

GNSO Working Group Newcomer Webinar
5th April 2016
ICANN Transcript

Note: The following is the output of transcribing from an audio recording. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors. It is posted as an aid to understanding the proceedings at the meeting, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

On page: <http://gnso.icann.org/calendar/#fapr>

Mary Wong: Thank you very much. I see that the meeting session is now being recorded. So let me now repeat for the record my welcome on behalf of all ICANN staff including the ones on this call today to everyone.

I noticed that we would have a few folks who are new to ICANN and new to the Generic Names Supporting Organization or the GNSO. And we also have some folks who are joining - who have just joined the first Policy Development Process in the GNSO.

So welcome to everybody. We hope that this introductory Webinar will be useful to you as you work through the PDPs with your respective working groups.

As we said in the announcement for the Webinar, this is not just something intended for people who are absolutely new. There are some folks who have participated at ICANN for some time but who may want to brush up on what it means to be involved in a PDP. And so we welcome them as well.

For those of you who are on the audio bridge meaning you have called in by telephone or Skype and you are not in the Adobe Connect virtual meeting room, may I invite you to join the virtual meeting room. And the reason for this

is because we are going to be showing slides and those slides are going to be very helpful as you follow along with the presentation.

If you need us to resend you the link to the Adobe Connect room, could you let us know now? If not, then just before proceeding with the slide presentation, I'd like to remind everybody to stay on mute if you can. We will have the opportunity for you to ask question as we are going along through the presentation because we'll be covering a few different topics.

Please feel free to type your question in the Adobe Connect chat pod, which you should see in the bottom left hand side of your screen and our presenter will either take the question at the appropriate time in the presentation or come back to it during the Q&A session.

And on that note, I would like to thank our presenter for today, our guest speaker who is Donna Austin. And I will introduce Donna in slightly greater detail later on. But I do want to thank her for taking the time to share her experiences with ICANN with you and to take you through this session.

Before I hand over to Donna with a long introduction, the team thought that it'd be helpful especially for those of you who may be somewhat newer to ICANN participation to show you what your friendly GNSO Policy Team looks like. And you see a few of them there on the slide. That's me on the bottom left hand side. My name is Mary Wong, as I said earlier.

We're based in different countries and different time zones across the globe. So for those of you who may be resident in a region where there may be fewer participants in your particular working group and somewhat feel the pain of inconvenient hours for your calls, let me assure you that many of us share that pain as well.

But as you'll find out, we do try different ways to try to ameliorate that problem. So if you do happen to attend an ICANN meeting, please be sure to

say hello to us. And obviously we have our email addresses here. At any time should you need any assistance or have any question, please reach out as well.

Besides those of us on the first slide, here are actually three very important people who are the ones who coordinate all the calls, all the meetings and all the recordings as well as a whole bunch of other things for the entire GNSO community.

You may have already heard from Nathalie earlier on in this Webinar. You will be hearing much more from Nathalie, from Terry, from Glen and other members of the team as you work through your PDP. So on everyone's behalf, once again, welcome.

This is the agenda that we're covering today - like I said, with our guest speaker Donna Austin. And at this point I'd like to introduce Donna. Some of you may know that Donna is the current - one of the current Vice Chairs of the GNSO Council.

And so she is helping to lead the Council in supervising some of the key PDPs or policy development processes that many of you are now engaged in. I think we're particularly fortunate to have Donna because not only is she currently the Policy and Industry Affairs Manager for Neustar, which many of you will know as a registry operator Donna has had a lot of experience in and around ICANN both in a staff role and in a community role as well.

And her roles encompass working the GAC or the Governmental Advisory Committee, the ccNSO or the Country Code Names Supporting Organization and now of course the GNSO.

So Donna brings a lot of experience in the industry and at ICANN to us for which we are very grateful. And on that note, Donna I think I will hand over to you.

Donna Austin: Thanks very much Mary. Thanks for the introduction. So as Mary said, I've had quite a bit of varied experience within the ICANN - within ICANN. And I had a little bit of a chuckle when I saw participants joining this call because the person responsible for introducing me to ICANN is somebody that I knew by the name of Michelle Scott who now goes by the name of Michelle Scott Tucker.

Michelle and I worked together at the Australian Department of Communications 15 or probably 16, 17 years ago now. And Michelle made a career move and brought me along with her about 12 months after.

So at that time Michelle was the Australian GAC representative and I was the - provided the Secretariat to the GAC. And here we are some 15 years later and I'm now working for Neustar and Michelle is part of the team that now provides professional Secretariat support for ICANN. So it's - it made me chuckle.

So as Mary said, I've, you know, I've had some experience with the GAC. I've had some experience with the ccNSO. I'm now a Councilor, a Vice Chair of the GNSO Council through the Registry Stakeholder Group.

And one little gem of information I have not participating in a GNSO PDP. I have only recently just signed up for my first one. So I will take you through the process and I will give you the insights that I can. But just bear with me that some of this is - I know the theory. I don't necessarily know the practice so I'll do the best that I can. So Mary's spoken to the agenda so we'll - I guess we'll just move forward to the next slide. Thanks Nathalie.

So just to put this into context, we'll talk about the structure of the GNSO Council. And the reason this is important is because the policy development process is managed through the Council. So the Council is the oversight body that does that.

So with the GNSO Council it has two stakeholder groups and the Council is often referred to as being bicameral. So we have the Contracted Parties House, which is the registries and registrars; and as I said, I'm part of the Registry Stakeholder Group. And the other party is the Non-Contracted Parties House, which is broken down into commercial and non-commercial stakeholder groups.

There - on the outside of that and in the center we - there's a reference there to NCA and that is the Non-Com Appointed representative. So the Nominating Committee appoints three representatives to the Council and two of those are voting; they're the people in green. And the one in the orange, which I think is (Carlos) at the moment is - he does not vote.

At the top we have a dotted line to ALAC and the ccNSO. And that dotted line means that we have liaisons on the Council. Olivier Crepin-Leblond is our liaison from the ALAC. And the liaison from the ccNSO his name escapes me at this point in time.

So the structure is important. So the Council is the mechanism that we use to manage the policy development process. So we're kind of the business managers. Next slide please Nathalie. Okay. So we'll kick into the GNSO policy development process. Next slide please. Thank you.

So the GNSO is given the ability to develop policies from the ICANN bylaws. So if you are particularly new to ICANN, the bylaws will give you the kind of outline of what all the different supporting organizations and advisory committees - what their roles are and what their, you know, what they're able to do within the ICANN construct.

Those bylaws are probably changing. Well I know they are changing somewhat because of the recent CCWG work on Accountability. So there will be some changes. But it will still hold that the ICANN bylaws is probably the

best place to go to get a pretty brief outline of what the different SOs and ACs are responsible for.

And it's the bylaws that give the GNSO the responsible for developing and recommending to the ICANN Board substantive policies relating to generic top-level domains.

Now it's important here that distinguishing the thing between the GNSO and the ccNSO is that the G stands for generic, the cc stands for country codes. The GNSO policies that are developed and known was consensus policies and we'll talk to that a little bit later. And they have a direct endpoint - a direct impact on the Contracted Parties House (unintelligible) with the ccNSO.

The ccNSO can also develop policy but it's a very - they have a very narrow scope as to what they can do in terms of policy development. And the main difference with the ccNSO developed policies is that they are not - a ccTLD manager is not required to adhere to the policy.

And I won't go into the reasons why but it's interesting to know that, you know, the gTLDs or the Contracted Parties House are bound by consensus policies but it's not the same for ccTLD operators. Next slide please.

So this is the stages that a policy development process will go through with the GNSO. And it's quite a detailed process. And my understanding is this is, you know, the - some of the consensus policies that are being developed through ICANN date back many years.

And this process is being honed and developed over a period of time. So while this looks like a lot of work, which it is, there's identified stages within the process.

It means that there is a consistency to the work that is being done and there's an understood, you know, and kind of measuring gates that the process has to go through.

So it starts off with an issues report. And just in terms of who can request an issues report -- and Mary, I might need your assistance on this one -- is that the Board, any of the Advisory Committees, so the GAC or the ALAC, can request an issues report or the Council itself can request an issues report.

And Mary, there's - I think there is a distinction between when the Board and Advisory Committee calls for an issues report when the Council itself does it. I don't know if you wanted to speak to that because I think it's an important thing to understand.

Mary Wong: Thanks Donna. And hi again everybody. This is Mary from staff. Donna, you're absolutely right. The organizations that you've named in addition to the GNSO; so those would be the Board and the Advisory Committees can themselves request and issue report on any topic that's within the GNSO's remit. As you also mentioned, the consequences or the treatment of each of those requests are slightly different.

And those are outlined in the ICANN bylaws. Essentially though if it is a request from the Board, this does mean that following the issue report and the public comments that will help scope out the full scope of the topic, the GNSO will indeed proceed with the policy development process. That is not the case when the request comes from the other organizations if this helps.

Donna Austin: Thanks Mary. So I think what I might do - Nathalie, could you go to the next slide? So this slide maps to a number of items that are on the previous diagram and it's just to give you an indication of what the timeline looks like.

And because one of the - one of the things if you're going to join a PDP working group, then be prepared to commit time over a long period of time.

So I think - I don't know what the average numbers are but it's not unusual for a PDP to take in the order of 18 months to two years. So it is a long process and it takes a certain amount of dedication from the people who sign up for any policy development working group.

So this one is the Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation Issues PDP Working Group's timeline. And this is a PDP that only recently the GNSO Council approved the recommendations from the final report. It was submitted to the ICANN Board.

And the ICANN Board recently went through the public comment process, which is further on down in the process. And the Board is actually in the position now of reviewing those comments in order to see whether they approve them or not as well.

So the scoping for this one was done in October 2011 with the preliminary - with the request in October 2011. The preliminary issues report published in December 2012 and the final issue report published in March 2012. So you can see that there's a fair amount of time there in just getting through that first hurdle.

So the initiation of the PDP - so the Council needs to - can see the final issues report and vote on whether they want to initiate the PDP. And I won't get into the voting on how the Council approves whether - decides whether to move forward but just understand that there are voting requirements in order to initiate a PDP or get through the different gated stages.

So the initiation of this PDP was in October of 2013. And initial report published in May 2015. So there's a fair lag in timeline there. And then the final report completed December 2015 in preparation for the Board in January - February 2016.

So I just wanted to show you this slide to give you an indication of, you know, that it does take a (constituted) period of time to get through some of these staging processes.

I wasn't personally involved with this PDP but I do understand that it was recently contentious. So one of the things that you will often hear about policy development process is that it is messy, it can be complicated but in the main the working group will work towards consensus and they will do that in good faith.

But they will - one of the other things I think to understand is that depending on where you're coming from in terms of how the potential for the outcome of policy will be it's going to determine how hard you're fighting on different aspects.

So it's usually, you know, them versus us depending on which side of the equation you're on and it's usually hard fought battles. But I think one of the things that I've come to understand and value from this process is that people work in good faith to get consensus outcomes. And I think that's a real positive. So does anyone have any questions on any of that before I move forward? Okay. Next slide please Nathalie. Thanks.

So just to go back and this is connected again to that - I guess it's the - you can call it Venn diagram if you wanted to but there's probably not too much Venn about it.

But the scope of work is defined by the PDP charter and this is an important document because it becomes your reference document. So if you're kind of going down a path and you think that perhaps your - it's going beyond the scope of work, then it's - the charter of the PDP that you need to refer back to.

Mary, just the charter itself - I know there's been some recent changes in how this is done. So the Council will approve the final - the recommendations from a final issue report but they also approve the PDP charter before call for volunteers to out to join a working group. Mary, could you just explain the process as to how the charter is developed as well please?

Mary Wong: Hi Donna. This is Mary from staff. Gladly. And those of you who've participated in GNSO PDPs previously may have noticed that things are done slightly differently, as Donna alluded to, these days.

So by way of background, there's been a concerted effort across ICANN to try to streamline all the processes and make them more effective and especially to better facilitate the volunteer work of the community.

So one of those changes is that a draft charter is now attached to the preliminary issue reports that are published by ICANN staff for public comments. This means a couple of things.

First of course it does mean that at an early opportunity the public would get to comment not just on the issue report itself but also on the draft charter. And this is an important step because the charter, as Donna noted, basically is the blueprint that sets out the full scope of work for the eventual working group if a PDP is indeed then started by the Council.

So having it early on in this process provides an important opportunity for feedback, which the Council will then take into consideration. And it also allows for a deeper exploration into what does it mean when you task a working group to do a particular task and that may be described in somewhat general terms in for example the request for the issue report.

The charter in combination with issue report can go into somewhat more detail so you get a better sense perhaps of the sort of deliverables, the levels of complexity that would be involved and so forth.

So then when the Council comes to vote on whether or not to initiate the PDP, as Donna noted, they really have to do two things. So they have to vote on whether to initiate the PDP.

If they then vote yes, we think it's a good idea to conduct a policy development process on this particular topic, the other then that they would then have to do is charter the working group; in other words, approve the charter. And that charter may well be either the initial draft charter unchanged or - and Donna, I think this may be what you were referring to.

What we've seen happen in the few very recent PDPs is that as a result of the draft charter being out there for comment as a result of the community and the Council having the opportunity to look closely at it, some amendments and updates are usually made to the initial draft charter so that when the Council comes to do its second step of approval, which is to formally approve the charter and therefore formally, you know, set off the call for volunteers and start the working group off.

That charter would then have been fully considered. And as I noted previously, that charter really is the one point of reference for the working group. If, as Donna mentioned, some of these PDPs can get fairly contentious, a lot of them may take quite a bit of time to complete.

So at some point or at several points along that journey it usually becomes quite critical to go back to the charter and say well, what is it that we are supposed to do as working group.

And the last point I'll say on this Donna really quickly is that what we've also seen happen as working groups go through the task is that, you know, they've come up against either some new information or they encounter a certain challenge which then requires them to go back to the GNSO Council

to say, you know, we need to narrow our charter for example or we need to update it to take these new developments into account.

So the charter is a very important living document that is approved by the Council. Back to you Donna.

Donna Austin: Thanks Mary. That's really helpful context. Once the Council approves the charter there's usually - there will be a request go out for volunteers to join a working group.

And a number of you may be on this call because you've recently joined a working group. Because in the last three months I think the Council has approved the Next Generation RDS Working Group, the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Working Group and the GNSO Review of all RPMs in all gTLDs PDP Working Group. So, you know, three substantive efforts that have kicked off within about three months of one another.

So the call for volunteers is important. Those people who want to become involved in the issue they will sign up to the working group. And you can sign up in two different ways, one being a formal representative and the other being just an observer.

So a representative you participate in the discussion actively; an observer you're (in aligning) with communities. It's kind of just a - you're a silent observer.

And I just wanted to make that point that it's - anybody can join a working group. You don't have to be somebody from ICANN or involved in an ICANN supporting organization or advisory committee. You could just be somebody who has an interest in the topic. So anybody is - can join a working group.

But the other important thing that I wanted to note is that even if you don't join a working group, you do have opportunities to provide comment on some of the - at the different stages moving forward.

So at the - if we went back to the (S) diagram you will see that there are a number of opportunities for the working group to get a public comment. So that's an important stage in the process as well.

That even if you're not involved in the day-to-day, you know, discussions within the working group itself, when draft recommendations come out, you have an opportunity to provide comments. And that will then be taken into consideration by the working group moving forward. So I think it's really important to understand that.

And I would also, you know, public comment has - is used for many different purposes within ICANN. But with the PDP working groups it is specifically the working group itself that will consider those public comments and then decide how to manage them within the process that they're going through. And that will feed towards the final outcome of the final report.

Does anyone have any questions on those basic requirements? Okay. Next slide please. Consensus policy and the picket fence. For the - those of you that are outside the U.S. you probably don't understand what a picket fence is. I certainly didn't. But it's a legal term that we'll get to in just a minute. Nathalie, could you go to the next slide please?

So consensus policy is really - so the consensus policy and the picket fence is important in thinking about when you go through a PDP process, at the end of it you come out with what is understood as a consensus policy.

And that consensus policy impacts generally the Contracted Parties House. So all ICANN accredited registrars and registries have contracts with ICANN that contain binding legal obligations.

And one of those obligations within the registry agreement, in particular in obviously the registrar accreditation agreement is that they must abide by consensus policies.

And that's kind of interesting in the sense if you think about it because when a registry signed the 2012 registry agreement, which is as a result of a new gTLD program, coming down the pipe at some later time there will be consensus policies that may impact the way that they do their business. But they've signed an agreement to say that they will abide by any consensus policies that are developed.

So it's kind of a - that's why the PDPs are particularly important the registries and registrars, not to say that they're not important to other people within the community. But consensus policies have the ability to impact business operations, cost of operations and the general way that registries and registrars can conduct their business. Next slide please Nathalie.

So in terms of the consensus policy, it's - there is a - there is kind of a boundary around it and that's where the picket fence comes in because the picket fence is kind of the barrier to decide, you know, what is within the limits of consensus policy and what is on the other side of that.

So this slide here speaks to what policies can relate to. And I think Mary just a quick kind of qualification. When the initial report is done - is prepared by ICANN staff, I think the General Counsel actually has to identify whether the item that is being considered for policy development must fall within the remit of what's allowed within consensus policy development. Could you just confirm that please?

Mary Wong: Hi Donna. Mary again. Yes, that's correct. And that is actually specified in the issue report as well.

Donna Austin: Thanks Mary. So that's one of the check points to ensure that, you know, if an issue - if something's been requested from the - by the ALAC for development of policy, if it happens to be outside the bounds of what is contained within the bounds of what consensus policy can be developed on, then my understanding is that the General Council would inform that it's not within - it's not within the remit to be able to develop policy on that issue.

So, you know, the policies have to relate to uniform coordinated resolution, which is reasonably necessary to facilitate interoperability, technical reliability and/or stable operation of the Internet or the domain name system, registry, registrar policies reasonably necessary to Internet consensus policies relating to registries and registrars and resolution of disputes regarding the registration of domain names as opposed to the use of such domain names.

Any questions on the consensus policy part? And next slide please Nathalie. And the next slide again. So those of you who understand what a picket fence looks like - what a picket fence is - that graphic that Nathalie had up there on the screen with a picket fence. I haven't seen too many of those in Australia. I have seen a few of them in the United States. But I'm not sure that they're well understood across the globe.

But in terms of what it means in this context, the picket fence has been included in the registrar accreditation agreement and the registry agreement since ICANN's creation in 1998. It is the basis of bargain between ICANN and a contracted party.

And the picket fence describes the topics that can be the subject of consensus policies and policies that can be imposed on ICANN contracted parties with or without their agreement so long as they have been developed by the ICANN names community, the GNSO through the bottom up process described in the ICANN bylaws.

So two important points here that, you know, it has to be within the bounds of what consensus policy can be but it also has to be developed through the GNSO.

One of the probably better known examples of what a consensus policy is is the uniform dispute resolution policy, which has been in existence for quite a number of years now and of the more recent PDP efforts that will commence in the future the GNSO review of all PMs and all gTLD working groups there will be a first review of the UDRP since its operation.

So that will be interesting to see how that plays out. Because I think the UDRP has been one of those consensus policies that has been supported by registrants and registries, registrars alike. Mary, did you have anything to add on this topic.

Mary Wong: Not at this point. Thanks Donna.

Donna Austin: Okay Mary. Next slide Nathalie. And the next slide again. Thanks. I just wanted to give you - we'll go through the working group guidelines. But I just wanted to give you a sense of not the conversation but what the numbers of a working group looks like now.

And it's the - this slide and the next slide are interesting in terms of the new PDPs that have recently started. So the privacy proxy SAI, which I can never - acronyms. I hate acronyms because I can never remember which applies to the other. But there is a - there is an acronym helper that is available to everybody. So if you get stuck on what that acronyms are, just know that there's a Web site somewhere that can help you through them.

But with the PPSAI there were 81 members. And by comparison when we look at the Next Generation RDS Whois PDP Working Group, 139 members have signed up. So they're the people that will be actively engaged in the discussion and 113 observers.

So Whois has been a topic of discussion around Whois ever since I've been around and ever since most people were around. And it's become different things to different people over the last, you know, 15 or 20 years.

So this PDP working group is important because it looks to position Whois moving forward. Chuck Gomes -- many of you may have heard that name; works for VeriSign; has been in this space for many, many years -- was joking during the Marrakech meeting that this PDP will be wrapped up in three months. Chuck will be lucky if he gets this PDP wrapped up in three years.

So a lot of work, a lot of effort, a lot of dedication will be required as a result of this effort. And Nathalie, just the next one too please. So just to, you know, give you a sense of how many active participants are going to be on these other working groups as well.

A hundred and seven for the Subsequent Procedures PDP and 139 for the Review of RPMs. That doesn't mean that we've got 300 volunteers out there working on separate efforts. It probably means that there's a lot of commonality of membership across these working groups.

Man: (Total disgust) because I got 20 minutes to get to...

((Crosstalk))

Man: ...all day. (Got a good point).

Donna Austin: Just a reminder that could people mute their phones please? Thank you. So this is just illustrated just to say that, you know, the - a lot of people involved in the PDP working groups that are moving forward, it is a huge responsibility of, you know, the leadership or the Chairs of these groups to be able to

organize the work and move work forward. So we'll talk a little bit about that with next slide please Nathalie.

So this is the working group guidelines. Most of the working groups are going to operate in a similar manner. But there will be, you know, some differences along the way depending on the subject matter that's being discussed, the number of people that are in the groups, the way that the work of the group is organized.

So, you know, roles and responsibilities are important. So I recently joined the Subsequent Procedures PDP and I'm an observer on the Next Generation RDS Working Group. They went through two different processes to elect their leadership teams.

So the RDS team has a Chair and I think three co-Chairs or three Vice Chairs. And they were selected by simply through nomination on the mailing list general agreement support for those names that were put forward. And it was a reasonably easy process to select a leadership team.

And then with the Subsequent Procedures PDP a quite different process in that we have three co-Chairs and some of those are self-nomination. But again it was, you know, general consensus among the - a mailing list of how we got to the - to identify who the leadership team was.

And just - on the - I just want to clarify something with the RDS. There was I think some kind of doodle poll for the Chair position. I'm just not sure how that - they may have that worked out. But just understand that there is a process to identify who your leaders of the - who your Chair will be or your co-Chairs will be and each working group will probably do that a little bit differently.

Again, sub teams, briefings, subject matter experts. So the way that you - the work is broken up will have some impact on whether you have sub teams and the way that you manage your work.

The methodology I think, you know, certainly says that the Next Generation RDS Working Group has been through a process of trying to work out how they're going to manage the body of work because it is a significant piece of work.

And the Subsequent Procedures are kind of going through that administrative process as well to understand how they're going to break out their work. But it's very different when - if you- if you're looking at the two groups, it's very different in the way that they will fall out.

I think, you know, in terms of how the working groups operate it's really important the aspect of respectful behavior. Everybody's going to have a different point of view. You're not always going to be - everybody's not going to have the same opinion.

So just, you know, bear in mind that you can be - there are ways that you can make your points not - that you can make your respective points but just be respectful that there are people that are not going to share your views.

It doesn't mean that at the end of the day that their views are going to be taken into account over yours. The process works really well in terms of coalescing ideas and getting to consensus.

And I'd have to say that the Chairs of the two working groups that I've been mentioning are very well seasoned in doing that. And so if you're in either one of those working groups, you're in really good hands.

Mary, anything else you'd like to add on this one that I might have skipped over?

Mary Wong: Donna, there was a question that I think I answered at least partly in Adobe Connect about a method or rationale behind the format for choosing working group leadership.

And I just wanted to follow up on (Gangesh)'s last comment that, you know, it may seem to some folks that around ICANN and the GNSO particularly that there are a lot of rules and processes.

And to be honest, there are. But I think we'd like to think that there are very good reasons for those. And then there are certain things which others outside the ICANN community might expect there to be, you know, strict rules and they're aren't.

And where those are the case, I think it's really because that's sort of the beauty as well the essence of the ICANN model that it is about consensus building. And that in the GNSO the policy that come out of the GNSO comes through the working groups and through the working groups working bottom up through consensus.

So just linking this back to your points about the Chairs and the question that (Gangesh) asked that it really is up to each working group. And Donna, as you noted, the methods have varied and they have usually -- actually always I would say -- be the methods that seemed to be most suitable for that particular working group at that point in time either because of the workload that that group is facing.

So a particular group may only need one Chair and perhaps one or two Vice Chairs. Another group might realize that it requires a full leadership team and maybe this should be co-Chairs especially as in the Subsequent Procedures Working Group that Donna mentioned.

Just as a very recent example, the nominations were of several individuals who have different (so forms) of experience and who formed a very good and capable team.

So the last point that I would note is that, you know, just as formerly a community participate before I joined ICANN staff and now as an ICANN staff member, just looking at the dynamics of the different working groups it is pretty interesting that even with the same framework of rules that the things that they need to work out are obviously quite different but the methods themselves are quite different as well.

And Donna, I think this goes to your earlier point about the good faith with which everybody approaches their work in those working groups. So I just wanted to highlight that. Thank you.

Donna Austin: Thanks Mary. Nathalie, next slide please. So standard methodologies for decision making. So we're just kind of going over the fact that, you know, each working group will work out its own method of operation. But I think the important point is when they come down to deciding on recommendations.

So there are meanings around full consensus, consensus, strong support but significant opposition, divergence and minority view. So I think that's probably the commonality in terms of when you - the issues report will follow a certain template. And the final report will also follow the same template.

So your documents are templated in a similar way. So if you've seen one issues report, you can expect the next issues report that you read will follow the same format. And the same goes for the, you know, the final report as well.

But the method by which they got to putting text on paper is going to be different. But these - the designations here in relation to full consensus,

consensus, strong support, they will have the same meanings across the different working groups.

And as Mary said, you know, what the aim is here to get to full consensus. It's not always possible to do that. And it's - I think Mary and I might need your clarification on this but generally, you know, recommendations with full consensus or consensus will get over the line. Strong support but significant opposition are going to be maybe a little bit tenuous.

But the working group will have done its due diligence to get to understand what there points of commonality are and how to distinguish between the different levels of support.

Mary Wong: Donna, this is Mary again. And that's absolutely right. These different levels of support are further defined in the working group guidelines but it would be a four-hour Webinar though to take us through every single page of those guidelines.

But it is important to designate which of the final proposals that a working group considers got full consensus, which did not and which maybe got divergence.

There is room in a final report to also record say minority positions. And again, that's just for the full transparency of the record as well as to allow the Council because all these final recommendations do go back to the Council and the Council then votes whether or not to adopt all or some of those recommendations.

And as Donna has noted, where a working group has reached full consensus, which effectively is unanimous consensus, the Council having just basically checked that all the processes have been duly followed basically say this is the consensus will of the bottom up community. And I don't recall a time

where the Council questioned those full consensus or even some consensus recommendations.

Where you have divergent recommendations or even the ones of strong support but significant opposition however, the Council often chooses not to vote or adopt those. I hope that helps Donna. And apologies for the phone ringing in the background.

Donna Austin: Thanks Mary. Nathalie, could you go to the next slide please? So we're almost at the end of the presentation here. And we have a slide with additional tips.

So as I said before, acronyms you will need the helper if this is new territory for you because there are so many acronyms; so, so many acronyms. I don't know that there's any duplication of acronyms. There has to be. So if you're uncertain about what something means, go to the GNSO home page and find the acronym helper.

You can also learn more about ICANN from the link that is provided there and more about the GNSO. You know, if you're feeling - if you're feeling uncertain about what's happening with the - in a working group, you can reach out the Mary and the Policy Team to - if you've got any questions about what happens next or I don't understand what's happened here, they can provide you with support and clarification.

I think you'll generally find that the leadership team of any working group will also be responsive to any questions that you ask. One of the things with the (learning lesson) -- I've done this myself -- it doesn't always look like that your input is being read or understood by people because people don't necessarily respond to it.

But I can assure you that the leadership teams of these working groups are reading through every email that comes through, every discussion that's happening on the list.

An important point here. Look up your fellow SOI to - so your statement of interest and I don't think I've touched on the statement of interest. When you join a working group you have to submit a statement of interest. And there is a template and information that can help you fill that out.

And it's - an important piece of information. If you're joining a working group and you want to understand where the interest of the other members of the working group lie, so it's a good indicator of, you know, if some of these are going strongly in favor of one point and you don't understand why they're pushing so hard for something, if you go to the SOI and understand where they come from or what their affiliation is, it might give you some insight as to why they're pushing a certain position.

And I'm not using, you know, push a certain position to suggest that there's anything wrong with that. We all do it because we all, you know. One thing I found with most - anything to do with ICANN, most people participate because they have a dog in the fight, which means that there is something that is of great interest to them so they want to be involved in any discussion around it and any potential outcome.

The conference call agenda and key points. So one of the things that's important to be able to keep up with what's happening in the working group is to do your own due diligence. Do the reading that's required.

If this is something that's really important to you, make sure you've read the, you know, the issue report to start with, the charter that Mary referred to, any other documents that may be out there that can help you understand how we got to this point and what the issues are that are being discussed. So it's

important that you do your own due diligence because that benefits you. It also benefits the working group as a whole.

One of the things that I have - being from Australia I'm actually currently based in Los Angeles. So time zones aren't that so difficult for me anymore. But very respectful of time zones.

And one of the other things that you'll get into early in a working group is you need to set up the call rotation times. And generally what you will find is that the majority of the working group comes from Europe or North America. And there will be deference paid to those, you know, having conference calls during times that suit the majority.

If you are from Asia Pacific or one of those regions that you don't think you've been treated fairly, push. That's all I can say. Don't be afraid to raise your hand and say this isn't - this is important to me. I want to contribute. Can we please reconsider the time zones for the timing for the calls?

Always observe the ICANN's expected standards of behavior. By all means, you know, be an advocate for your positions but be respectful of the others within the group that you're working with.

This is, you know, the working group experience. And as I said, I haven't participated in a PDP before but I have recent experience with the CWG on IANA transition and also the Meeting Strategy Working Group.

This does get messy. It seems really difficult at times that you are going to get to an outcome. But there are some really (decent) performance in this community that will work towards achieving consensus and they do an excellent job of getting working groups to that point.

So be respectful of the others in your group and trust in the process. If there's one thing that I can ask you to do, it really is trust in the process because

regardless of how complicated, messy and unwieldy it seems at the time, it works. I don't know how but it does. It works.

So that's probably all I have with three minutes before the end of the hour. So I apologize for taking so much time and not leaving room for questions. But Mary and her team are always there to provide assistance. Your leadership teams in the working groups will do the same. And generally the other members of your working group will be happy to help you out as well.

So I think Mary if you have anything to add, please do so. If anyone else has any questions, please raise your hand.

Mary Wong: Thanks Donna. And not at all. I think that was very thorough and informative. And we did get some questions in chat. Since we have two minutes left, if there's anyone who does have a question and would like to ask it, if you could please raise your hand, we could probably un-mute you if that is the case. And I see that someone is typing in the Adobe chat and we'll try to get to your question if you're typing it in the next two minutes.

While we're waiting, Donna, I just to, of course, thank you very much again and also echo what you've said that somehow the process does work. Certainly from the ICANN side, from the policy team, we feel that our roles are here to facilitate the consensus development especially when it comes to developing gTLD policy.

So as we said at the beginning and Donna, thank you for noting again towards the end of your presentation, we are here to help at any time with any questions or any need for assistance you may have.

And I don't see any hands nor do I hear anyone on the line. So on that note, again, thank you very much Donna for sharing you experiences and for taking everyone through the GNSO policy development process, explaining what it might be like to take part in one and join a GNSO working group.

And we on your and the rest of the Council's behalf will look forward to working with everyone in your respective working groups. Thank you all very much. And operator, we can now stop the recording.

END