

Working Group (WG) Charter Template

Overview: This template is provided to assist in the preparation of a Working Group Charter that meets the requirements set forth in the GNSO Working Group Guidelines, which are incorporated as ANNEX 1 of the GNSO Operating Procedures (see: <http://gnso.icann.org/council/docs.html>). The Chartering Organization (CO) will be responsible for drafting and approving the Charter and may follow its own internal procedures for completing and/or assigning this task.

Instructions:

Notes to Preparer:

- 1) This document contains a set of instructions and guidelines for completing the template (below). This explanatory section should be removed from the Charter once it is completed and ready to be published.
- 2) **Disclaimer:** While this template was designed to be comprehensive in terms of topics that might be applicable to a wide range of circumstances, not all WG Charters need to contain each and every section outlined below; however, Sections I, II, and III are minimally required. 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.
- 3) All non-shaded fields have been designed to auto-text-wrap.

WG Name: Enter the official name and any acronym (in parentheses) that will be used to identify this Working Group.

Section I: Working Group Identification

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 (see Overview above) was referenced in preparing the Charter document. Specific elements that might be included in this section are:

- Chartering Organization(s)
- Charter Approval Date: Enter the date that the Chartering Organization formally approves the document.
- 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*]
- Name of Appointed Liaison(s)
- Names of Advisers to the WG, if any
- URL of any WG Workspace(s) and WG mailing list archives, if available
- GNSO Council Resolution: Insert the Title of the resolution, its reference number (e.g., 20110609-3) and the link: <http://gnso.icann.org/resolutions>.
- Links to ICANN documents or initiatives that might have a bearing on the WGs discussions and deliberations and/or decisions that have led to the creation of the WG

Section II: Mission, Purpose, and Deliverables

Mission & 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.

Objectives & 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.

Deliverables & 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.

Section III: Formation, Staffing, and Organization

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.

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.

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 [see Overview above]. 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.

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. The GNSO Operating Procedures, Chapter 5.0, addresses Statements of Interest (see: <http://gns0.icann.org/council/docs.html>). In addition, a new online template with instructions is available on the [ICANN Community Wiki](#), the official repository for all Statements of Interest.

Section IV: 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 of the WG Guidelines.

Decision-Making Methodologies:

The standard methodology for making decisions is incorporated in Section 3.6 of the WG Guidelines 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.

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. If the CO has a standard for reporting, it can be included here by reference. *[It should be noted that the Board has adopted a ['Document Publication Operational Policy'](#), which requires the publication of documents 15 working days in advance of an ICANN public meeting.]*

Problem/Issue Escalation & Resolution Processes

The standard methodology for problem/issue escalation and resolution is incorporated in Sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.7 of the WG Guidelines 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.

Closure & 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.

Section V: 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. Please enter the version number, date, and description of the revisions.

Note: At the bottom of the template (below), if this Charter is intended to be translated, please indicate the languages in the table cells provided.

>>> DO NOT INCLUDE THE ABOVE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE FINAL CHARTER DOCUMENT <<<



Working Group (WG) Charter

WG Name:	
Section I: Working Group Identification	
Chartering Organization(s):	
Charter Approval Date:	
Name of WG Chair:	
Name(s) of Appointed Liaison(s):	
WG Workspace URL:	
WG Mailing List:	
GNSO Council Resolution:	Title:
	Ref # & Link:
Important Document Links:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • {Doc1} • {Doc2} • {Doc3} • {Doc4}
Section II: Mission, Purpose, and Deliverables	
Mission & Scope:	
Objectives & Goals:	
Deliverables & Timeframes:	

Section III: Formation, Staffing, and Organization

Membership Criteria:

Group Formation, Dependencies, & Dissolution:

Working Group Roles, Functions, & Duties:

Statements of Interest (SOI) Guidelines:

Section IV: Rules of Engagement

Decision-Making Methodologies:

{Note: The following material was extracted from the Working Group Guidelines, Section 3.6. 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, this section should be amended as appropriate}.

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. *[Note: 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.

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 (see Note 1 below) 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 (see Note 2 below).

Note 1: 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 before a formal appeal process 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 a formal appeal process.

Note 2: 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.

Status Reporting:

Problem/Issue Escalation & Resolution Processes:

{Note: the following material was extracted from Sections 3.4, 3.5, and 3.7 of the Working Group Guidelines and may be modified by the Chartering Organization at its discretion}

The WG will adhere to [ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior](#) as documented in Section F of the ICANN Accountability and Transparency Frameworks and Principles, January 2008.

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.

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.

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 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 this Charter, the same appeals process may be invoked.

Closure & Working Group Self-Assessment:

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Section V: Charter Document History

Version	Date	Description
1.0		

Staff Contact:		Email:	
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Translations: If translations will be provided please indicate the languages below:

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