plans to continue to meet on a regular basis and the current objective is to conclude the work of this group at the or around the ICANN meeting in Los Angeles, USA in November 2014.

Resources

An active Wiki is in place which provides a full record of all of the work of the Consultation Group. It is located [here](#).

Key documents for consideration:

- GAC GNSO Consultation Group Charter located [here](#).

- An overall plan of work for the Group is located [here](#).

- A detailed description of the Work Track 1 is available from the [mailing list](#).

- A detailed description of Work Track 2 is also available from the [mailing list](#).