

Report of the Review Group in relation to the ccNSO OISC

Introduction

The ccNSO Outreach & Involvement Standing Committee (OISC) was constituted by the ccNSO Council on 4 February 2021 and met for the first time on 8 April 2021. Its terms of reference¹ were later amended on 7 June 2021.

In brief, the remit of the OISC is to oversee the coordination of all ccNSO outreach, involvement and capacity building activities. This includes community onboarding and travel funding approvals.

This review is conducted in accordance with the [Template](#) for review of the OISC, as adopted by Council in November 2023.

The review group comprises members of the ccNSO who have not been otherwise involved in the OISC.

Background

The OISC has been inactive for more than 18 months, with its last meeting taking place on 14 April 2022. It is therefore evident that the review team was charged with taking a more substantive look at the OISC, and then trying to work out the reasons why its work had gone so badly off track so quickly.

A few of the OISC's specific tasks such as travel funding have subsequently been carried out in other ccNSO processes to ensure continuity of these essential activities.

Review process

The review team met with all the members of the OISC in person at ICANN78. The review team thanks the OISC members for their full cooperation and frank responses to the review team interview questions:

Interview Questions:

- Did it fulfil its mandate and objective?
- Why are the items/tasks being completed by other entities?

¹ <https://ccnso.icann.org/en/workinggroups/oisc.htm>

- Are the items/tasks that are being completed within other groups, being accomplished more successfully?
- What worked well?
- What didn't work well?
- What needs to change?
- Does it still serve any purpose?

The review team met to discuss its approach at ICANN77 and ICANN78 with some additional meetings being held by Zoom.

The first point that was very clear to the review team was that the OISC was very unlucky that its inception coincided almost perfectly with the onset of Covid, global lockdowns, travel bans and an indefinite pause on any new outreach and capacity building initiatives. The review team were very sympathetic to the position of the OISC in facing this unprecedented situation, and strongly empathises with the position that the OISC found itself in. We can all recall the frustration of having to try and organise and coordinate activities in a climate where planning is impossible, and everyone was operating in an atmosphere of stress and uncertainty. It must have been very demoralising having a specific mission based on outreach and engagement at the exact time that outreach and engagement were basically wound down to zero.

The second conclusion that the review team came to was that the terms of reference for the OISC were over broad and therefore overlapped with other ccNSO committees and working groups which have community outreach and involvement as part of their mission - IGLC, DASC & MPC for example. The fact that the OISC were inactive did not mean that outreach and other inclusion initiatives did not happen; they just were carried out under the auspices of other ccNSO chartered structures. The conclusion of the review team was that there were numerous examples of excellent outreach and engagement activities carried out in the ccNSO, generally by reference to a particular topic (e.g. internet governance, DNS Abuse).

Finally, we recognised that since the OISC has been inactive for some time now with little indication that it will restart, some more radical recommendations were likely to be required. Nobody on the review team or amongst the membership of the OISC felt that things were working perfectly and should continue as currently set up. The review team was therefore facing two principal options going forwards:

1. That the OISC should be wound up; or

2. That it should be re-chartered with a narrower remit focussed on the mentoring aspects of its work that all agreed was a valuable activity and which was not seemingly being picked up in other parts of the community.

Recommendation

The review team feels that in the context of new initiatives which come on stream for the ccNSO, it is a healthy process to discontinue those ccNSO activities which absorb valuable volunteer time and resources, but for whatever reason have not worked out. We should learn, adapt and move forwards.

In hindsight the OISC charter was too broad and the OISC has had to compete with other ccNSO activities which inherently also involve community outreach and engagement.

We therefore recommend that the OISC in its current format be disbanded, but we are very concerned to ensure that the mentoring of new and prospective community members is not lost as a valuable activity. Either ccNSO community leaders (including all council members) should all collectively take up the slack with a mentoring programme, or perhaps a specific mentoring initiative to build up a pipeline of future ccNSO participants should be curated, with the objective of ensuring the passing over of ccNSO know-how and history to those who will hold leadership roles in the future.

Nick Wenban-Smith
OISC Review Team Chair
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