The Role of GNSO Council Members

Executive Summary

Responsibilities of the GNSO and GNSO Council
- The Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) develops and recommends to the ICANN Board substantive policies related to generic top-level domains (gTLDs).
- The GNSO includes all Board-recognized Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies, as well as the GNSO Council.
- The GNSO Council manages the GNSO's policy development process (PDP) as outlined in Annex A of the ICANN Bylaws and the GNSO Operating Procedures, including the PDP Manual.

Responsibilities of individual GNSO Council members
- Council members are expected to balance the interests of their Stakeholder Group or Constituency, the GNSO, the ICANN community and the worldwide Internet community, as well as their own interests. To this end, they are expected to consult extensively with their Stakeholder Group or Constituency. In addition, Stakeholder Groups or Constituencies may have specific requirements in place that their respective Council members need to fulfill.
- Members elected to the Council by their Stakeholder Group or Constituency act as liaisons to that Stakeholder Group or Constituency regarding Council work.
- In addition to Council members elected by Stakeholder Groups or Constituencies, there are also three Council members appointed by the ICANN Nominating Committee.

Participating in GNSO Council meetings
- Most Council meetings are held via teleconference. Others (e.g., during ICANN Public Meetings) are held in person.
- Council meetings are usually held once per month and last at least two hours each.
- Council members are expected to attend every Council meeting.
- If a Council member cannot attend a meeting, he/she must inform the GNSO Secretariat *before* the meeting and arrange for any meeting responsibilities that he/she has to be handled by an officer of his/her Stakeholder Group or Constituency (who can attend in the member's place) or by another Council member.

Participating in GNSO Working Groups
- Council members may join GNSO Working Groups, as well as chair them.

Participating in ICANN's Public Meetings
- Council members are expected to attend each of ICANN's Public Meetings, currently held three times a year in different locations worldwide.

- During these public meetings, the GNSO Council holds several in-person meetings that Council members are expected to attend. Several GNSO Working Groups also meet during these Public Meetings.
- For these meetings, ICANN provides support for Council members' transportation and hotel costs.

Time commitment
- Council members spend, on average, 2–10 hours per week on Council work. This increases as each of ICANN's three annual public meetings approaches.
- Council members are expected to prepare in advance for any motions to be considered at a Council meeting by reading the reports submitted by Working Groups, as appropriate, and consulting with his/her Stakeholder Group or Constituency, as appropriate.
- Members work, on average, an additional 2–4 hours per week for each GNSO Working Group they choose to join.

Introduction

Input from the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and GNSO Council is a crucial ingredient in ICANN's bottom-up policy development process. The quality of this input depends on the expertise, judgment and active participation of GNSO community members - especially members of the GNSO Council.

Responsibilities of the GNSO and GNSO Council

The GNSO is responsible for developing and recommending to the ICANN Board substantive policies related to generic top-level domains (gTLDs). (This expectation is stated in Article X, Section 1, of the ICANN Bylaws.) Here, the "GNSO" refers to the whole GNSO community, including all Board-recognized Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies, as well as the GNSO Council.

The GNSO Council is responsible for managing the process by which the GNSO develops its substantive policy recommendations. This process is called the "policy development process" (PDP) of the GNSO and is generally described in the ICANN Bylaws (see Annex A of the ICANN Bylaws) and the PDP Manual (see GNSO Operating Procedures).

In order to manage its operations as well as the GNSO PDP, the GNSO Council is able to adopt internal operating procedures it sees as necessary. These procedures are called the "GNSO Operating Procedures" (see the current set of GNSO Operating Procedures here). While the procedures themselves are not part of the ICANN Bylaws, the steps required to adopt or revise these procedures are (see Article X, Section 3(4), of the ICANN Bylaws).

Responsibilities of individual GNSO Council members

There are 21 members of the GNSO Council. Each is chosen in one of two ways:
- 18 members are each selected by his/her Stakeholder Group or Constituency within the GNSO (these 18 members are the Council's Stakeholder Group and Constituency representatives); and
- 3 members are each appointed by the ICANN Nominating Committee (NomCom), one of which is nonvoting.

In addition to the formal Council members, the Country-Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) may each appoint one of its members to participate in GNSO Council meetings and other activities as a nonvoting liaison.

Participating in GNSO Council decisions
Each Council member has a responsibility to more than just his/her own Stakeholder Group or Constituency. He/she also has a responsibility to the GNSO, the ICANN community, and, on the broadest level, the worldwide Internet community. Therefore, in contributing to Council decisions, each Council member is expected to balance the interests of each of these groups, along with his/her own interests.

Specifically, to this end, all Council members are expected to:
- Take into account a broad range of information when contributing to Council decisions. This should include Council members' own perspectives gained through their broad Internet-related experiences outside of ICANN and through their extensive consultations within their GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency and other relevant ICANN groups.
- Clearly disclose their respective interests in any matters before the Council. The GNSO is a very diverse community. Understanding the perspectives of all participants is a key factor in a transparent, bottom-up process. The concept is one of openness – not exclusion. The sharing of a "Statement of Interest" is intended to inform others of an individual's specific perspectives.
- Understand the needs, views and concerns of their own Stakeholder Group or Constituency.
- Prepare for each vote taken by the Council by reading any Working Group Reports, as appropriate.
- Stay informed regarding matters affecting ICANN beyond the Council's direct issues and decisions.

Other responsibilities of all Council members
All Council members are also expected to:
- Actively participate in all Council meetings and activities. This could require making appropriate arrangements to do so (for example, members should avoid scheduling professional and personal commitments during scheduled Council meeting times).
- Solicit GNSO volunteers to participate in Working Groups (WGs) created by the Council; and
- Attend ICANN's three annual Public Meetings, held in different locations worldwide.

Selecting GNSO officers
The GNSO Council members are responsible for selecting the GNSO Council officers – a Chair and two Vice-Chairs (as described in Section 2.2 of the GNSO Operating Procedures).

Stakeholder Group or Constituency representatives
In addition to their other responsibilities, Council members who are Stakeholder Group or Constituency representatives are expected to:
- Act as liaisons to their Stakeholder Group or Constituency regarding specific Council work and decisions. This includes consulting with their Stakeholder Group or Constituency on Council issues before and after Council meetings.
- Ensure that their Stakeholder Group or Constituency is informed about ICANN's overall operational and strategic planning.

Participating in GNSO Council meetings

How the meetings are conducted
These meetings are usually held in two ways:
- Most are held as teleconference calls.
- Some are in-person meetings held during ICANN Public Meetings, currently held three times a year in different locations worldwide. Council members' travel expenses to these ICANN meetings are covered by ICANN. Members who cannot attend these meetings in person can do so remotely via teleconference and other remote participation tools.

For teleconference calls, Council members in most countries can use a toll-free telephone number. Alternatively, the GNSO Secretariat can arrange for members to be called (to receive a "dial-out").

In rare instances, the GNSO Council may hold an in-person meeting in addition to those held during ICANN's annual public meetings. Such meetings are held in locations convenient for most participants. Council members' travel expenses are typically covered for these meetings.

Frequency and duration
At present, GNSO Council meetings are usually held once per month and last two hours each. Additional meetings (usually on specific topics) may also be scheduled, if necessary.

Attendance
Each GNSO Council member is expected to attend all GNSO Council meetings, unless unable to do so because of an important professional or personal commitment that cannot be rescheduled.

A Council member who cannot attend a meeting is expected to do the following *before* the meeting:
- Inform the GNSO Secretariat that he/she will not be able to attend; and

- Arrange for any responsibilities that he/she has during the meeting to be handled either by an officer of his/her Stakeholder Group or Constituency (who is able to attend in the member's place) or by another Council member.

Meeting technology
For most Council meetings, members will need to use the following technology tools:
- A toll-free telephone number provided by a contracted vendor; and
- Adobe Connect, a Web-based meeting tool through which documents can be shared. (See the GNSO Communication Tools Module for more information and the Adobe Connect tutorial for a user-friendly introduction.)

In addition, Council work often requires the use of Confluence community wiki pages (simplified Web site pages on which GNSO and ICANN information and documents are posted).

Participating in GNSO Working Group meetings

GNSO Working Groups (WGs) are often created to help develop GNSO policy recommendations and for other purposes. Each WG is typically "chartered" by the GNSO Council. WG charters specifically set forth the goals and expectations of each WG. Council members are welcome to join these WGs, as well as chair them.

GNSO WGs typically enjoy broad freedom to establish their own meeting and work procedures, as long as these are in line with the GNSO Working Group Guidelines and the WG Charter. Most WGs follow meeting procedures similar to those described above for the GNSO Council. One exception, however, is that WG meetings are usually held once every week or every two weeks, typically for an hour or an hour and a half.

Participating in ICANN's Public Meetings

ICANN holds public in-person meetings (usually over the course of one week) three times a year in different locations worldwide. As part of these, the GNSO Council holds several in-person meetings of its own. For this reason, Council members are expected to attend each of ICANN's public meetings.

For these public ICANN meetings, ICANN typically pays Council members' transportation and hotel costs. Members can arrange this travel support through ICANN's Constituency Travel Team.

The GNSO Council usually holds or participates in the following in-person meetings (with teleconference participation also available) during the week of each ICANN public meeting which Council members are generally expected to attend:
- Two full-day GNSO working sessions (on the Saturday and Sunday before the public meeting's official Monday start);
- GNSO Working Group and drafting team meetings, as needed;

- An optional informal Council dinner meeting (on that Saturday or Sunday);
- A four-hour public GNSO Council meeting, during which the public and ICANN community of volunteers can offer input and ask questions, answered by Council members, about the GNSO's work;
- One meeting with the ICANN Board; and
- Meetings with other ICANN Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs), including a meeting with the Government Advisory Committee (GAC).

In addition, individual GNSO Council members may participate in other types of meetings during an ICANN annual public meeting, as well. These may include separate GNSO Stakeholder Group or Constituency meetings, meetings with ICANN Staff and ICANN-wide meetings and workshops.

Time commitment of GNSO Council members

This section offers estimates of the time commitment needed from GNSO Council members and the members of GNSO Working Groups. These estimates could be useful to individuals considering joining the Council or a GNSO WG.

Basic time commitment for Council members
The time dedicated by Council members can vary widely based on a member's work habits and degree of involvement at any given moment. On average, members have needed to commit 2–10 hours per week. Of course, the time commitment substantially increases as each of ICANN's three annual public meetings approaches.

For a typical Council member, most of this time is usually spent doing the following:
- Communicating (by phone, e-mail, Skype, etc.) with other Council members and with officers and members of their Stakeholder Group or Constituency;
- Reading meeting materials, including any Working Group reports for matters that are to be voted on by the Council;
- Reading and participating in the GNSO's various mailing lists; and
- Participating in Council and other meetings.

In addition, Council members can choose to participate directly in the Council's significant drafting work (for example, revising policy reports), done with the support of the GNSO Staff.

For the GNSO Council Chair, the typical time commitment can vary from as few as five hours per week to as many as 16 hours per week.

Additional time for Working Groups
Council members need to allocate additional time to participate in any GNSO Working Group for which they volunteer. Members dedicate, on average, 2–4 hours per week to each of their WGs.

For a typical GNSO member on a WG, most of this time is usually spent doing the following:

- Communicating (by phone, e-mail, Skype, etc.) with other WG members, with the GNSO Council and with the officers and members of their Stakeholder Group or Constituency;
- Reading meeting materials;
- Reading and participating in the WG mailing list; and
- Participating in WG meetings.

For a WG Chair, the typical time commitment can rise to about 5–10 hours per week, depending on meeting-preparation time and other factors.

The GNSO Policy Staff

Members of ICANN's GNSO Policy staff work closely with GNSO Council members to support them in numerous ways – from administering meeting calls, to assisting with document drafting, to explaining the background of current issues and providing subject matter expertise.

The members of ICANN's Policy Staff who are most closely involved with the GNSO Council can be found at this link - http://newgnso.icann.org/en/about/policy-staff.htm.

The GNSO Policy Staff welcomes the opportunity to meet with new as well as prospective Council members in order to give them an overview of the Council's current work.

To contact the GNSO Policy Staff
If you have any questions or comments for the GNSO Policy Staff, please do not hesitate to contact the GNSO Secretariat (gnso.secretariat@gnso.icann.org) or other Staff person.

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