

# ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

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## Governmental Advisory Committee Input Regarding GNSO PDP 3.0 Implementation Documents

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The ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the GNSO's effort to update and improve aspects of the GNSO's Policy Development Process ("PDP 3.0"). Various GAC members have reviewed the PDP 3.0 Implementation Documents delivered to the GNSO Council (see [GNSO PDP 3.0 Documents Delivered to the GNSO Council](#)) and the committee offers a number of thoughts and comments intended as input to help move the process forward.

This "input" document provides comments and observations on the fifteen (15) implementation documents shared so far for ten (10) out of the fourteen (14) recommended PDP 3.0 improvements. This GAC input is provided in a bulleted format designed for ease of reference.

### Specific Document Comments

#### Improvement #1 - Terms of participation for working group members

##### Document - Statement of Participation

- A statement of participation is a good mechanism for reminding a working group member about their obligations to the community effort.
- The expectations set forth in the document seem reasonable to helping achieve a productive and collaborative work environment for participants.
- There should be some appeal mechanism included or referenced in the document in the event a group or team member disagrees with any leadership action to restrict group participation.

#### Improvement #2 - Consider alternatives to open working group model

##### Document - A comparison table of working group models

- The term/acronym "SSC" used in the document should be defined

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- If not initially appointed by the GNSO Council, leadership of a working group or team should be determined by members of the group or team itself with subsequent confirmation by the GNSO Council.
- Consideration should be given to establishing a standard default set of minimum ICANN community expectations regarding the experience and skill sets needed to lead a group or team.
- A group or team charter (or terms of reference) could identify additional expertise, as appropriate, concerning the particular objective or subject matter with which the group/team is tasked.
- The overall concept conveyed in recommendation 2, of having appointed representatives in the PDP working groups, is very valuable. It may be helpful to have participants who represent identified wider interests, may be more motivated, more responsible and accountable, while at the same time maintaining the openness of the working groups.
- Moreover, recommendation 2 seems to be an important precondition for contributing to solving many of the identified concerns regarding the quality of discussions or in consensus-building. It would allow the group to better gauge the levels of support for different positions in the wider community beyond very specific positions espoused sometimes by small but vocal groups of well-resourced people whose level of representativeness of broader constituencies may be unclear.

### **Improvement #3 - Criteria for joining of new members after a PDP working group is formed or rechartered**

#### **Document - Criteria for joining of new members**

- This criteria document does a good job identifying the issue created when members seek to join the group after certain conclusions or decisions have been reached.
- The apparent current practice which allows new members to join a group “so long as they get up to speed and do not reopen previously closed topics, unless they provide new information”, seems to be quite practical and reasonable.
- The document needs to state more clearly what circumstances would necessitate a departure from the current practice.
- If a “representative” model is applied to a particular working group effort, then participant replacements should be permitted at any time during the life span of the working group so long as the party appointing the participant makes the effort to appropriately prepare the new participant.

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## **Document - Working group member skills guide**

- The skills guide, as drafted, offers useful information that should be made readily available to inform and educate new and existing working group participants.
- It is quite helpful to see that this guide is intended to be a “living” document that can be supplemented over time.

## **Improvement #5 - Active role for and clear description of Council liaison to PDP working groups**

### **Document - New liaison briefing and liaison handover**

- The GNSO Liaison to a PDP plays an important communication and process facilitation role in the PDP structure.
- The briefing and handover document provide a useful resource for new or experienced liaisons.

### **Document - GNSO Council liaison supplemental guidance**

- The supplemental guidance document as drafted provides a thorough checklist of the various job duties and best practices of a GNSO Council liaison to PDP working groups.
- The expectation of neutral behavior by the liaison is key precept of the supplemental guidance and should be emphasized as much as possible.

## **Improvement #6 - Document expectations for working group leaders that outlines role & responsibilities as well as minimum skills / expertise required**

### **Document - Expectations for working group leaders**

- This document does a good job of setting forth the specific expectations, roles and duties of working group leaders.
- The document provides several pages of language describing useful capabilities and skills that leaders are expected to bring to the working group’s efforts. It includes a six-page skills checklist (accompanied by useful document links) that suggests it could also be used to evaluate candidates for Working Group leaders, or as a resource for prospective leaders to develop their skills.
- As valuable as the best practices described in the document are, they remain somewhat subjective. The GNSO should consider adopting or incorporating specific

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standard certifications as a vehicle for evaluating the eligibility of potential working group leaders.

- The references in the document to ICANN Academy and ICANN Learn resources suggest that a certification or credentialing program could be considered as part of or related to the PDP 3.0 effort.
- The GNSO Council may also wish to consider how to incorporate its working group leadership review mechanisms (Improvement #13) into the assessment of future working group leader candidates. Review feedback is something that could be incorporated into some form of a group chair/leader accreditation, credentialing or certification program.

### **Improvements:**

#### **#11 - Enforce deadlines and ensure bite size pieces**

#### **#12 - Notification to Council of changes in work plan**

#### **#16 - Criteria for PDP working group updates**

##### **Document - GNSO project work product catalog**

- A consistent reporting and tracking methodology will enable periodic review of PDPs while they are ongoing.
- The work product catalog lists five specific work products that each identify the product owner and the product audience while also defining an update/reporting cycle that should be followed.
- The GNSO should consider establishing some basic key performance indicators (KPIs) that can be determined by reviewing the various update/report products. Tracked and measured over time, those KPIs could be used to gauge the relative overall health of individual PDPs (and by extension, the overall PDP 3.0 process itself) as implemented.

##### **Document - Next generation project list**

- The next generation project list offers a highly detailed overview of existing GNSO projects (including PDPs) that may prove to be of estimable value to the GNSO Council PDP management function.
- In some respects, the list's level of detail would likely be intimidating to the uninitiated, but there are portions of the format that display very useful status information about ongoing projects.
- The GNSO should ensure that the project list is easily accessible to all members of the community.

##### **Document - Project status and condition change procedure**

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- This document provides excellent background and information about how the GNSO Council tracks the status of its various projects and PDPs.
- The monthly review process outlined in the document seems to provide the appropriate frequency to check status and act accordingly if a project begins to experience delays or difficulties that merit Council management attention.

### **Document - Project status and condition change Flowchart**

- This document appears to be a useful internal resource for GNSO Council managers and staff that depicts the decision flowchart for updating the status of particular projects.
- It is an excellent reference document that would appear to be of limited value to outside audiences.

### **Document - Project change request form**

- This appears to be another useful internal document for GNSO Council management of the PDP efforts. Presumably, the request document will be stored in a place on the GNSO web page or a specific web page dedicated to individual PDPs that would show each request and the dispensation of each request.
- To ensure transparency, it might be useful for the document to include a section that records the result of the request, so that the status change decision/information is all in one place.

## **Improvement #13 - Review of working group leadership**

### **Document - Regular review of PDP working group leadership by GNSO Council**

- The review documentation and process provides a useful management mechanism for checking on the effectiveness of the leadership of any particular PDP effort and can offer early warning of potential difficulties.
- The documented process provides sufficient flexibility to avoid over-management while ensuring some form of oversight.
- It is important to maintain the spirit of support that the review process suggests.
- The documented process appears to provide potential opportunities to address (and possibly escalate) concerns before they become serious management issues.
- It is particularly useful that all working group members appear to have an opportunity to provide anonymous input on a standard survey regarding the performance of the working group leadership at regular intervals.

### **Document - PDP working group member survey on leadership performance**

- The survey document itself provides a good balance of questions and assessments from working group participants.

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- Although it appears that the survey questions are intended to measure levels of success over the lifetime of the PDP effort, please consider adding a numerical component to the survey responses. This could enable the application of the survey results (or some aggregate) into a possible credentialing or certification process for working group leaders that could be applicable across the community with a possible application in broader cross-community working group settings.

## **Improvement #14 - Criteria to evaluate request for data gathering**

### **Document - Checklist: criteria to evaluate request for data gathering**

- Access to commonly understood data and facts can play a vital role in effective policy development discussions by ensuring that working group participants are all accessing the same trusted and reliable information for their discussions.
- The draft criteria document presents a checklist of nearly 30 individual questions designed to assure that any request for data is thoroughly considered and vetted.

## **Closing**

The GAC appreciates the opportunity to contribute input to the GNSO's PDP 3.0 effort and looks forward to further community collaboration to consider implementation of this important initiative.