

# GNSO Operating Procedures

## ANNEX 1: GNSO Working Group Guidelines

### Section 1.0: General

#### 1.1 Purpose

The objective of this document is to assist Working Groups to optimize productivity and effectiveness by providing a set of guidelines, checklists, templates, and other 'best practice' materials that they may consider and/or utilize, as appropriate, in the process of establishing the WG and throughout its life cycle.

#### 1.2 Intended Audience

This document is intended to inform the (potential) members of Working Groups that have been created or are in the process of being created by the GNSO or another Chartering Organization<sup>1</sup> to achieve or accomplish one or more objectives or outcomes. It should be noted that the manner in which the output of a WG defined by these guidelines is used is not determined by these guidelines, but rather is determined by the charter of the WG and, if applicable, the relevant ICANN Bylaw definitions such as the Policy Development Process.

While the document is the outcome of an effort started in response to the GNSO reorganization, the guidelines are meant to be applicable to other chartering organizations; hence, reference is made to Chartering Organization or CO as opposed to GNSO Council throughout this document.

#### 1.3 Revisions

As further experience is developed in the management, operation and practice of Working Groups, it is intended that this document will be updated when appropriate. Any proposals for updates or changes should be submitted to the GNSO Council for consideration (please contact the [GNSO Secretariat](#) for further information).

The GNSO Council should commit to the annual review of these documents to ensure that documents stay up-to-date.

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines can also be used when several organizations want to charter a joint working group, such as has been done in the Cross-Community Working Groups (CWG).

## **Section 2.0: Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 Introductions and Working Group Formation**

#### **2.1.1 Announcement of a Working Group**

After a decision has been taken to form a Working Group, it is important to circulate a ‘Call For Volunteers’ as widely as possible in order to ensure broad representation and participation in the Working Group. Depending upon the scope of the Working Group and its intended subject matter, the following avenues could be explored:

- Publication of announcement on relevant ICANN web sites, including by not limited to the GNSO and other Supporting Organization and Advisory Committee web pages.
- Distribution of announcement to GNSO Stakeholder Groups, Constituencies, and/or other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees.
- Circulation of announcement to organizations that are considered to have expertise/knowledge/interest in relation to the subject matter of the Working Group.
- One-to-one outreach from either the GNSO Chair or the Interim WG Chair to the Chair of other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees either known to have an interest in the subject, or those where it is felt that their input into the discussions will be valuable. Individuals known to be knowledgeable or interested could be similarly approached.

Ideally, the ‘Call For Volunteers’ announcement should include the following types of information about the Working Group: its objective(s), expectations concerning activities and timeframes, links to relevant background information including its charter, details on how to sign up as a participant, and the requirement to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI). In addition, a Chartering Organization (CO) might want to include some statement as to the importance of the activity, that is, why the effort is being undertaken, its criticality, context, and perceived usefulness to the GNSO. While a WG may not "need to know" these elements in order to complete their tasks, it could help in recruitment and sense of purpose. In addition, the announcement should include a link to these Working Group Guidelines as well as any other instructions or information that might be applicable to that particular Working Group.

#### **2.1.2 Membership Applications**

The Chartering Organization Secretariat or their representative, herein after referred as the Secretariat, will be tasked to gather expressions of interest to participate in a WG. Following the submission of an expression of interest, the Secretariat will verify that the submission has been received from a ‘real person.’ If the expression of interest has been made on behalf of a company or organization, a primary point of contact and alternate will be required in order to be eligible for WG membership.

Upon completion of the ‘real person’ verification, the Secretariat will send a confirmation of receipt together with a request for a Statement of Interest (SOI), according to GNSO Operating Procedures, [Chapter 5.0](#), and a link to these Working Group Guidelines.

### **Appeals Process**

If concerns about the completeness and/or accuracy of a Statement of Interest persist after reasonable attempts are made to resolve them with the Relevant Party, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the applicable Chair and handled according to decision-making methodology and appeal process as prescribed in Sections 3.6 and 3.7.

### 2.1.3 Planning the First Meeting

The responsible ICANN Staff member will coordinate with the Chair, Interim Chair or Chartering Organization (as appropriate) on the timing and proposed agenda for the first meeting of the WG. In addition, the ICANN Staff member is expected to provide the members of the WG with the relevant background information, including any relevant historical data, and recommended materials for review prior to the first meeting, including, but not limited to, a link to these Working Group Guidelines.

Once a date and time has been identified, the Secretariat will send out the call-in details to all the members of the WG.

### 2.1.4 First Meeting of the Working Group

#### 2.1.4.1 Introductions

For team-building purposes, to understand its resources and capabilities and, potentially, to help with prospective assignments, members of the Working Group should be provided with the opportunity, at the start of the first meeting, to share information regarding interests, background, skills, experience, especially as related to any requirements in the Charter.

Members of the Working Group should be informed that all Working Groups are normally expected to operate under the principles of transparency and openness, which means, *inter alia*, that mailing lists are publicly archived, meetings are normally recorded and/or transcribed, and SOIs are required from Working Group participants which will be publicly posted.

#### 2.1.4.2 Election of the WG Leaders

Unless a Chair has already been named by the Chartering Organization, normally a Chair will be selected at the first meeting of the WG. Until that time, the Chartering Organization's liaison may fulfill the role of interim Chair. A Working Group may elect to have Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Under extraordinary circumstances, ICANN staff may be requested to perform administrative coordination of the WG until such time a Chair can be appointed. Once selected, a Working Group Chair will need to be confirmed by the Chartering Organization (CO). The newly elected Chair will act on a provisional basis until the Chartering Organization has confirmed the appointment. If there are any objections to the selected Chair, the CO will conduct a vote to establish whether there is sufficient support for the selected Chair according to the voting procedures of the CO. If not, the Working Group will be requested to reconsider their choice for Chair and return to the CO with a new proposal.

In the unlikely event that the selected Chair is rejected by the CO, the CO must articulate its reason for the rejection and the WG must be able to ask for reconsideration of the decision.

### 2.1.4.3 Items for Review

At the first meeting of the WG or as soon thereafter as practicable, the following documents should be reviewed in order to ensure all members have a common understanding of the WG's mission, goals, objectives, deliverables, decision-making process and timeframes: Charter, Working Group Guidelines and any other documents relevant for the WG's discussion (e.g., Policy Development Process Guidebook, Issues Paper). These documents are normally transmitted to the WG prior to the first meeting. It is required that WGs develop a work plan that outlines the necessary steps and expected timing in order to achieve the milestones set out in the WG Charter. If a WG does not develop a work plan, it will need to provide a justification to the Chartering Organization.

The WG Chair may use the checklist (see [Addendum](#)) for further details.

## 2.2 Working Group Member Roles and Responsibilities

The following is a description of standard WG roles. Typically, the Charter will outline the desired qualities and skills a WG Chair should possess, the role and name of the official liaison to the Chartering Organization, and any key Staff or other experts assigned to the WG. Any additional roles that are not included here should be listed in the WG Charter, including a description and minimal set of functions/duties to the extent that the chartering organization might wish to specify them.

A suggested procedure to conduct elections may be:

- Nominations or self-nominations;
- Statements of qualifications from candidates, which sets forth the qualifications, qualities and experience that they possess that will serve the particular WG;
- Vote by simple majority;
- Notification of and subsequent confirmation by the Chartering Organization of results of actions.

### 2.2.1 Chair

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. The Chair should underscore the importance of achieving overall representational balance on any sub-teams that are formed. The Chair should make it clear that participation on sub-teams is open to all and he/she should encourage representational balance to the degree possible. However, it should be understood that there will not always be volunteers from every interest group and that it is often acceptable to have a small sub-team that is not totally representational perform an initial role that will later be reviewed by a broader more representational group. In those cases where initially there is insufficient balance, the Chair should make a special outreach effort to those groups not represented. In all cases where the Chair believes that one set of interests or expertise is missing from a group, special efforts must be made to bring that interest or expertise into the group via invitation or other method and the situation must be documented in the final report, including a discussion

of the efforts made to redress the balance. Additionally, the Chair should ensure that particular outreach efforts are made when community reviews are done of the group's output, to include reviews from the interests or expertise that were not adequately represented. The Chair should always encourage and, where necessary, enforce the ICANN Standards of Behavior (see [3.0 Norms](#)).

### 2.2.2 Co-Chairs or Vice-Chairs

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.

### 2.2.3 Secretary

Note taker and recorder of the WG's activities (Note: this role could also be fulfilled by ICANN Staff).

### 2.2.4 Liaison

A Member of the Chartering Organization (CO) may be appointed to serve as a Liaison to the Working Group. The role of the Liaison consists of reporting to the CO on a regular basis on the progress of the Working Group; assisting the Chair as required with his/her knowledge of WG processes and practices; taking back to the CO any questions or queries the WG might have in relation to its charter and mission; and, assisting or intervening when the WG faces challenges or problems. The liaison is expected to fulfill the liaison role in neutral manner, monitor the discussions of the Working Group and assist and inform the Chair and the WG as required.

### 2.2.5 Members

WG members as a whole are expected to participate, contribute and drive the work of the group. It is the responsibility of the WG members to make sure that any initial drafts represent as much of the diversity of views as possible. This may be done by either asking multiple WG members to contribute text that may be assembled with the help of staff, or for a drafting subgroup to be established to produce such an initial draft. While staff may be asked to help in assembling initial drafts, the WG is responsible for driving the work. Examples of member responsibilities include:

- Develop and draft working-group documents;
- Contribute ideas and knowledge to working group discussions;
- Act as liaisons between the Working Group and their respective stakeholder groups or constituencies;
- Ensure that stakeholder group or constituency statements are developed in an informed and timely way; and
- Actively and constructively participate in the consensus decision making process.

### 2.2.6 Staff

ICANN Staff performs the following two basic functions for any WG, namely secretariat (fundamentally a support function covering logistics) and policy liaison (a support function providing WG assistance in a

neutral manner, including drafting, if required, which should reflect faithfully the deliberations of the Working Group). In addition, workload permitting, ICANN Staff may perform the following distinct roles for a WG as requested and appropriate:

- Expertise (technical, legal, economic, etc.);
- Operational/Implementation (facilitation with the framework of existing policies and rules);
- Scoping (for policy matters, internal role of the General Counsel, but possibly distinct, guaranteeing respect of the procedures and competencies of the different structures); or
- Liaison with other Staff or experts.

### **2.3 Use of Sub-Teams**

The WG may decide to employ sub-teams as an efficient means of delegating topics or assignments to be completed. Sub-team members need to have a clear understanding of issues they work on as well as the results to be achieved. The members of sub-teams report their results to whole working group for review and approval. The WG should indicate whether or not it would like to have meetings of the sub-team recorded and/or transcribed.

Any member of the WG may serve on any sub-team; however, depending upon the specific tasks to be accomplished, the Chair should ensure that the sub-team is properly balanced with the appropriate skills and resources to ensure successful completion. It is recommended that the sub-team appoints a coordinator who heads up the sub-team and is responsible for providing regular progress updates to the Working Group. There is no need for formal confirmation by the CO or WG of such a coordinator.

The lifespan of a sub-team should not extend beyond that of the Working Group.

**Decisions made by sub-teams should always be shared with the larger working group and a call for consensus must be made by the entire WG.**

## **Section 3.0: Norms**

### **3.1 Participation**

Members of a WG are expected to be active participants, either on the WG mailing lists and/or in the WG meetings, although some might opt to take an observer approach (monitor mailing lists and/or meetings). The WG Chair is expected to make an assessment at the start of every meeting whether a sufficient number of WG members are present to proceed with the meeting and discussions. A sufficient number has not been defined in exact numbers in this context, but should be understood as having a representative number of WG members present. For example, the Chair may decide that there is not a sufficient number of WG present to make decisions, but that there is a sufficient number of WG members to have initial discussions on a certain issue and following those initial discussions encourage members on the mailing list to share their views before a decision is made at a subsequent meeting. An attendance record will be kept of every WG meeting.

If there is lack of participation resulting in meetings being cancelled and/or decisions being postponed, the Chair is expected to explore the reasons (e.g. issues with the schedule of meetings, conflict with other activities or priorities) and attempt to address them (e.g. review meeting schedule). If there is no obvious way to address the situation, the Chair should approach the Chartering Organization, Stakeholder Groups, or Constituencies for assistance (e.g. request for additional volunteers to the WG) on whether there is sufficient interest from the community to continue or whether the work should be delayed.

### **3.2 Representativeness**

Ideally, a Working Group should mirror the diversity and representativeness of the community by having representatives from most, if not all, CO Stakeholder Groups and/or Constituencies. It should be noted that certain issues might be more of interest to one part of the community than others. The Chair, in cooperation with the Secretariat and ICANN Staff, is continually expected to assess whether the WG has sufficiently broad representation, and if not, which groups should be approached to encourage participation. Similarly, if the Chair is of the opinion that there is over-representation to the point of capture, he/she should inform the Chartering Organization.

### **3.3 Process Integrity**

WGs are encouraged to focus and tailor their work efforts to achieve the identified goals of the Charter. While minimum attendance and participation requirements are not explicitly recommended, a Chair is expected, as outlined above, to take the necessary measures to ensure that all WG members have an opportunity to provide their input on issues and decisions. WG members should be mindful that, once input/comment periods have been closed, discussions or decisions should not be resurrected unless there is group consensus that the issue should be revisited in light of new information that has been introduced. If the reopening is perceived as abusive or dilatory, a WG member may appeal to the Chair (see Section 3.7).

Members are expected to participate faithfully in the WG's process (e.g., attending meetings, providing input OR monitoring discussions) and should formally withdraw if they find that they can no longer meet this expectation. Working group members may request a review by the Chair if a member disrupts the work or decision-making of the group as a result of inconsistent participation. It should be noted that

there are no rules or requirements as to what constitutes sufficient or adequate ‘participation;’ this is an assessment that each WG member should make individually.

Public comments received as a result of a public comment forum held in relation to the activities of the WG should be carefully considered and analyzed. In addition, the WG is encouraged to explain their rationale for agreeing or disagreeing with the different comments received and, if appropriate, how these will be addressed in the report of the WG.

### 3.4 Individual/Group Behavior and Norms

ICANN’s Expected Standards of Behavior are outlined in the ICANN Accountability and Transparency Framework, see <http://www.icann.org/transparency/acct-trans-frameworks-principles-10jan08.pdf> for further details.<sup>2</sup>

If a WG member feels that these standards are being abused, the affected party should appeal first to the Chair and Liaison and, if unsatisfactorily resolved, to the Chair of the Chartering Organization or their designated representative. It is important to emphasize that expressed disagreement is not, by itself, grounds for abusive behavior. It should also be taken into account that as a result of cultural differences and language barriers, statements may appear disrespectful or inappropriate to some but are not necessarily intended as such. However, it is expected that WG members make every effort to respect the principles outlined in ICANN’s Expected Standards of Behavior as referenced above.

### 3.5 Rules of Engagement

This section contains procedures for handling any member that is perceived to be persistently and continually obstructing the Working Group’s efforts.

The Chair, in consultation with the Chartering Organization liaison(s), is empowered to restrict the participation of someone who seriously disrupts the Working Group. Any such restriction will be reviewed by the Chartering Organization. Generally, the participant should first be warned privately, and then warned publicly before such a restriction is put into place. In extreme circumstances, this requirement may be bypassed. This restriction is subject to the right of appeal as outlined in Section 3.7.

### 3.6 Standard Methodology for Making Decisions

The Chair will be responsible for designating each position as having one of the following designations:

- **Full consensus** - when no one in the group speaks against the recommendation in its last readings. This is also sometimes referred to as **Unanimous Consensus**.
- **Consensus** - a position where only a small minority disagrees, but most agree<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Other best practices that can be considered include the ‘Statement on Respectful Online Communication’, see [http://www.odr.info/comments.php?id=A1767\\_0\\_1\\_0\\_C](http://www.odr.info/comments.php?id=A1767_0_1_0_C).

<sup>3</sup> For those that are unfamiliar with ICANN usage, you may associate the definition of ‘Consensus’ with other definitions and terms of art such as rough consensus or near consensus. It should be noted, however, that in the case of a GNSO PDP originated Working Group, all reports, especially Final Reports, must restrict themselves to the term ‘Consensus’ as this may have legal implications.



- **Strong support but significant opposition** - a position where, while most of the group supports a recommendation, there are a significant number of those who do not support it.
- **Divergence** (also referred to as **No Consensus**) - a position where there isn't strong support for any particular position, but many different points of view. Sometimes this is due to irreconcilable differences of opinion and sometimes it is due to the fact that no one has a particularly strong or convincing viewpoint, but the members of the group agree that it is worth listing the issue in the report nonetheless.
- **Minority View** - refers to a proposal where a small number of people support the recommendation. This can happen in response to a **Consensus**, **Strong support but significant opposition**, and **No Consensus**; or, it can happen in cases where there is neither support nor opposition to a suggestion made by a small number of individuals.

In cases of **Consensus**, **Strong support but significant opposition**, and **No Consensus**, an effort should be made to document that variance in viewpoint and to present any **Minority View** recommendations that may have been made. Documentation of **Minority View** recommendations normally depends on text offered by the proponent(s). In all cases of **Divergence**, the WG Chair should encourage the submission of minority viewpoint(s).

The recommended method for discovering the consensus level designation on recommendations should work as follows:

- i. After the group has discussed an issue long enough for all issues to have been raised, understood and discussed, the Chair, or Co-Chairs, make an evaluation of the designation and publish it for the group to review.
- ii. After the group has discussed the Chair's estimation of designation, the Chair, or Co-Chairs, should reevaluate and publish an updated evaluation.
- iii. Steps (i) and (ii) should continue until the Chair/Co-Chairs make an evaluation that is accepted by the group.
- iv. In rare case, a Chair may decide that the use of polls is reasonable. Some of the reasons for this might be:
  - A decision needs to be made within a time frame that does not allow for the natural process of iteration and settling on a designation to occur.
  - It becomes obvious after several iterations that it is impossible to arrive at a designation. This will happen most often when trying to discriminate between **Consensus** and **Strong support but Significant Opposition** or between **Strong support but Significant Opposition** and **Divergence**.

Care should be taken in using polls that they do not become votes. A liability with the use of polls is that, in situations where there is **Divergence** or **Strong Opposition**, there are often disagreements about the meanings of the poll questions or of the poll results.

Based upon the WG's needs, the Chair may direct that WG participants do not have to have their name explicitly associated with any Full Consensus or Consensus view/position. However, in all other cases

and in those cases where a group member represents the minority viewpoint, their name must be explicitly linked, especially in those cases where polls were taken.

If a Chartering Organization wishes to deviate from the standard methodology for making decisions or empower the WG to decide its own decision-making methodology it should be affirmatively stated in the WG Charter.

Consensus calls should always involve the entire Working Group and, for this reason, should take place on the designated mailing list to ensure that all Working Group members have the opportunity to fully participate in the consensus process. It is the role of the Chair to designate which level of consensus is reached and announce this designation to the Working Group. Member(s) of the Working Group should be able to challenge the designation of the Chair as part of the Working Group discussion. However, if disagreement persists, members of the WG may use the process set forth below to challenge the designation.

If several participants<sup>4</sup> in a WG disagree with the designation given to a position by the Chair or any other consensus call, they may follow these steps sequentially:

1. Send email to the Chair, copying the WG explaining why the decision is believed to be in error.
2. If the Chair still disagrees with the complainants, the Chair will forward the appeal to the CO liaison(s). The Chair must explain his or her reasoning in the response to the complainants and in the submission to the liaison. If the liaison(s) supports the Chair's position, the liaison(s) will provide their response to the complainants. The liaison(s) must explain their reasoning in the response. If the CO liaison disagrees with the Chair, the liaison will forward the appeal to the CO. Should the complainants disagree with the liaison support of the Chair's determination, the complainants may appeal to the Chair of the CO or their designated representative. If the CO agrees with the complainants' position, the CO should recommend remedial action to the Chair.
3. In the event of any appeal, the CO will attach a statement of the appeal to the WG and/or Board report. This statement should include all of the documentation from all steps in the appeals process and should include a statement from the CO.<sup>5</sup>

### **3.7 Appeal Process**

Any WG member that believes that his/her contributions are being systematically ignored or discounted or wants to appeal a decision of the WG or CO should first discuss the circumstances with the WG Chair. In the event that the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the WG member should request an

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<sup>4</sup> Any Working Group member may raise an issue for reconsideration; however, a formal appeal will require that a single member demonstrates a sufficient amount of support for initiating an appeal before the formal process outlined in Section 3.7 can be invoked. In those cases where a single Working Group member is seeking reconsideration, the member will advise the Chair and/or Liaison of their issue and the Chair and/or Liaison will work with the dissenting member to investigate the issue and to determine if there is sufficient support for the reconsideration to initial the appeal process set forth in Section 3.7.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that ICANN also has other conflict resolution mechanisms available that could be considered in case any of the parties are dissatisfied with the outcome of this process.

opportunity to discuss the situation with the Chair of the Chartering Organization or their designated representative.

In addition, if any member of the WG is of the opinion that someone is not performing their role according to the criteria outlined in Section 2.2 of this document, the same appeals process may be invoked.

## **Section 4.0: Logistics and Requirements**

### **4.1 Session Planning – General Meeting Logistics**

The Chair will normally work with ICANN Staff and/or the Secretariat to coordinate the logistics for the WG meetings. Online tools are available that may be used to find a day and time convenient for most WG participants. It should be noted, however, that scheduling tools should follow the preference of the majority and accommodate those that are in different time zones. Alternating meeting times should be considered as an option if the same members of the WG are always ‘inconvenienced’ by a standing meeting time. WGs should decide how often they would like to meet (e.g., weekly, every two weeks) and for how long (e.g., 1 hour, 1.5 hours).

The Secretariat is responsible for communicating the timing and dial-in details for meetings that take place by conference call. Universal Standard Time (UTC) is used as a standard reference (local times can be found using [www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com)). Dial out support and/or toll free numbers, when available, will be provided to WG members to facilitate participation. Additionally, to facilitate remote participation and sharing of documents, WGs may make use of various online connect services. As described above, meetings are normally recorded and transcribed.

There is a presumption of full transparency in all WGs. In the extraordinary event that the WG should require confidentiality, it is up to that WG to propose a set of rules and procedures in collaboration with the CO.

WGs may opt to organize face-to-face meetings during ICANN meetings to take advantage of those members attending and to open its session to the broader ICANN community. It should be noted that not all WG members may attend an ICANN meeting, a factor that should be weighed in deciding whether to arrange a face-to-face session. Best efforts should be made to provide remote participation facilities for those not attending an ICANN meeting in person.

Apart from face-to-face sessions during ICANN meetings, WGs might decide that it is vital for its deliberations and/or reaching consensus to meet in person for a certain amount of time (e.g., day, two days). If funding is required to organize such a meeting (e.g., travel expenses), a request should be made to the Chartering Organization for approval with as much advance notice as possible<sup>6</sup>.

A WG may request additional tools or applications if considered necessary to achieve the objectives set out in its Charter.

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<sup>6</sup> Please note that the ICANN Budget is finalized and approved in advance of each fiscal year so if general funds are not available for a need like this, it may be difficult to obtain funding.

The Chair, with support of ICANN Staff, if required, is expected to circulate the draft agenda to the WG ideally at least 24 hours in advance. At the start of a meeting, the Chair should review the agenda and any proposed changes to that agenda.

Following the meeting, an MP3 recording and/or transcript will be made available for those who were not able to attend and/or other interested parties. In addition, a WG may consider using action items and/or notes from the meeting to record the main decisions or follow-up items from a meeting. The action items or meeting notes should be circulated in a timely manner in order to allow for sufficient preparation or response ahead of the next meeting.

## **4.2 Communication/Collaboration Tools**

Each Working Group will have a dedicated mailing list. Working Group mailing lists are publicly archived (e.g., on the GNSO web site (<http://gnsso.icann.org>)). In addition, WGs may make use of collaborative workspaces such as Wikis (see <https://community.icann.org>). WGs are free to make use of different document formats, but it might be helpful to come to an agreement, in advance, to ensure that all members are able to work with them.

## **4.3 Translation**

ICANN uses the following [translation principles](#):

ICANN will provide timely and accurate translations, and move from an organization that provides translation of texts to one that is capable of communicating comfortably with a range of different languages. The translation framework comprises a four-layer system:

- The bottom layer contains those specific documents and publications that address the organization's overall strategic thinking. They will be translated into an agreed block of languages.
- The next layer contains a class of documents that ICANN undertakes to provide in different languages to allow interaction within ICANN processes by non-English speakers.
- The third layer comprises documents suggested by ICANN staff as being helpful or necessary in ongoing processes; and documents requested by the Internet community for the same reasons. These documents will be run through a translation approval system.
- The top layer is where the community is encouraged to use online collaborative tools to provide understandable versions of ICANN materials as well as material dynamically generated by the community itself. ICANN will provide the technology for community editing and rating, and a clear and predictable online location for this interaction to occur. It will also seek input from the community to review the tools.

English will remain the operating language of ICANN for business consultation and legal purposes.

Every effort will be made to ensure equity between comments made in languages other than English and those made in English. If it is not possible to arrange the release of particular documents in the agreed

languages at the same time, then each language will be provided with the same time period in which to make comments.

ICANN will adopt the International Organisation for Standardisation's 639-2 naming system for identifying and labeling particular languages.

#### **4.4 Briefings and Subject Matter Experts**

If the WG determines that it needs additional educational briefings occurring upfront or as issues emerge during deliberations, it should identify its specific requests to the CO including subject matter(s), type(s) of expertise, objectives, and costs. If additional costs are involved, prior approval must be obtained from the CO.

Additionally, a WG may, at any stage throughout its deliberations, decide to seek input from self-formed groups and/or individuals with the aim of further informing WG members about matters that fall within the remit of the WG and which are of interest to the ICANN community.

#### **Section 5.0: Products and Outputs**

The products and outputs of a Working Group may be prescribed by the Charter such as a report, recommendations, guidelines, self-assessment or defined by the process under which the WG operates (e.g., Policy Development Process). In addition, the Working Group might decide that additional products or outputs are required in order to carry out its Charter in an efficient and productive manner such as a statement of work or a project plan. Working Groups should be encouraged to review products and outputs from other WGs and/or consult with ICANN Staff to decide what additional products or outputs would be advisable to develop. Links to some examples of products and outputs produced by other GNSO Working Groups can be found hereunder:

- Initial Report – [IRTP Part A WG Initial Report](#)
- Final Report – [GNSO Final Report on Domain Tasting](#)
- Public Comment Review Sheet – [Fast Flux Public Comments Review](#)
- Recommendations/Guidelines – [New gTLDs Principles, Recommendations & Implementation Guidelines](#)
- Stakeholder Group/Constituency Statement Template – [IRTP Part B Constituency Statement Template](#)
- Public Comment Announcement Text – [Post-Expiration Domain Name Recovery Public Comment Announcement](#)
- Self Assessment Template (TBD)

## **Section 6.0: Charter Guidelines**

This section of the document is intended to assist any Chartering Organization in its effective implementation of Working Groups by providing a set of guidelines, checklists, templates, and other 'best practice' materials that it should consider and/or utilize, as appropriate, in creating, chartering, staffing, and guiding a Working Group (WG) to accomplish some desired outcome. The term “Chartering Organization” (CO), in this context, can be any formal entity or informal grouping of individuals that wishes to generate a WG Charter document.

These Guidelines are organized into three major sections as follows:

**Section 6.1:** Contains suggestions and recommendations related to the implementation of Working Groups.

**Section 6.2:** Is organized and structured to be a template containing specific elements that are recommended to be considered by any CO intending to produce a specific Working Group Charter document.

**Section 6.3:** Contains background information informing the effort to create this document.

### **6.1 General Working Group Implementation Guidelines**

**Introduction:** This Section contains suggestions and recommendations related to the general implementation of Working Groups. For those engaged in drafting a specific Working Group Charter, please see Section 6.2 below for further details.

#### **6.1.1 Announcement of a Working Group**

After a decision has been taken to form a Working Group, it is important to circulate a ‘Call For Volunteers’ as widely as possible in order to ensure broad representation and participation in the Working Group. Depending upon the scope of the Working Group and its intended subject matter, the following avenues are required to be utilized as the default rule, subject to exceptions only in extraordinary circumstances:

- Publication of announcement on the relevant ICANN web sites.
- Distribution of announcement to appropriate Stakeholder Groups, Constituencies, and/or other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees.

Nothing in the foregoing is intended to limit the wider distribution of the call for volunteers. For example, the WG could consider:

- Circulation of announcement to organizations that are considered to have expertise/knowledge/interest in relation to the subject matter of the Working Group.

Ideally, the ‘Call For Volunteers’ announcement should include the following types of information about the Working Group: its objective(s), expectations concerning activities and timeframes, links to relevant background information including its charter, details on how to sign up as a participant, and the

requirement to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI). In addition, a CO might want to include some statement as to the purpose of the activity, that is, why the effort is being undertaken, its criticality, context, and perceived usefulness to the Chartering Organization. While a WG may not "need to know" these elements in order to complete their tasks, it could help in recruitment and sense of purpose.

### 6.1.2 Transparency and Openness

All Working Groups are expected to operate under the principles of transparency and openness, which means, *inter alia*, that mailing lists are publicly archived, meetings are normally recorded and/or transcribed, and SOIs are required from Working Group participants and will be publicly available. It is important that prospective Working Group members are made aware of these principles.

### 6.1.3 Purpose, Importance, and Expectations of the Chair

While open Working Groups may offer many benefits in terms of broad participation and support, it is equally important that inclusiveness does not compromise effectiveness. An experienced Chair with strong leadership and facilitation skills will be a key ingredient of a successful outcome. He or she should be able to distinguish between participants who offer genuine reasons for dissent and those who raise issues in an effort to block progress. The Chair should have the authority to enforce agreed upon rules applicable to anyone trying to disrupt discussions and be able to exclude individuals in certain cases, provided an avenue of appeal is available. In addition, the Chair should be able to ensure that anyone joining a Working Group after it has begun has reviewed all documents and mailing list postings and agrees not to reopen previously decided questions. However, if there is support from the Chair to reopen an issue in light of new information that is provided either by a new member or an existing member of the Working Group, this should be possible.

The Chair is expected to assume a neutral role, refrain from promoting a specific agenda, and ensure fair treatment of all opinions and objectivity in identifying areas of agreement. This does not mean that a Chair experienced in the subject matter cannot express an opinion, but he or she should be explicit about the fact that a personal opinion or view is being stated, instead of a 'ruling of the chair.' However, a Chair should not become an advocate for any specific position. The appointment of co-chairs could be considered and is encouraged as a way to share the burden, provide continuity in case of absence of the Chair as well as allowing group leaders to rotate their participation in the discussion. In addition, in certain circumstances the CO may decide that it must appoint a completely neutral and independent Chair who would not participate in the substance of the discussions. In such circumstances, the Chair would be appointed by the CO.

Ideally, a Chair should have sufficient and substantive process expertise, possess leadership skills and be skilled in consensus building.

The Chartering Organization, working with the Staff, might consider the use of a professional facilitator, in certain circumstances, to help a Chair ensure neutrality and promote consensus or to provide other capabilities and expertise.

### 6.1.4 Other Important Roles

There are a number of other roles that a Chartering Organization should consider including:

- **Chartering Organization Liaisons** – A Member of the Chartering Organization (CO) is appointed to serve as a Liaison to the Working Group. The role of the Liaison consists of reporting to the CO on a regular basis on the progress of the Working Group; assisting the Chair as required with his/her knowledge of WG processes and practices; taking back to the CO any questions or queries the WG might have in relation to its charter and mission; and, assisting or intervening when the WG faces challenges or problems. The Liaison is expected to play a neutral role, monitor the discussions of the Working Group and assist and inform the Chair and the WG as required. The CO is therefore strongly encouraged to appoint an individual to the role of liaison who is expected to remain neutral and fulfill the role as described above.
- **Expert Advisors/Consultants** – If deemed necessary to fulfill the charter obligations, a CO may consider inviting one or more expert advisors or consultants to participate in the WG. If there are budget implications related to the participation of such external resources, funding should be confirmed in advance with the appropriate ICANN Staff organization.
- **ICANN Staff** – the following distinct Staff roles may be assigned to a WG:
  - Expertise (technical, legal, economic, etc.)
  - Secretariat (fundamentally a support function covering both logistics and drafting assistance in a neutral manner reflecting faithfully the deliberations of the Working Group)
  - Operational/Implementation (facilitation with the framework of existing policies and rules)
  - Scoping (for policy matters, internal role of the General Counsel, but possibly distinct, guaranteeing respect of the procedures and competencies of the different structures)

## 6.2 Working Group Charter Template<sup>7</sup>

**Introduction:** This Section of the Guidelines is organized and structured to be a template containing specific elements that are recommended to be considered by any group intending to produce a specific Working Group Charter document.

*Disclaimer: The reader is cautioned that, while this template was designed to be comprehensive in terms of topics that might be applicable to a wide range of circumstances, not all Working Group Charters need to contain each and every section outlined below. Charter drafters are encouraged to consider all of the elements contained herein, but should feel unconstrained in skipping any section(s) that are not relevant to a particular purpose or adding additional sections that are specific to the particular WG effort. However, the following sections are required like 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3 and all associated sub-sections.*

### 6.2.1 Working Group Identification

<sup>7</sup> The Chartering Organization will be responsible for drafting the charter and may follow its own internal procedures for completing and/or assigning this task.



*This section of the Charter should identify the name/identity of the Working Group and any sponsoring motion (as well as links/pointers) that establishes the Charter, if applicable. Drafters are also encouraged to identify which version of these Guidelines was referenced in preparing the Charter document. Specific elements that might be included in this section are:*

- *Name of WG*
- *Name of Appointed Liaison(s)*
- *Names of Advisers to the WG, if any*
- *Name of WG Chair, if appointed in advance [Note: the Liaison may serve as Interim Chair until a Chair selected by the WG and confirmed by the CO]*
- *URL of any WG Workspace(s) and WG mailing list archives, if available*
- *Links to other ICANN documents or initiatives, including past documents or initiatives, that might have a bearing on the WGs discussions and deliberations*

*Links to documents and/or decisions that have led to the creation of the WG*

## **6.2.2 Mission, Purpose, and Deliverables**

### **6.2.2.1 Mission and Scope**

*A well-written mission statement is characterized by its specificity, breadth and measurability.*

*The Scope of a WG should outline the boundaries within which the WG is expected to operate, e.g., in the context of a GNSO policy development process, the scope of a WG is limited to consideration of issues related to gTLDs and within ICANN's mission.*

### **6.2.2.2 Objectives and Goals**

*The objectives/goals should clearly set out the issues that the WG is supposed to address. This could, for example, be in the form of a number of questions that the WG is expected to answer. In addition, objectives/goals could also include specific activities such as the organization of a workshop or production of certain documents. In general, well-defined objectives will structure and facilitate the deliberations of the WG and should be written clearly and concisely to minimize questions and confusion.*

*A provision should be considered that encourages the WG to request clarity from the CO if it feels it cannot carry out its tasks and responsibilities due to perceived uncertainties or limitations within the Charter. Furthermore, a WG has the possibility to renegotiate potential changes to the Charter if deemed necessary in order to achieve the objectives and goals set out.*

### **6.2.2.3 Deliverables and Timeframes**

*A Charter is expected to include some, if not all, of the following elements: potential outcomes and/or expected deliverables, key milestones, and a target timeline - all of which can, if necessary, be further refined by the WG at its onset in conjunction with the CO. Although the identification of specific work tasks, outcomes, and deadlines might be perceived as constraining the WG in its activities, it is also intended to provide guidance to the WG and prevent unintentional scope creep. It should be emphasized that the WG can always ask the CO to reconsider any of the deliverables or renegotiate deadlines identified by providing its rationale.*

*In certain WGs, such as a Policy Development Process, the milestones and timeline might be prescribed by the ICANN Bylaws. In other situations, sufficient thought should be given to key milestones, realistic timelines, and ways to inform and consult the ICANN Community (such as public comment periods). It should be noted that any changes to milestone dates incorporated in the charter will need to be cleared with the CO.*

## **6.2.3 Formation, Staffing, and Organization**

### **6.2.3.1 Membership Criteria**

*This section of the charter should contain the chartering organization's guidance to the Working Group in terms of membership/staffing and may specify certain types of knowledge/expertise needed or desired, balance in skills/background/interest, openness to the ICANN community and its modus operandi, sizing elements/factors, and any limitations or restrictions to individuals previously banned from participating in a WG for cause.*

### **6.2.3.2 Group Formation, Dependencies, and Dissolution**

*This section should outline information about the proper formation and instantiation of the Working Group (e.g., date, place, logistics). It would also indicate any dependencies or relationships with other groups, if applicable. Further information might be included addressing under what conditions the WG is dissolved.*

### **6.2.3.3 Working Group Roles, Functions, and Duties**

*This section is intended to describe the WG roles that exist (e.g., Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Liaison, Expert Advisor, Staff). A description of standard WG roles [provide list of standard roles] can be found in the WG Guidelines [include reference]. A reference to this section should be included in the Charter. Any additional roles that are not included in the WG Guidelines should be listed here including a description and minimal set of functions/duties to the extent that the chartering organization might wish to specify them.*

### **6.2.3.4 Statements of Interest (SOI)**

*This section will contain guidelines relating to the elements and content of SOIs that each member of the WG is required to supply to the team. [See GNSO Operating Procedures, [Chapter 5.0](#), for provisions related to Statements of Interest]*  
*Further guidance is provided in Section 2.1.2 of this document on how to deal with any participant that does not provide an SOI despite multiple requests and reminders.*

#### **6.2.4 Rules of Engagement**

*The intention of this section is to provide a place in the Charter for those situations where a sponsor or chartering organization wishes to emphasize the rules of engagement or impose specific overarching 'rules of engagement' that will apply to the WGs deliberations and activities. The standard rules of engagement, including behavior and norms, are explained in further detail in Section 3.0 of this document.*

##### **6.2.4.1 Decision Making Methodologies**

*The standard methodology for making decisions is incorporated in Section 3.6 of this document and should be reproduced/referenced in the WG's charter. If a chartering organization wishes to deviate from the standard methodology for making decisions or empower the WG to decide its own decision-making methodology it should be affirmatively stated in this section.*

##### **6.2.4.2 Status Reporting**

*This section of the Charter should stipulate the types of status reports requested (e.g., Chair or Liaison update), frequency of reporting, and any guidance to the WG in terms of expected substance/content, e.g. status of deliberations, significant agreements/disagreements, how often are meetings held, how many active participants are there, role assignments, etc. It should also specify if there is a requirement for status updates at set times, e.g., two weeks prior to an ICANN meeting<sup>8</sup>. If the CO has a standard for reporting, it can be included here by reference.*

##### **6.2.4.3 Problem/Issue Escalation and Resolution Processes**

*The standard methodology for problem/issue escalation and resolution is incorporated in Section 3.4, 3.5 and 3.7 of this document and should be reproduced in the WG's charter. If a chartering organization wishes to deviate from the standard methodology for problem/issue escalation and resolution, and empower the WG to decide its problem/issue escalation and resolution methodology it should be affirmatively stated in this section.*

##### **6.2.4.4 Closure and Working Group Self-Assessment**

*This section of the Charter should describe any instructions for WG final closure including any feedback and/or self-assessment that is requested by the Chartering organization. This section might also indicate if there is any specific format, template, or prescribed manner in which the feedback is to be provided.*

#### **Charter Document History**

*This section should record key changes to the WG Charter, that take place after the adoption of the Charter by the CO.*

### **6.3 Revisions**

The original drafters of this document intended that its contents be continually revised and improved as individuals and groups gain experience with Working Groups and utilize these guidelines in writing charter documents. Comments about this document, including suggestions for revision may be directed to: [policy-staff@icann.org](mailto:policy-staff@icann.org). When offering suggestions for update, please cite the section, chapter, page number, and specific text along with recommendations for amendment. This document and its prior versions will be available on the GNSO Website (<http://gnso.icann.org>).

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the Board has adopted a 'Document Publication Operational Policy' (see <http://www.icann.org/en/committees/participation/document-publication-operational-policy-30oct09-en.pdf>) which requires the publication of documents 15 working days in advance of an ICANN public meeting.

## 6.4 Applicability

The GNSO Council or any of its sub-groups may decide to utilize a WG anytime they think that community wide participation is advisable for resolving issues. It should be emphasized that WGs are not intended to apply to policy development processes solely.

### Addendum: Chair Checklist

Checklist	Yes/No
Have all WG members submitted Statements of Interest?	
Introduction of WG members	
Inform members that WG will operate under the principles of transparency and openness (i.e., mailing lists are publicly archived, meetings are recorded / transcribed)	
Review of WG's mission, goals, objectives, deliverables, decision-making process, timeframes and any other documents relevant for the WG's discussion	
Development of a work plan	
Schedule for future meetings of the WG	

\*\*END OF ANNEX 1\*\*