GAC Operations & Interactions - Recommendation 6

Implementation Briefing for the Third Accountability & Transparency Review Team (ATRT3)

Recommendation 6

6.1. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to consider a number of actions to make its deliberations more transparent and better understood to the ICANN community. Where appropriate, ICANN should provide the necessary resources to facilitate the implementation of specific activities in this regard. Examples of activities that the GAC could consider to improve transparency and understanding include:

a. Convening "GAC 101" or information sessions for the ICANN community, to provide greater insight into how individual GAC members prepare for ICANN meetings in national capitals, how the GAC agenda and work priorities are established, and how GAC members interact intersessionally and during GAC meetings to arrive at consensus GAC positions that ultimately are forwarded to the ICANN Board as advice;

b. Publishing agendas for GAC meetings, conference calls, etc., on the GAC website seven days in advance of the meetings and publishing meeting minutes on the GAC website within seven days after each meeting or conference call.

c. Updating and improving the GAC website to more accurately describe GAC activities, including intersessional activities, as well as publishing all relevant GAC transcripts, positions and correspondence;

d. Considering whether and how to open GAC conference calls to other stakeholders to observe and participate, as appropriate. This could possibly be accomplished through the participation of liaisons from other ACs and SOs to the GAC, once that mechanism has been agreed upon and implemented;

e. Considering how to structure GAC meetings and work intersessionally so that during the three public ICANN meetings a year the GAC is engaging with the community and not sitting in a room debating itself;

f. Establishing as a routine practice agenda setting calls for the next meeting at the conclusion of the previous meeting;

g. Providing clarity regarding the role of the leadership of the GAC; and,

h. When deliberating on matters affecting particular entities, to the extent reasonable and practical, give those entities the opportunity to present to the GAC as a whole prior to its deliberations.

6.2. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI, to facilitate the GAC formally adopting a policy of open meetings to increase transparency into GAC deliberations and to establish and publish clear criteria for closed sessions.

6.3. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI, to facilitate the GAC developing and publishing rationales for GAC Advice at the time Advice is provided. Such rationales should be recorded in the GAC register. The register should also include a record of how the ICANN Board responded to each item of advice.

6.4. The Board, working through the BGRI working group, should develop and document a formal process for notifying and requesting GAC advice (see ATRT1 Recommendation 10).

6.5. The Board should propose and vote on appropriate bylaw changes to formally implement the documented process for Board-GAC bylaws consultation as developed by the BGRI working group as soon as practicable (see ATRT1 Recommendation 11). Increase support and resource commitments of government to the GAC (see ATRT 1 Recommendation 14)

6.6. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to identify and implement initiatives that can remove barriers for participation, including language barriers, and improve understanding of the ICANN model and access to relevant ICANN information for GAC members. The BGRI working group should consider how the GAC can improve its procedures to ensure more efficient, transparent and inclusive decision-making. The BGRI working group should develop GAC engagement best practices for its members that could include issues such as: conflict of interest; transparency and accountability; adequate domestic resource commitments; routine consultation with local Domain Name System (DNS) stakeholder and interest groups; and an expectation that positions taken within the GAC reflect the fully coordinated domestic government position and are consistent with existing relevant national and international laws.

6.7. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to regularize senior officials' meetings by asking the GAC to convene a High Level meeting on a regular basis, preferably at least once every two years. Countries and territories that do not currently have GAC representatives should also be invited and a stock-taking after each High Level meeting should occur.

6.8. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to work with ICANN's Global Stakeholder Engagement group (GSE) to develop guidelines for engaging governments, both current and non-GAC members, to ensure coordination and synergy of efforts.

6.9. The Board should instruct the GSE group to develop, with community input, a baseline and set of measurable goals for stakeholder engagement that addresses the following:

a. Relationships with GAC and non-GAC member countries, including the development of a database of contact information for relevant government ministers;

b. Tools to summarize and communicate in a more structured manner government involvement in ICANN, via the GAC, as a way to increase the transparency on how ICANN reacts to GAC advice (e.g. by using information in the GAC advice register).

c. Making ICANN's work relevant for stakeholders in those parts of the world with limited participation; and,3

d. Develop and execute for each region of the world a plan to ensure that local enterprises and entrepreneurs fully and on equal terms can make use of ICANN's services including new gTLD's.

Implementation Status

Fully implemented in June 2016.

- 6.4, 6.5 and 6.7 addressed by the Board-GAC Recommendation Implementation Working Group (BGRI).
- 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.6 addressed by the Working Group on GAC Working Methods (WGWM).
- 6.8 and 6.9 addressed by the GAC Joint Working Group on Government Engagement (JWG/GE).

Executive summary and archives available at:
https://community.icann.org/display/atrt/Rec+%236.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
6.1 Increased transparency of GAC-related activities	GAC	✓
6.2 Formally adopt open meetings policy	GAC	✓
6.3 Develop and publish rationales for GAC advice	GAC	✓

6.4 Develop and document formal process for GAC advice	BGRI	✓
6.5 Bylaw change, requiring a Board supermajority to reject GAC advice	BGRI	Not Applicable (see ICANN Bylaws adopted on 27 May 2016)
6.6 Implement initiatives to remove barriers for participation	GAC	✓
6.7 Regularize Senior Officials meetings	BGRI & GAC	✓
6.8 Develop government engagement guidelines	JWG/GE	✓
6.9 Develop goals for stakeholder engagement by GSE	JWG/GE	✓

Recommendation 6.1. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to consider a number of actions to make its deliberations more transparent and better understood to the ICANN community. Where appropriate, ICANN should provide the necessary resources to facilitate the implementation of specific activities in this regard. Examples of activities that the GAC could consider to improve transparency and understanding include:

a. Convening "GAC 101" or information sessions for the ICANN community, to provide greater insight into how individual GAC members prepare for ICANN meetings in national capitals, how the GAC agenda and work priorities are established, and how GAC members interact intersessionally and during GAC meetings to arrive at consensus GAC positions that ultimately are forwarded to the ICANN Board as advice;

b. Publishing agendas for GAC meetings, conference calls, etc.,on the GAC website seven days in advance of the meetings and publishing meeting minutes on the GAC website within seven days after each meeting or conference call.

c. Updating and improving the GAC website to more accurately describe GAC activities, including intersessional activities, as well as publishing all relevant GAC transcripts, positions and correspondence;

d. Considering whether and how to open GAC conference calls to other stakeholders to observe and participate, as appropriate. This could possibly be accomplished through the participation of liaisons from other ACs and SOs to the GAC, once that mechanism has been agreed upon and implemented;

e. Considering how to structure GAC meetings and work intersessionally so that during the three public ICANN meetings a year the GAC is engaging with the community and not sitting in a room debating itself;

f. Establishing as a routine practice agenda setting calls for the next meeting at the conclusion of the previous meeting;

g. Providing clarity regarding the role of the leadership of the GAC; and,

h. When deliberating on matters affecting particular entities, to the extent reasonable and practical, give those entities the opportunity to present to the GAC as a whole prior to its deliberations.

Implementation Status

Complete in June 2016.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
a. Convening GAC 101 information sessions (Sweden lead)	GAC	✓
b. Publishing agendas and minutes for GAC Meetings timely (WGWM lead)	GAC	✓
c. Improving GAC website (existing website and new website in planning)	ICANN org and ACIG	✓
d. Considering whether and how to open GAC conference calls	GAC	✓

e. Considering how to structure GAC meetings to better engage with community	GAC	✓
f. Establishing agenda-setting calls for the next meeting	GAC	✓
g. Providing clarity on GAC leadership roles	GAC	✓
h. Defining process to give opportunity to present to the GAC prior to deliberations	GAC	✓

Results & Implementation Details

Convening GAC 101 or information sessions for the ICANN community

This recommendation has been implemented by the GAC through GAC open forum sessions at ICANN50, IGF 2014 and ICANN51. The GAC discussed the experiences to date and considered further refinements of the approach. The GAC agreed on the need to consider organizing at least one open forum per year and for such arrangements to align with the new ICANN meeting structure.

Publishing agendas and minutes for GAC Meetings timely (WGWM lead)

From January 2015 (ICANN52), the GAC has started to publish its ICANN meeting agendas for ICANN52 on the GAC's public website, well in advance of the seven-day time period recommended by ATRT2. Agenda publishing within seven days of the meeting is thus complete. Additionally, during the meetings, the GAC agenda on the public space is updated with all documents from the sessions.

The GAC interprets the recommendation to publish meeting minutes within seven days of its meetings as aiming to clarify GAC advice as early as possible after it is issued. Official meeting minutes approved by the GAC are now published within three weeks of the meeting. The GAC publishes a negotiated, official record of its meetings at their close, in the form of the GAC communiqués. The GAC is continuously working on improving the clarity of the communiqués, for example through the inclusion of annexes where relevant. Furthermore, since recordings and full transcripts are made publicly available within seven days for all sessions, this aspect of the recommendation is implemented in reality. Hence, recommendation 6.1b has been implemented by the GAC.

Improving GAC website

The GAC Technology Task Force addressed this deliverable with ICANN and the Australian Continuous Improvement Group (ACIG) that provided secretariat support to the GAC at the time. The existing GAC website at https://gacweb.icann.org was first revised to improve access to relevant information, including correspondence, to increase the amount of information available on the public website, to make working group information publicly available and to streamline the site's navigation. Audio recordings and transcripts of all GAC meetings (except for communiqué-drafting sessions which were made available at ICANN55) have been made available online since ICANN47 in the six UN languages as well as Portuguese. In parallel, a project to establish a new website began in March 2015, conducted by the ICANN org IT staff, the ICANN org staff supporting the GAC, and ACIG under the guidance of the GAC Technology Task Force with a then-current GAC Vice-Chair, as lead. By July 2016 the interfaces for the website were ready. The new website - https://gac.icann.org/ - was launched in September 2017 and is now operational. A roadmap of work can be found at: https://gac.icann.org/file-asset/public/gac%20website%20roadmap%20-%20v2%20-%2024%20oct.%202017.pdf.

Considering when and how to open GAC conference calls

Intersessional GAC conference calls have traditionally been concerned with agenda setting for physical meetings, rather than with decision-making on substantive matters of GAC advice. The GAC determined at ICANN52 that liaisons to the GAC from other SO/ACs can be invited to observe and participate as appropriate; the appointed GNSO liaison to the GAC has participated on GAC calls and the GAC mailing list since April 2015. This recommendation has thus been implemented.

Considering how to structure GAC meetings to better engage with community

This recommendation has been implemented by the GAC through a number of efforts, such as open GAC working group sessions at ICANN meetings, participation of GAC members in both GAC working groups and policy development process (PDP) and cross-community working groups, the GAC open forum (recommendation 6.1a) and through the new ICANN meetings strategy. All face-to-face GAC meeting sessions are open, except generally for the communiqué drafting sessions. Working groups such as the Public Safety Working Group (PSWG) have been holding open sessions of notable interest to the community at ICANN public meetings and community. GNSO PDP leaders have been invited to address the GAC during GAC sessions at ICANN meetings.

Establishing agenda-setting calls for the next meeting

This recommendation has been implemented by the GAC. The GAC has a public session at the end of each ICANN meeting to prepare for the next meeting, and holds a conference call in the middle of the period between ICANN meetings to set priorities for the next GAC agenda. If need be, a second agenda setting call is organized closer to the next meeting to refine the schedule.

Providing clarity on leadership roles

This recommendation was initially implemented with the publishing of a fact sheet about the GAC chair and vice chairs - https://gac.icann.org/work-products/public/fact-sheets-igf-ist.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1408963346000&api=v2 - and then incorporated into the GAC website at: https://gac.icann.org/about/leadership-and-support#leadership. The enlargement of the GAC management team has been reflected through a published revision of the GAC operating principles at ICANN53, formally stating that the GAC can have up to five vice chairs - https://gac.icann.org/operating-principles/operating-principles-june-2017.

Defining process to give opportunity to present to the GAC prior to deliberations

The GAC has been implementing this recommendation. The topics of geographic names, human rights, public safety and international law are examples of areas for which the GAC is actively reaching out, in particular through its working groups, to the rest of the community to gather information and input ahead of decision-making, which can serve as case studies to help define a process for the GAC to give entities the opportunity to present, as well as be regarded as an implementation of recommendation 6.1h in practice.

Recommendation 6.2. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI, to facilitate the GAC formally adopting a policy of open meetings to increase transparency into GAC deliberations and to establish and publish clear criteria for closed sessions.

Implementation Status

Complete in March 2015.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
Adopt open meetings policy, in effect since ICANN47	GAC	✓

Results and Implementation Details

This recommendation has been implemented.

Although Principle 50 of the GAC operating principles (https://gac.icann.org/operating-principles/operating-principles-june-2017), including the most recent version ratified by the GAC in June 2017 still states that: "The meetings of the GAC shall ordinarily be held in private. The Chair may decide that a particular meeting, or part of a particular meeting, should be held in public", in practice the GAC has held open meetings since mid-2013, with only limited exceptions such as for communique drafting and where, on occasion, "if the topic of discussion is a sensitive and purely internal matter. In these cases, the GAC agenda clearly shows the 'closed' nature of a session by coloring it in red". These practices are all documented on the GAC website, as part of a fact sheet for new GAC members (see https://gac.icann.org/meeting-services/attending-your-first-gac-meeting).

The GAC continues to discuss further improvements and possible amendments to the operating principles, as part of its ongoing review of the operating principles, including any gap-filling that may be needed as a result of new practices and obligations through the GAC's participation in the new Empowered Community. The GAC Operating Principles Evolution Working Group was formally established by the GAC at ICANN63 in October to develop recommendations for further changes to the GAC operating principles.

6.3. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI, to facilitate the GAC developing and publishing rationales for GAC Advice at the time Advice is provided. Such rationales should be recorded in the GAC register. The register should also include a record of how the ICANN Board responded to each item of advice.

Implementation Status

Complete in June 2016.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
Consider, decide on and implement successive steps to provide rationale for GAC Advice	GAC	✓

Improving the GAC register of advice	ICANN org and ACIG	✓
Include in the advice register a record of how the ICANN Board responded to each item of advice	ICANN org and ACIG	✓

Results and Implementation Details

Recommendation 6.3 was implemented gradually, starting with discussion by the GAC at ICANN53 in Buenos Aires in June 2015. At ICANN56 in Helsinki, the GAC included a rationale for each recommendation it made to the ICANN Board.

Improving the GAC register of advice to make it more user-friendly and comprehensive of GAC input and Board feedback was part of the review of the existing GAC website that began in February 2015. It was also a major component of a project for a new revamped GAC website. All GAC communiques, correspondence and itemized GAC advice are published on the GAC website (see, e.g. https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/icann63-barcelona-communique). In addition, the ICANN org has developed an Action Request Register, which is a framework intended to improve the process for the Board's consideration of recommendations to the ICANN Board, including advice from ICANN Advisory Committees. The Board began using this register to track GAC advice in June 2017. All GAC advice has been reviewed since ICANN46 (Beijing) to identify actionable items, and all ICANN Board or the ICANN org's response or action to address GAC advice are documented.

"Developing and publishing rationales for GAC advice at the time advice is provided and recording rationales in the GAC register": The GAC interpreted this recommendation as aiming to clarify GAC advice. The rationale for GAC advice has been made more clear through continuous efforts such as ongoing restructuring of the communiqué format, focusing on ensuring that the text of the communiqué itself is clear, including attachments where appropriate, holding open meetings by default, and publishing transcripts and minutes. The Helsinki communique of June 2016 for the first time included detailed rationales for the section of the communique containing GAC advice to the ICANN Board, which has since become regular GAC practice.

The GAC notes that other initiatives, such as holding GAC open forum sessions and opening GAC sessions to non-members, also help to explain the aims and procedures of GAC advice. The level of detail in the minutes from the GAC meetings also has been enhanced with a view to facilitate a greater understanding among the community. Beginning with ICANN55 in Marrakech in March 2016, the GAC has opened its communiqué drafting sessions for public observation, which continues to be the general practice (with exceptions as noted in 6.2 above).

The GAC considers recommendation 6.3 to be fully implemented by the above listed actions and practices.

Recommendation 6.4. The Board, working through the BGRI working group, should develop and document a formal process for notifying and requesting GAC advice (see ATRT1 recommendation 10).

Implementation Status

Complete in May 2016.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
Develop draft "Timeline for Board requesting GAC advice"	BGRI	✓
Adopt or amend 'Timeline for Board requesting GAC advice' (evaluate current shortcomings / enhance process).	BGRI	✓
Adoption by GAC, post online	BGRI	✓

Results and Implementation Details

In its London communiqué of June 2014, the GAC "agreed to implement this recommendation with the BGRI processing the recommendation by documenting the current process and seeking comment on options for improvements." It was noted that Board requests for GAC advice are very rare, with only one such request issued during the preceding five years. The Board intended to address ATRT2 recommendation 6.4 in 2016, as a result of the desire to allow an Independent Review Process (IRP) that involved GAC advice to proceed without conflict in the meantime.

At ICANN50, ICANN51 and ICANN52, the BGRI discussed a draft of a formal process for notifying and requesting GAC advice, which was circulated and, in the absence of comments, considered approved from a GAC perspective. The process was detailed and documented for Board approval. Prior to the Board's formal consideration, there was an Independent Review

Process initiated that focused on the handling of GAC advice, and the Board deferred formal consideration of the process. In mid-2016, the Board consented to the process without formal resolution, so the process is agreed is now in force. The process is available in the GAC principles and guidelines section of the GAC website.

The current steps involved in Board consideration of GAC advice are documented in the form of a flowchart (https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/gac-advice-process-flowchart-31aug17-en.pdf) and a handbook (https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/gac-advice-process-handbook-06mar18-en.pdf) on the main ICANN website. The BGRI continues to meet regularly to discuss the process and status of Board consideration of and necessary action on all GAC advice. Most recently, at ICANN63 in Barcelona, the group agreed to change its name to the Board-GAC Interaction Group, to more accurately reflect the nature of the group's ongoing work.

Recommendation 6.5. The Board should propose and vote on appropriate bylaw changes to formally implement the documented process for Board-GAC bylaws consultation as developed by the BGRI working group as soon as practicable (see ATRT1 recommendation 11). Increase support and resource commitments of government to the GAC (see ATRT1 recommendation 14)

Implementation Status

Complete in June 2016.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
Develop draft "Timeline for Board requesting GAC advice"	BGRI	✓
Adopt or amend 'Timeline for Board requesting GAC advice' (evaluate current shortcomings / enhance process)	BGRI	✓
Adoption by GAC, post online	BGRI	✓

Results and Implementation Details

The Bylaws specify that the Board and the GAC must conduct a consultation should the Board intend to act inconsistently with GAC advice. The first ICANN Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT1) recommended the formalization of that consultation process. Members of the ICANN Board, together with the GAC, formed the BGRI, which developed a formalized process that included the raising of the voting threshold to 2/3 of the voting members. Though a bylaws change would have been required to give full effect to this formalized process, the ICANN Board indicated that the higher voting threshold would be applied in the event ICANN determined to act inconsistently with GAC advice prior to the posting for and consideration of public comments on the required bylaws revisions. The second Accountability and Review Team (ATRT2) recommended that the bylaws revision process should be completed. On 30 July 2014 the Board approved posting the proposed bylaws revisions for public comment (https://www.icann.org/public-comments/bylaws-amend-gac-advice-2014-08-15-en).

At their meeting at ICANN51 in October 2014, both the Board and the GAC noted that public comment on the proposed bylaw change had been almost unanimously negative, although many comments had seemed to be based on a misunderstanding of the purpose, status and timing of the proposal, conflated with accountability issues. Public comments reflected several themes: i) the poor timing of the proposed changes, which should have been considered after the IANA stewardship transition process, or as part of the work on enhancing ICANN accountability; ii) concern that the threshold for rejecting GAC advice would be different than for other SOs/ACs; iii) concern that changes could remove any incentive for GAC involvement in policy development; iv) lack of transparency in the selection of GAC members; and, v) changes would create even more problems should GAC advice move from consensus to voting.

For these reasons, in October 2014 the Board put the issue on hold, pending broader changes across the ICANN community. The GAC, in its deliberations during ICANN54 (see GAC communiqué), saw a potential connection between this provision and what was being referred to as "Stress Test 18" (see https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/58723827/Annex%2011%20-%20FINAL-Revised.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1456255822000&api=v2), embodied by the CCWG-Accountability Working Group in its recommendation 11, which addressed the situations when the ICANN Board should be required to provide special consideration to advice from the GAC, and the conditions under which that would remain appropriate. The CCWG-Accountability's WS1 proposal specified that the Board may only act inconsistently with GAC consensus advice by a vote of 60% of the Board. This reflects a compromise – the threshold for Board action is reduced from the proposed 66% to 60%, while only applying this heightened threshold to consideration of GAC consensus advice. The compromise reached through the CCWG-Accountability process has been embedded into current ICANN's Bylaws (adopted in June 2018):

"The advice of the Governmental Advisory Committee on public policy matters shall be duly taken into account, both in the formulation and adoption of policies. In the event that the Board determines to take an action that is not consistent with Governmental Advisory

Committee advice, it shall so inform the Governmental Advisory Committee and state the reasons why it decided not to follow that advice. Any Governmental Advisory Committee advice approved by a full Governmental Advisory Committee consensus, understood to mean the practice of adopting decisions by general agreement in the absence of any formal objection ("GAC Consensus Advice"), may only be rejected by a vote of no less than 60% of the Board, and the Governmental Advisory Committee and the Board will then try, in good faith and in a timely and efficient manner, to find a mutually acceptable solution. The Governmental Advisory Committee will state whether any advice it gives to the Board is GAC Consensus Advice."

With that compromise, this Recommendation is complete.

Recommendation 6.6. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to identify and implement initiatives that can remove barriers for participation, including language barriers, and improve understanding of the ICANN model and access to relevant ICANN information for GAC members. The BGRI working group should consider how the GAC can improve its procedures to ensure more efficient, transparent and inclusive decision-making. The BGRI working group should develop GAC engagement best practices for its members that could include issues such as: conflict of interest; transparency and accountability; adequate domestic resource commitments; routine consultation with local Domain Name System (DNS) stakeholder and interest groups; and an expectation that positions taken within the GAC reflect the fully coordinated domestic government position and are consistent with existing relevant national and international laws.

Implementation Status

Complete in December 2015.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
Identify initiatives that can remove barriers for participation	GAC	✓
Implement initiatives that can remove barriers for participation	GAC	✓
Improve GAC procedures to ensure more efficient, transparent and inclusive decision- making	GAC	✓

Develop GAC engagement best practices	BGRI	✓

Results and Implementation Details

Removing Barriers

There has been significant progress in overcoming language barriers to participate in the GAC, with the communiqué, fact sheets, minutes and transcripts being made available in seven languages and interpretation available for meetings and conference calls. A more extensive use of background briefing documents has been implemented in order to reduce participation barriers, as has the increase of the number of travel support slots for participants from developing economies. Surveys of the GAC following ICANN52, ICANN53 and ICANN54 included rating of various initiatives to encourage participation in the GAC. Providing access to more relevant information was viewed as an effective way to encourage more active participation in the GAC. Providing more outreach was viewed as important, and providing better information on the ICANN model was viewed as being helpful. However, providing more translation and/or interpretation was not widely viewed as helpful. This aspect of recommendation 6.6 is linked to recommendation 6.9 and the implementation thereof that was originally discussed and explored by a Joint Working Group on Government Engagement (JWG/GE)[1] comprised of GAC members and ICANN org's Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) staff.

This general recommendation serves as a principle for continuous improvement efforts, as addressed in recommendations 6.1-6.3, where a number of proposals and initiatives have been launched to promote inclusiveness and active participation by GAC members and observers in its discussions and to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and the timely provision of decisions and advice. The use of GAC working groups to address particular topics has increased, which also serves to fulfil this recommendation. Some of the specific topics highlighted in the ATRT2 recommendations (e.g. transparency and accountability) have been identified as possible gaps in the GAC operating principles by the GAC Operating Principles Evolution Working Group, which continues to discuss improvements that need to be made to the operating principles.

In November 2017, the GAC and the At Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) issued a joint statement calling on the Board to direct the ICANN org to develop "a simple and efficient document management system that allows non-experts to easily and quickly access and identify

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[1] The working group, comprised of GAC members and GSE/GE staff met in 2014 and 2015 to develop a consistent mechanism for information sharing. A report template was designed for ICANN Org to provide updates to the GAC on the government engagement work and a series of joint leadership calls was agreed. Once the reports and calls were implemented the working group disbanded. The GAC leadership and ICANN org's GSE/GE teams continue to hold bi-monthly calls, and the GSE/GE teams produce bi-monthly reports circulated to the GAC - https://gac.icann.org/activity/bi-monthly-report-icann-gse-ge-governments-and-igos-engagement-activities.

documents"
(https://gac.icann.org/advice/itemized/2017-11-01-enabling-inclusive-informed-and-meaningful-participation-in-icann). The GAC and the ALAC issued a follow up statement at ICANN63 in October 2018, which emphasized that "non-expert stakeholders need executive summaries to be able to quickly determine, whether a particular issue is of concern to them, and if yes, to participate in the process easily and effectively, on equal footing with other stakeholders" and that "clear and up-to-date information to facilitate quick understanding of relevant issues and high interest topics is key for inclusive, informed and meaningful participation by all stakeholders, including non-experts."

Best Practices

The GAC considers, with regard to GAC engagement best practices for members, that some issues, such as making "adequate resource commitments" for supporting ICANN-related work, are matters for the judgment of individual governments rather than for standardization. The suggestion for a code of conduct led to discussion during the GAC's ICANN48 Buenos Aires meeting and was mentioned in the Buenos Aires communiqué, which noted that each member already operates within his/her own government's code of conduct framework. The GAC is, however, implementing and investigating ways in which members can be supported to engage most effectively, complementing measures to remove barriers to participation. This includes elements mentioned by ATRT2 such as local stakeholder consultation and coordination on multidimensional issues such as Internet governance. For example, the GAC open forum session always features presentations of how individual governments prepare for GAC meetings at the national level, including consultations with local stakeholders. In 2015, the GAC established an Underserved Regions Working Group, which focuses on regions under-served by the DNS industry and least developed economies and small island developing states, with a particular focus on underserved economies/countries from the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions. Between October 2017 and June 2018, the GAC held several capacity building workshops in different regions around the world, with the support of the ICANN org (https://gac.icann.org/activity/gac-capacity-development-workshops-2017-2018).

Recommendation 6.7. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to regularize senior officials' meetings by asking the GAC to convene a High Level meeting on a regular basis, preferably at least once every two years. Countries and territories that do not currently have GAC representatives should also be invited and a stock-taking after each High Level meeting should occur.

Implementation Status

Complete in March 2015.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Due Date
GAC agreement to convene regular, high level meetings	GAC	✓
Establishing practice with High Level meetings in Toronto 2012, London 2014 and Marrakech 2016	GAC	✓
Approving and publishing guidelines for GAC high level governmental meetings	GAC	✓

Results and Implementation Details

In its London ICANN50 communiqué, the GAC agreed that "regular high-level meetings are beneficial, and (that it) will examine ways to maximize their benefits and continually improve the way they are arranged and scheduled." The GAC established the practice of holding high level meetings by doing so in Toronto in 2012, in London in 2014, in Marrakech in March 2016 and in Barcelona in October 2018. At ICANN52 in Singapore, the GAC approved a set of guidelines for GAC High Level Governmental Meetings (HLGM). The guidelines are a living document (last updated in 2016) that reflect the experiences of each HLGM host nation and articulate expectations before each HLGM, during the meeting, and after the meeting. The guidelines are published on the GAC website at https://gac.icann.org/meeting-services/guidelines-for-high-level-government-meetings. For stock-taking purposes, the GAC typically conducts a review session during the ICANN meeting at which the HLGM took place and a report by the HLGM chair is also expected (see, e.g. https://gac.icann.org/sessions/icann63-agenda-item-22-hlgm-lessons-learned).

Recommendation 6.8. ATRT2 recommends that the Board work jointly with the GAC, through the BGRI working group, to work with ICANN's Global Stakeholder Engagement group (GSE) to develop guidelines for engaging governments, both current and non-GAC members, to ensure coordination and synergy of efforts.

Implementation Status

Complete in April 2015.

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
Enhance monthly GAC/ICANN leadership conference call format	ICANN org	✓
Enhance monthly GSE/GE related activities report	ICANN org	✓
Develop and publish government engagement guidelines	ICANN org	✓

Results and Implementation Details

Leadership Calls

Monthly GAC/ICANN leadership conference calls now involve GAC members (notably the GAC vice chairs and GAC support staff and government engagement staff).

GSE/GE Related Activities and Government Engagement Guidelines

A new format of the monthly GSE/GE related activities report has been implemented and is distributed to the full membership each month. Monthly reports are published on the GAC website at -
https://gac.icann.org/activity/bi-monthly-report-icann-gse-ge-governments-and-igos-engagement-activities [2]

The GAC and the ICANN org's Global Stakeholder Engagement/Government Engagement (GSE/GE) teams have finalized approved guidelines for coordination between the GAC and the GSE/GE teams
(https://gac.icann.org/principles-and-guidelines/public/guidelines-coordination-gse.pdf).
Beginning in October 2014, a number of guidelines were implemented through staff work nationally, regionally and with activities relating to international governmental organizations. The guidelines are a working document that can be amended as communities request additional communication or methods of working together. The ICANN org's GSE Team and the GAC secretariat/support staff have been directed to continue work on implementation of agreed measures and report back to their respective organizations.

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[2] At the request of the GAC the reports were further revised to arrange information by regions and later the scope of the report was changed to cover three months of activity each time - two months of completed engagement as well as the next months planned engagement are reflected. With the agreement of the GAC leadership the frequency of the reports changed to bi-monthly when the scope of the reports was expanded.

The guidelines have been implemented in spirit and in practice on a regular/weekly/monthly basis through regular interactions between the ICANN org's GE/GSE staff and the GAC support staff, GAC leadership and GAC membership. Improvements include:

- GAC support staff and GE staff have regular weekly calls to compare notes and share information.
- GAC support staff and GE/GSE teams share and compare GAC RSVP information for GAC attendance at upcoming ICANN public meetings.
- GAC support staff and GE/GSE teams have recently operationalized collaborative use of an enterprise-wide Salesforce tool to maintain consistent and up to date membership information – consistent with new GDPR regulations.
- The GE team conducts regular monthly calls with the GAC leadership team (chair and vice chairs) to share information about GE and GSE activities and to engage GAC leaders on the ICANN org preparations for international exchanges throughout the world.
- The GE/GSE staff prepare bimonthly reports (covering three-month periods) that are shared with the entire GAC membership. These regular reports share information about engagement meetings and activities by the ICANN org staff taking place in various regions around the world.
- The GE team and the GAC Underserved Regions Working Group recently concluded a collaborative capacity-building workshop pilot program to increase recruitment, engagement and participation within and outside the GAC in various ICANN geographic regions around the world. An assessment report of that project is currently being evaluated by the GAC.
- GE staff, GAC support staff and GDD staff recently collaborated on the development and roll-out of new Second Level Country Code Registration Search tool for GAC members.
- The GAC support staff, GE and GSE and GAC leadership team recently effectively partnered with the Spanish government on planning and implementing the fourth HLGM at ICANN63 in Barcelona, Spain. The meeting realized the highest level of participation of all the HLGMs to date.
- GE staff and GAC leadership are engaged in discussion about possible GAC involvement in the new Cross-Community Engagement Group on Internet Governance.

Recommendation 6.9. The Board should instruct the GSE group to develop, with community input, a baseline and set of measurable goals for stakeholder engagement that addresses the following:

a. Relationships with GAC and non-GAC member countries, including the development of a database of contact information for relevant government ministers;

b. Tools to summarize and communicate in a more structured manner government involvement in ICANN, via the GAC, as a way to increase the transparency on how ICANN reacts to GAC advice (e.g. by using information in the GAC advice register).

c. Making ICANN's work relevant for stakeholders in those parts of the world with limited participation; and,

d. Develop and execute for each region of the world a plan to ensure that local enterprises and entrepreneurs fully and on equal terms can make use of ICANN's services including new gTLD's.

Implementation Status

Complete in December 2015

Deliverables

Deliverable	Responsible	Status
a. Develop goals for engagement with GAC and non-GAC member countries including database of relevant Ministers	ICANN org	✓
b. Utilize tools to better track ICANN response to GAC advice	ICANN org	✓
c. Make ICANN's work relevant for stakeholders in parts of the world with limited participation	ICANN org	✓
d. Develop and execute for each world region a plan to allow local enterprises and entrepreneurs to fully and on equal terms use of ICANN's services including new gTLDs (all regional plans by July 2016 but implementation work on going)	ICANN org	✓

Results and Implementation Details

Engagement with GAC and Non-GAC Member Countries

The relationships with GAC and non-GAC member countries have been strengthened through the ICANN org staff interactions in regions. The engagement work occurs within regions in capitals, with regional intergovernmental groups and in Geneva and New York through

engagement with the relevant intergovernmental organizations and international organizations. GAC discussions in ICANN53 have clarified that the objective with having a database of contact information for relevant government ministers has been achieved through other means and should not be pursued.

The promotion of a more comprehensive use of an internal database (maintained in a GDPR-compliant fashion and that can be accessed by the relevant teams within the ICANN org) better streamlines coordination with the GAC as well as managing outreach activities among GAC and non-GAC members. This has also supported better and more consistent maintenance of contact information and monitoring of such information as collected on the GAC membership. The database is also used by ICANN org's GSE and GE teams in the outreach to non-GAC members. The organization of several outreach events in Geneva and New York has offered an opportunity to further develop these contacts. The tremendous effort from the GE/GSE departments to enroll new GAC members has helped to enhance this database.

Goals towards engaging with GAC and non-GAC member countries include:

- Present and explain ICANN technical role (mandate), governance model
- Present and explain GAC's role (advisory role, participation in ICANN's PDPs)
- Develop a more active participation from GAC members in ICANN and especially in GAC works
- Avoid any misinterpretation/misunderstanding related to ICANN's mandate, Board resolutions

Making ICANN's Work Relevant for Stakeholders in Parts of the World with Limited Participation and Regional Planning

The engagement work is ongoing and expressed in the regional engagement strategies and the work of the regional communities.

Specific tools include:
- Regions have regular webinars that include government participation or are specific to governments, e.g. GAC webinar before ICANN meetings (especially in Asia/Pacific, Africa, LAC, and Middle East regions);
- Facilitation calls between the ICANN org and GAC organized several times in the context of GDPR and two character codes issue;
- Monthly GE call with GAC leadership;
- Regular briefings to permanent missions in Geneva and New York
- Regional DNS forums in Geneva and New York
- Regular briefings, including technical presentations educate the diplomatic staff from the missions about the relevance of the DNS to their country's economy and to gain a better understanding of how the Internet works and therefore why what ICANN does is relevant and worth their participation. Communication has been followed up with a push strategy

to get additional materials to those entities that request briefings. The GAC Communique and information on membership (including how to contact the GACSEC) are distributed and GAC membership and participation in ICANN are encouraged.

The regional engagement plans can be found here: https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=35521555. Regional plans are often living documents/processes depending on how they are set up (it varies from region to region). For example: https://www.icann.org/public-comments/africa-strategic-plan-2018-07-30-en

The regional ICANN community (including governments whether ICANN GAC members or not) designs the plan - based on specific needs - in collaboration with the ICANN org's regional GSE and GE teams to facilitate regional discussions. GSE and GE then plan the work to identify and prioritize those activities for the coming year. Part of that planning process is the further development of the community wiki space to encompass the metrics, forums and the regional projects. In practice, GSE/GE implementation in the regions is according to community priorities as expressed in the community driven regional engagement planning and prioritization (regional strategies) and at GE team in Geneva in accordance with stakeholder's preferences and global work. The webinars, visits, trainings and other related activities are implemented, and this has translated into an increased GAC membership and IGOs as of December 2015. Note:

Regional strategies are developed as follows:
- The relevant GSE local team drafts a document with GE inputs
- This draft document is reviewed by a committee of Supporting Organization/Advisory Committee representatives from the region
- The reviewed document is subjected to a public consultation
- The ICANN org consolidates the comments and generates an updated strategy document

Tracking GAC Advice

See section on page 10.

Useful Links

GAC Open Forum at ICANN50 - https://archive.icann.org/meetings/london2014/en/schedule/thu-gac-forum.html

GAC Communiqué at ICANN50 - https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/icann50-london-communique?language_id=1

GAC Open Forum at IGF2014 -
http://intgovforum.org/cms/147-igf-2014/2040-report-gac-open-forum-igf-2014

GAC Open Forum at ICANN51 -
https://archive.icann.org/meetings/losangeles2014/en/schedule/wed-gac-forum.html

GAC Communiqué at ICANN54 -
https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/gac-to-board-21oct15-en.pdf

GAC Communiqué at ICANN55 -
https://meetings.icann.org/en/marrakech55/schedule/wed-gac-communique

GAC Communiqué at ICANN63 -
https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/icann63-barcelona-communique

New GAC website - https://gac.icann.org/

GAC website roadmap -
https://gac.icann.org/file-asset/public/gac%20website%20roadmap%20-%20v2%20-%2024%20
oct.%202017.pdf

GAC website on open meetings - https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+Meetings

GAC website on attending first meeting -
https://gac.icann.org/meeting-services/attending-your-first-gac-meeting

GAC operating principles -
https://gac.icann.org/operating-principles/operating-principles-june-2017

ICANN-GAC Advice Consideration Process Flowchart -
https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/gac-advice-process-flowchart-31aug17-en.pdf

ICANN-GAC Advice Consideration Process Handbook -
https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/gac-advice-process-handbook-06mar18-en.pdf

Proposed Bylaws Changes Regarding Consideration of GAC Advice -
https://www.icann.org/public-comments/bylaws-amend-gac-advice-2014-08-15-en

CCWG-Accountability Work Stream 1 Proposal -
https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=58723827

CCWG-Accountability Work Stream 1 - Recommendation 11 -
https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/58723827/Annex%2011%20-%20FINAL-Revised.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1456255822000&api=v2

ICANN Bylaws 12.2(a)(x) -
https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en/#article12

GAC Advice - Enabling inclusive, informed and meaningful participation in ICANN -
https://gac.icann.org/advice/itemized/2017-11-01-enabling-inclusive-informed-and-meaningful-participation-in-icann

GAC Capacity Development Workshops -
https://gac.icann.org/activity/gac-capacity-development-workshops-2017-2018

GAC Guidelines for High Level Government Meetings -
https://gac.icann.org/meeting-services/guidelines-for-high-level-government-meetings

HLGM Lessons Learned (ICANN63) -
https://gac.icann.org/sessions/icann63-agenda-item-22-hlgm-lessons-learned

Bi-Monthly Report on GE/GSE activities -
https://gac.icann.org/activity/bi-monthly-report-icann-gse-ge-governments-and-igos-engagement-activities

Guidelines for Coordination: GAC and ICANN's Global Stakeholder Engagement Team -
https://gac.icann.org/principles-and-guidelines/public/guidelines-coordination-gse.pdf

Global Stakeholder Engagement page -
https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=35521555