

(Co-)Chairing a GNSO Working Group: What's involved? - Tasks and desirable skills.

As outlined in the GNSO [Working Group Guidelines](#) (WGG), the purpose of a Chair is to call meetings, preside over working group deliberations, manage the process so that all participants have the opportunity to contribute, and report the results of the Working Group to the Chartering Organization. These tasks require a dedicated time commitment as each week calls have to be prepared, the agenda concretized, and relevant material has to be reviewed.

In addition, it is advised – though not required – that chairs have followed or participated as a WG member in at least one Policy Development Process throughout its lifecycle to have some experience of the different tasks that come with chairing a PDP. Familiarity with the functioning of a Working Group is important to understand the various leadership skills that are necessary to employ during a WG's lifecycle. For example, a chair has to ensure that debates are conducted in an open and transparent matter and that all interests are equally represented within the Group's discussions. During the later stages of a WG when recommendations are drafted, a Chair will benefit from understanding the viewpoints of various participants to ensure that an acceptable and effective outcome – ideally in form of consensus – can be achieved.

In short, a WG Chair is expected to:

- i. Strive to attend a maximum of WG meetings to assure continuity and familiarity with the subject matter and the on-going discussions;
- ii. Prepare meetings by reading all circulated materials;
- iii. Be familiar with the subject matter and actively encourage participation during the calls
- iv. Be active on the WG mailing list and invite WG participants to share their viewpoints;
- v. Drive forward the WG and assure that discussions remain on point;
- vi. Work actively towards achieving policy recommendations that ideally receive full consensus;
- vii. Ensure that particular outreach efforts are made when community reviews are done of the group's output;
- viii. Underscore the importance of achieving overall representational balance on any sub-teams that are formed;
- ix. Encourage and, where necessary, enforce the ICANN Standards of Behavior.
- x. Co-ordinate with ICANN staff and assure that the WG is supported as effectively as possible

Finally, as also pointed out in the [GNSO Working Group Guidelines](#), 'appointing a co-chair(s) or vice-chair(s) may facilitate the work of the Chair by ensuring continuity in case of absence, sharing of workload, and allowing the Chair to become engaged in a particular debate.' As a result, similar tasks and skills are expected from co/vice chairs, although the overall workload may be reduced as a result of being able to share this with the chair(s).