

ALAC Comments on Final Draft Report of the ALAC Review Working Group

The ALAC is generally pleased with and supportive of the draft report. We are particularly pleased that the Working Group (WG) understood and acknowledged that the ALAC has a role far wider than just gTLDs – a position that has not been well understood during the entire GNSO restructuring effort.

This support notwithstanding, we do have a few specific comments.

Planning: There is no doubt that the ALAC must be more effective in planning, and that this planning should be linked to the ICANN Strategic and Operational Plans. However, we caution the WG not to push this integration too far. Just as with the other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees, the main ALAC focus must be on policy, and much of this is going to be linked to varying issues-of-the-day. There is no point in the ALAC spending much of its valuable time on planning if there is no time left to actually do anything.

Finances: We support the tying activities and their results to their costs. Only through mechanisms such as that can we aim for cost-effective activities and structures. We look forward to being in a position to work with ICANN staff on implementing this.

Board Seats: While we fully support the concept of replacing the current ALAC Liaison with two voting Board seats, we must make it clear that the mechanism by which these Board members are chosen will be critical to success. Today's Board members do not "represent" the organizations that select them, but they are selected by those organizations because of a belief that the Supporting Organization and the prospective Board member share a "world view" of things. While the model used by the today's Supporting Organizations may not be the one that is suitable for At-Large, it will be essential for the ALAC to be sufficiently engaged in the process so as to ensure good ongoing communications between the ALAC and the Board.

Skills and Competencies: Although not discussed directly in the report, one area that needs to be addressed is that of ALAC skills and competencies. Since the majority of ALAC members are chosen by RALOs to best meet their needs, the ALAC has minimal control over the skills they have. As a result, we are often lacking the skills that we need. Examples include skills and competencies associated with planning; running a meeting; and running a working group. Any suggestion from the WG on structural or other changes needed to address this problem would be welcome.

Implementation: While we agree with many of the WG's comments and recommendations, we also consider them to be a significant expansion of the ALAC's functions and responsibilities and stress that if they are to be achieved then they must be adequately resourced, and that those resources must be provided in a timely manner. We ask the WG to recommend to the board that budget be put aside so the WG's recommendations can be implemented in a timely manner and there is no need to wait for a future budget and/or planning cycle.