GNSO Council Development Session – 17 October 2014

Introductions

- Objective of the meeting building trust between each other and understanding of each others groups
- Orient the Council in the GNSO
- Intros: name, ICANN history, something we wouldn't read in your bio

Opening session by the Council Chair

The role and purpose of the GNSO Council

GNSO leadership / councilors provide their expectations as to what they would like to see from the Council in the coming year

- **IPC**: Most of the members are themselves large international organizations which means getting approval for statements / positions takes at least a week if not more. Membership meetings every second Tuesday of the month, which has an effect on discussions and timing. Practice that Council members are instructed, although it is not hardwired in the charter. Council members are elected to represent the constituency, not themselves. Do not want to hear about inter-council bickering but smooth running is key. Very pleased with ICANN management reversal regarding accountability discussion. Council needs to be a key voice to ensure that similar scenarios do not occur or can be directed much quicker. New gTLDs: you cannot do start on a next round if you are still reviewing. A lot of focus, in additional to general topics, on geographic names proposals that is being developed by the GAC (any string may be subject to government veto if current proposals stand). Very little co-ordination at the Stakeholder Group level, apart from logistics for ICANN meetings such as planning for CSG breakfast that takes place on Sunday at ICANN meetings with the GNSO Board members. Assists in focus for CSG meeting with the Board.
- **NCSG**: Elect Councilors at SG level. Policy committee that joins Council members and representatives from constituencies and Chair of SG. Policy Committee has monthly call, Tuesday before GNSO Council meeting (or more if there are more Council meetings). Policy committee goes through the agenda and discusses issues. Up to each Councilor to vote according to their own conscience but expectation is that SG/C views are taken into account.
- **NCUC**: works through NCSG for Council related matters. NCUC has been around for 15 years. Following restructuring NCSG was created under which the NCUC now falls. Some would prefer an integrated SG compared to the current structure. Provide back-end to civil society advocacy groups interested in ICANN and bring that to the NCSG. Council members represent the NCSG, not the

constituency. No directed voting, although the constituency/SG may provide input. Would like to see discussions broadened to other topics like human rights.

- **NPOC**: still on a learning curve, leadership turnover has presented some challenges, especially in relation to historic knowledge. Would be good if there would be some guidance to help newcomers what the mission is and the objective of certain WGs is.
- **ALAC Liaison**: Bylaw mandated liaison, to ensure communication and coordination between ALAC and GNSO.
- **ISPCP**: usually mandated to vote on technical issues, on non technical issues, Councilors may decide how to vote. More technical oriented than commercial oriented (issues such as universal acceptance and name collision are important for example).
- **BC**: Council members are directed how to vote. Calls right before and after the Council meetings which include a policy section. Discussions on policy are currently led by Steve DelBianco – focus on issues that affect business users. Interested in showing that there are different views in the constituencies in the SG. Not the same to be a business in one or another country. Operational excellence is another focus point. Looking at how Internet users are affected and possibly harmed.
- **RrSG**: One of the two SG that are most directly affected by anything that ICANN does as policy decisions directly affect how their businesses are run. Sometimes difficult to motivate registrars as they are more business focused. No monthly calls, most conversations by email. Charter does specific that if there is a direction on how to vote, Councilors must follow these instructions but in most instances such instructions are not available.
- **RySG**: Mainly operational focus, talk every other week. Council members are instructed by their SG on how to vote. Current policy issues focus on IANA transition, accountability (forms of redress), GNSO activities. RySG 'appoints' representatives to each WG that are responsible to report back to the SG as well as communicate SG positions to the WG. Volume of membership is growing compared to original setup. Will require additional information and education to newcomers coming in.
- Find ways to make decisions more effectively – intercessional working methods
- Need to make sure that each WG / DT should have a liaison to make motion
- Everyone to give a little report back to the groups
- Issue reports provide important resource regarding the background, origin and objective of issues that are being addressed – consider having a summary version available to explain history / objective?
- How to ensure that community / public follow along with so much information being available
- Encourage WG members to read all materials as well as discussions on the mailing list as a requirement for participation

- Anyone can raise any issues that they would like to have added to the Council agenda
- How Council/SG/C encourage participation/attendance in WGs as well as early input in WG efforts? WG Chairs / Co-Chairs also play a role in this. Volunteer aspect poses challenges.

Review of what does success like in one year objectives set at the last session in BA

Successful working relationship with the GAC (strawman poll indicates average score of 4 out of 5 – compared to status quo in BA)
- Impossible to get a 5 with the GAC
- Maximum achieved of what can happen in a year
- Some topics we've stayed away from – e.g. who has responsibility for policy making in certain areas
- Advanced much more than thought was possible – at least there is now a direct dialogue and change of attitude
- Consider risk assessment of stakeholder relationship
- Role of Board is important in this context – how they have considered GAC advice
- GAC typically does not meet in between ICANN meetings, chair plays very important role, also as a member of the board
- Proposal for dealing with GAC advice:
  The timing of GAC Advice and how that fits into the policy making cycle as current cycle is problematic as GAC advice is developed in parallel to policy making efforts going on as well as during discussions at ICANN meetings. GAC Advice is often a mixture of policy and implementation, which should be reviewed and parsed by the GNSO since otherwise, it draws the Board into implementation. Typically, the GNSO never responds to the GAC Advice. A possible approach is for the community (led by the Council) to separate GAC Advice into issues of policy and implementation and then to come up with a GNSO response. Consideration of this approach could be a topic for discussion at the first GNSO Council meeting after an ICANN meeting. Policy advice could be further broken down into "in scope" and "out of scope" topics for ICANN policy and thereafter, what, if anything, the GNSO plans to undertake to address policy topics identified. This approach will permit the Board to then go back to the GAC to indicate what policy issues are being worked on. Dealing with the communiqué is a suggested topic for discussion in the joint GAC-GNSO meeting during ICANN 52.
- Are GAC communiqués reviewed part as the accountability reviews (how accountable are those documents)?

Demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness of the Council (strawman poll indicates average score of 3 out of 5 – compared to status quo in Buenos Aires)

- GNSO agenda is too ambitious. Could be more efficient and effective by focusing efforts on less projects.
- Mid-way in what we need to achieve.
- Better co-ordination, but still need to see that the Council can also deal with contentious issues.
- Work in progress on policy & implementation may provide GNSO Council additional processes to provide timely input

Attract new volunteers to the GNSO (strawman poll indicates average score of 3 out of 5 – compared to status quo in Buenos Aires)
- Burden to get new volunteers in is quite high
- What is being measured? Numbers, inclusiveness, effectiveness.
- Is it the Council's role to do this outreach? SG/C should also contribute to this and bear responsibility for training newcomers and introducing them to topics under consideration.
- No requirement for WG volunteers to participate in newcomer webinar or required readings, which is not feasible. No mechanism to 'force' people to get up to speed and no tradition of calling people out when they have not done their homework. Should there be requirements before volunteers can join efforts concerning what they should have read or participated in?
- Different constraints on volunteers depending on where they are coming from
- Not everyone may be able to participate for the whole duration of a PDP
- Work on GNSO WG onboarding programme may further assist in this effort (staff to recirculate paper that was prepared for London meeting)

Board acknowledgement / respect for the role of the GNSO (strawman poll indicates average score of 3 out of 5 – compared to status quo in Buenos Aires)
- There has been improvement, but maybe there was less improvement needed compared to some of the other priorities
- Engagement and relationship with the Board has improved
- Respect for the role of the GNSO may not have changed in the view of the GAC
- GNSO has many misunderstood processes
- GNSO seen as having commercial interests up front by GAC compared to organizations like SSAC which are considered completely independent
- Awarding of leadership award to Jonathan could also be seen as the increasing respect for the role of the GNSO
- Reconsider Tuesday meetings with the Board as currently set up as there is a lot of repetition
- Develop capability to provide input in an agile way to staff – could possibly be done in the form of standing committees to allow for a mechanism to consult on certain topics similar to how the Board organizes itself. Implementation Review Teams are currently performing that role in a GNSO context.

Substantive discussion

- Little discussion of policy substance, but is that a function of design as the Council is the manager of the process and its main role is that the process was followed?
- Is the Council asking the right questions in the role of manager of the process?
- How to deal with situations in which consensus may be achieved by the WG and the process was followed, but there may be no consensus at the Council level?
- Provide easier way to understand complex issues

What does success look like in one year? (Note: see section below – 2014-2015 categories - for final wording of objectives)

- Do we have any metrics to measure success? Should objectives be phrased in such a way that they are measurable

1. Strengthen working relationship with the GAC

2. Increased efficiency and effectiveness of the Council
- Work on methodology for how to measure efficiency – for example, communication to other SO/ACs, newcomer webinars
- Role of translations – in communication to newcomers this may be important to be able to have outreach / information available

3. Facilitate entry of new volunteers to GNSO WGs
- Consider removing – out of scope for the Council
- But if it is not in scope for the Council, who will be taking care of it.
- It is a matter of onboarding, not necessarily getting more people which is more the role of the SG/Cs

4. Acknowledgement / respect for the role and the work of the GNSO in general and in particular the Board
- Reputation management

5. Enhance preparedness and understanding of Council as well as broader communities of policy topics / recommendations under consideration

6. Role and function of the GNSO Council in the GNSO
- Should the Council be so large if it is just a manager of the process?

2014 – 2015 categories – How do we measure success?

1. **Strengthen working relationship with the GAC**

- Direct communications with the GAC, possibly informally
- Early indication of subject matter of the communiqué
- Communicate effectively via liaison
- Regular meetings among GAC, Council and Board to facilitate co-ordination and exchange of information
- Identify views and points of contact within the GAC to work with the liaison
- Action plan to encourage contacts with individuals SO/ACs members that have contacts with GAC members

2. **Increased efficiency and effectiveness of the Council**
   - Elapsed time from initiation to decision
   - Count initiates / completions
   - Less last minute changes / amendments, but do not limit the ability to provide new information
   - Give Councilors as much notice as possible
   - Instructions by SG/C limit the ability of Council members to react – if amendments are provided, give broader instructions to Council members to allow for flexibility

3. **Facilitate entry of new volunteers to GNSO WGs**
   - Focus on what the Council can do. Support launch of ICANN learn
   - Use fewer words and less text, make it easy to understand
   - Work with fellowship programme to facilitate mentoring, including remote mentoring
   - Identify contacts within each WG that newcomers can approach with questions
   - Be proactive in welcoming and training newcomers in the GNSO
   - Provide leadership in ensuring that SG/C are working on encouraging diversity and participation
   - Work with ICANN Staff, including Comms to widen the distribution of information

4. **Acknowledgement / respect for the role and the work of the GNSO in general and in particular the Board**
   - Increased understanding of what the GNSO does
   - More examples of Board referring policy issues to the GNSO
   - Number of times the GNSO leadership meets with the Board
   - Perception that the relationship is mutually beneficial
   - More GAC involvement in GNSO processes
   - Number of awards to GNSO members
   - Adoption of Policy & Implementation WG recommendations
   - Full consideration of PDP recommendations in reasonable timeframes

5. **Enhance preparedness and understanding by Council as well as broader communities of policy topics / recommendations under consideration**
   - Minimize use of acronyms, if used in writing, first use is written out, in speaking use fully

- Utilize the one-pager docs by staff and distribute to SG/C
- Translations – choose correct vocabulary for ICANN related translations (glossary)
- Description of concepts (for example, 360 assessment may not mean anything to non-native English speakers)
- Encourage informal conversations with staff as well as community members
- Deter English speakers from using slang words
- Would these measures make a community member / Council member more prepared?

6. **Role and function of the GNSO Council in the GNSO**
   - Strengthen our role by coordinating and respecting the roles of SO/AC by a clear understanding of each SO/ACs role and position.
   - Defining our own roles, define processes for reaffirming these roles.
   - Facilitate consensus

Closing Words / What should new Council members know?

- Liaison role function with each respective SG/C is key
- What information should new Council members have reviewed / read prior to first Council meeting: ICANN Bylaws provisions related to the GNSO, GNSO Operating Procedures, project list, reports or at list their executive summaries of reports that are being considered, 'picket fence'
- Don't get discouraged by the learning curve
- Never feel shy about shouting for help
- Reach out to others on the Council or staff to talk through issues and establish effective working relations
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Work with the GNSO Secretariat on any practical issues
- Get enough sleep prior to an ICANN meeting!!