**Review of GNSO Liaison to the GAC Pilot Project – Updated 4 December 2015**

**Background:** As part of the discussions within ICANN between the GNSO and GAC, on how to facilitate early engagement of the GAC in GNSO policy development activities, the option of appointing a GNSO liaison to the GAC proposed as one of the mechanisms to explore. As such, the GAC-GNSO Consultation Group (CG) on GAC Early Engagement in GNSO policy development activities proposed to implement this option initially as a one-year pilot program in FY15 (starting 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015) and subsequently to extend it for a second year in FY16 (starting 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016). This mechanism will be evaluated at the end of FY16, by both the GNSO Council and the GAC, to determine whether or not to continue in either in the same form or with possible adjustments based on the feedback received, and as such, the GAC-GNSO Consultation Group has been requested to provide its feedback and recommendations.

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| ***Overarching Question for CG*: Has the GNSO Liaison contributed to facilitating GAC early engagement in the GNSO Policy Development Process? If yes, see additional questions below. If no, should the pilot project be discontinued and other mechanisms explored instead?** | |
| *CG Individual Views* | *Comments* |
| Mason: I believe the role, in conjunction with the GAC-GNSO consultation group (CG), has positively contributed to GAC engagement with the GNSO. It’s pleasing to see that the CG made such significant progress in developing mechanisms for GAC participation. It was important to pave the way for a GAC role with a clear-cut method for contributions to a PDP. This, to me, has been the most productive outcome of the role to date. | Manal: Agree.  Mark: The liaison provides important visibility and communication channel for this initiative. |
| Manal: I think the role of the GNSO Liaison to the GAC has contributed significantly to facilitating GAC early engagement in the GNSO Policy Development Process. I believe it should be complemented by close coordination with a GAC lead for each PDP and the GAC secretariat, particularly that the liaison is not on the GAC mailing list. | Mark I agree that there should be an identifiable PDP lead contact on the GAC side - perhaps a role for a GAC vice-chair. |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | |
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**Original Objective**

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| **Is the original objective still relevant and if not, how should it be revised: The GNSO liaison to the GAC (hereafter “the Liaison”) will be primarily responsible for providing timely updates to the GAC on GNSO policy development activities in order to complement the existing notification processes as well answering questions in relation to these (GNSO) activities that GAC members may have. Furthermore, the Liaison will be responsible for providing the GNSO Council with regular updates on progress, including on GAC activities, specifically in so far as these relate to issues of interest to the GNSO. The objective of the liaison mechanism, in combination with some of the other mechanisms that the CG is exploring, as well as existing early engagement tools, will be to facilitate effective early engagement of the GAC as well as generally assist with flow of information between the GAC and the GNSO.** | |
| *CG Individual Views* | *Comments/Questions* |
| Mason: This is a primary function of the liaison. This objective still is highly relevant. My observation is that while this is important, the GAC is rather opaque and it’s often difficult to arrive at an accurate observation of progress on GNSO-related issues. In terms of reviewing this objective (which is still relevant), I recommend the liaison work with the GAC secretariat more closely (e.g., monthly check-in calls) to ascertain progress on the part of the GAC, and then actively report back to the GNSO council.  This objective is also highly relevant and need not be revised. | Manal: concerning the opaque comment, is this because the information is not available or is not clear?  Response from Mason: More that information isn’t available. There may be an opportunity for process improvement here. |
| Manal: This objective still is highly relevant. Based on Mason's feedback, this can be improved by working closely not only with GAC secretariat but also with GAC lead on each PDP. This would help the liaison in concluding and reporting back to the GNSO on GNSO-related issues. | Mark: the appointment of a designated GAC lead (vice chair) would go a long way to sustaining focus and clarity on the GAC side that will help the Liaison perform his/he task. |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | |
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**Original Responsibilities**

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| **Are these responsibilities still relevant and current? If not, how should these be revised?** | | |
| *Original Responsibilities* | *CG Individual Views* | *Comments/Questions* |
| Attend and participate as required in GAC meetings during ICANN meetings and possible intercessional meetings (Note: travel funding is available for the ICANN meetings in FY15 should the Liaison otherwise not be able to attend an ICANN meeting) | Mason: This responsibility is less heavy than anticipated, though it remains relevant. I’ve found it more critical to ensure a thorough understanding of GNSO work so as to advise the GAC of where PDPs and other work stand. | Manal: Is this because not all GAC meetings are relevant to GNSO discussions?  Response from Mason: Yes, that’s probably accurate. |
| Represent and communicate the policy work of the GNSO in a neutral and objective manner | Mason: This obviously is critical. |  |
| Liaise with ICANN policy staff who may assist, as needed, in the preparation of briefing materials and/or responses to questions | Mason: This is very important. In fact, the staff bears a great deal of the work involved in preparing briefings. While this adds to staff workload, it’s an efficient method for organizing information relevant to the GAC. |  |
| Liaise with relevant working groups, utilizing GNSO Council liaisons where required, in order to be continuously current and knowledgeable on work in progress | Mason: This remains relevant, though I have found this function to be not always necessary. It should not be revised, however—this is an effective method of gathering information. |  |
| Provide regular updates to the GNSO Council | This also is relevant. However, see input above regarding the occasional difficulty in collecting information from the GAC. | Manal: Would be interesting if you can elaborate. Info not available? Info not clear? Difficult to conclude? Etc …  Mason: My impression is that a good deal of GAC work is carried out on the GAC’s mailing list (with the exception of open GAC meetings) and therefore isn’t fully visible outside the GAC. Perhaps an area of improvement would be more proactive effort on the part of the liaison to gather relevant information. |
| Guide the GAC in opportunities for early engagement | Mason: This may be one of the more critical functions of the liaison, with support from staff. I observe, even, that it is often necessary to re-brief the GAC regarding where and when it has the opportunity to engage. |  |
| Keep the GAC updated on how its early input was considered by the GNSO | Mason: This also is important. No revisions necessary. |  |
| Assist in the facilitation of GAC-GNSO discussions in cases where GAC early input is in conflict with GNSO views | Mason: This is a relevant objective. The GNSO Council has developed its own procedure—by a thorough review of the GAC’s communiqués—for notifying the GAC about where PDPs and other work are either aligned or in conflict with GAC advice. |  |
|  | Manal: All responsibilities are still relevant. Based on Mason's feedback, also as stated above, improvement may include working closely with GAC secretariat and a GAC lead on each PDP. Also GNSO's review of the GAC communique is a useful mechanism to try to converge and align views of both constituencies as early as possible.  Mark: I agree that these are all essential responsibilities that ensure effective and timely communication and maintain visibility inter-sessionally of a PDP where there is direct GAC interest. |  |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | | |
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**Original skills and experience required**

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| **Are these skills and experience still relevant and current? If not, how should these be revised?** | | |
| *Original skills and experience* | *CG Individual Views* | *Comments/Questions* |
| Significant experience in and knowledge of the GNSO policy development process as well as of recent and current policy work under discussion and / or review in the GNSO | Mason: Highly relevant. I would not recommend retention of a liaison without this type of experience and working knowledge. |  |
| Availability to travel to and participate in GAC meetings during the course of ICANN meetings and also, where applicable, intercessional meetings (via teleconference) | Mason: Highly relevant. I would not recommend retention of a liaison without this type of experience and working knowledge |  |
| Availability to travel to and participate in GAC meetings during the course of ICANN meetings and also, where applicable, intercessional meetings (via teleconference) [Manal:this cell is repeated?] | Mason: Very relevant and current. |  |
| An outgoing or recently departed GNSO Councilor is likely to be well-qualified for the position but this is not a necessary criterion for the Liaison. | Mason: I would argue very strongly that a recently departed Councilor is ideal for the role. If another type of candidate is considered, it is critical that such a person have significant experience with ICANN, GAC, and GNSO processes. A longstanding ICANN participant potentially could fill such a role. |  |
|  | Manal: The listed skills and experience are still relevant, required and necessary. With respect to qualified GNSO candidates (whether recently departed GNSO Councilor or otherwise), this is up to the GNSO to decide.  Mark: agree need for deep knowledge and ability to explain process and recount status/progress/problems/recommend actions. |  |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | | |
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**Practical Working:**

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| **Practical Working:** Does this match how the GNSO Liaison to the GAC has operated to date? If not, how should this be updated? | | |
| *Practical working* | *CG Individual Views* | *Comments/Questions* |
| Attend all GAC open meetings and be allowed to request the floor  Attend GAC closed meetings discussing GNSO related topics and be allowed to request the floor | Mason: Yes, I have had the occasion to request the floor, but much of any speaking to the GAC is  Mason: I have not had a reason to provide GNSO-related discussions in closed meetings, but I believe this should be retained as an appropriate privilege. | Manal: The highlighted sentence is truncated. Is there something we need to know here? |
| Attend GAC conference calls by invitation and accordingly be allowed to request the floor | Mason: I have not been invited to GAC conference calls  Manal: I believe this is because it's been a while since we last had a GAC call on substance, other than the transition and accountability. But it's good to recall this and have it in mind, particularly that the liaison is not on the GAC mailing list. i.e. we have to make sure we extend explicit invitations to him as needed  Mark: the Liaison should attend the GAC agenda-setting calls and any relevant GAC WG sessions inter-sessionally when they may be providing inputs. |  |
| Will not be on the GAC mailing list but may send to it through the mailing list admin and receives replies by being cc’d | Mason: I seldom have the occasion to email the full GAC. Most often, by agreement with GAC leadership, the liaison’s communication to the GAC is delivered via the GAC secretariat. |  |
|  | Manal: Based on Mason's feedback, this seems to match how the GNSO Liaison to the GAC has operated to date, which seems to be a smoothly working set-up. We may recommend that GAC secretariat explicitly asks GAC leadership whether the GNSO liaison should be invited before any call that will discuss GNSO-related issues.  Mark: I agree that this step should be taken before any GAC call relevant to GNSO takes place - well in advance to help Mason plan for the call! |  |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | | |
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**Removal:**

In the case of significant issues identified with the performance of the liaison, the GNSO Council Leadership, in consultation with the GAC Leadership, may decide to remove (and possibly replace) the Liaison at any point during the Liaison’s term.

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| **Should this removal clause remain as is?** | |
| *CG Individual Views* | *Comments* |
| Mason: Yes |  |
| Manal: Agree, it should remain as is. Mark: agree |  |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | |
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**Original selection process:**

1. The leadership of each Stakeholder Group / Constituency may submit the application of its candidate(s), which should include at a minimum a link to a completed and current statement of interest as well as a brief note explaining why the candidate has applied for this role and how the candidate meets the specific requirements **by 31 July 2014 at the latest** to the GNSO Secretariat ([gnso.secretariat@gnso.icann.org](mailto:gnso.secretariat@gnso.icann.org)).
2. The GNSO Council Chairs will review the applications received and rank these taking into account the skills and experience required as outlined in this call for volunteers by 15 August.
3. Based on the outcome of the ranking process, the GNSO Council Chairs will contact the nr 1 candidate to confirm the selection by 20 August.
4. GNSO Council Chairs will submit motion for confirmation of GNSO Liaison to the GAC to the GNSO Council by 25 August at the latest.
5. Consideration of motion and approval of candidate by GNSO Council during GNSO Council meeting on 4 September.
6. Confirmation of candidate to GAC leadership (by 10 September).
7. GNSO Liaison to the GAC officially takes up its role (by 20 September).

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| **Are there any concerns about the selection process as it was conducted for the pilot project? Any changes / enhancements that should be considered?** | |
| *CG Individual Views* | *Comments* |
| Mason: Not on my part. However, I defer to others regarding any changes to the selection process. |  |
| Manal: Should we generalize this to apply beyond the first-time selection process, in case needed. i.e. use durations and periods rather than specific dates? Or leave this as the original selection process for the record and add a general part for future rounds? |  |
| Mark: no views at present on this. |  |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | |
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**Other issues to consider:**

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| **Should there be a term limit for this role?** | |
| *CG Individual Views* | *Comments* |
| Mason: From my perspective, no, provided the liaison is functioning well in the role. | Manal: Agree.  Mark: suggest as a corporate check a periodic appointment every two years - incumbent can apply to continue. |
| Manal: Do we need to add a sentence or two should the liaison decide to step down? |  |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | |
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| **Should the role of the Liaison be formalized in the GNSO Operating Procedures?** | |
| *CG Individual Views* | *Comments* |
| Mason: Yes, if the pilot project is made permanent. |  |
| Manal: It's up to the GNSO to decide. Since the liaison role turned to be successful, I do think it should be permanent to avoid the hassle of annual renewals. To be able to reach a timely decision, we should plan this early enough and start consulting with our constituencies. | Mark: no comments on this. |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | |
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| **Is the GNSO Liaison to the GAC considered to be a non-voting member of the GNSO Council?** | |
| *CG Individual Views* | *Comments* |
| Mason: I don’t believe this is necessary. I do believe it’s important for the liaison to attend GNSO meetings, however, to ensure fluency in GNSO work. | Mark: no comments on this. |
| Manal: This is up to the GNSO to decide. |  |
| **CG Response / Recommendation** | |
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