

# Introduction to the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and the Policy Development Process



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# ICANN Ecosystem



# The Generic Names Supporting Organization

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- The GNSO is the organization responsible for policy development for generic Top Level Domains (for example .com, .org, .info, .museum, .pro). It is the sole entity with this responsibility.
- Members of the GNSO community include representatives from gTLD registries, ICANN-accredited registrars, intellectual property interests, Internet service providers and connectivity providers, business, and noncommercial interests.
- The GNSO brings together these different stakeholders to develop gTLD policy recommendations using a bottom-up process, driven by working groups run by volunteers from the community.

# The GNSO Council

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- Representative body serves as the manager for the policy development process in the GNSO.
- Interacts and works with other parts of the ICANN community on behalf of the GNSO community.
- 21 Councilors from 6 different Constituencies / Stakeholder Groups & Nom Com appointees.
- Policy development work completed by the GNSO community must be considered and approved by the GNSO Council.

# Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

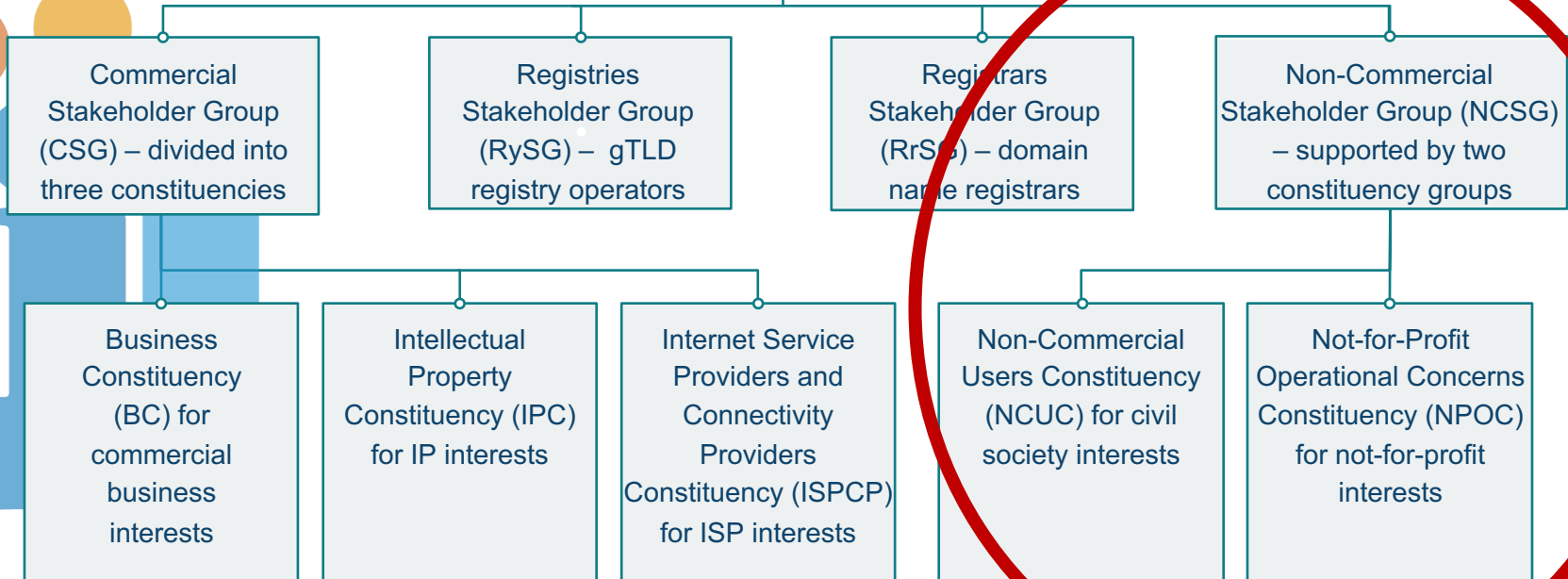
 **GNSO**  
The GNSO Council is composed of 21 members – divided into 2 houses (contracted and non-contracted parties) – who work on generic top-level domain (gTLD) naming policies (e.g., .com, new gTLDs).

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Generic Names Supporting Organization

 [Learn More ▶](#)

<https://gns0.icann.org>



# Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG)

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- The NCSG provides a voice and representation in the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and other ICANN policy processes to non-profit organizations and individuals who are primarily concerned with the noncommercial, public interest aspects of domain name policy.
- NCSG also represents non-commercial interests in other ICANN processes, for example structural and organizational reviews and cross-community working groups.
- NCSG has two member constituencies representing different noncommercial interests.
- Website <http://ncsg.is>

# NCSG Constituencies

## Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC)

Focuses on generic top-level domain (gTLD) policy development; Internet governance policy; and protection of non-commercial communication and consumer protection, civil liberties, and human rights.

## Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency (NPOC)

Focuses on operational concerns related to ICANN and the Domain Name System (DNS), such as domain name registration, expansion of the DNS, and DNS fraud and abuse.

# The Importance of the GNSO PDP

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From the ICANN Bylaws: The GNSO *“shall be responsible for developing and recommending to the ICANN Board substantive policies relating to generic top-level domains”*



# Why Get Involved?



Accountability and  
transparency



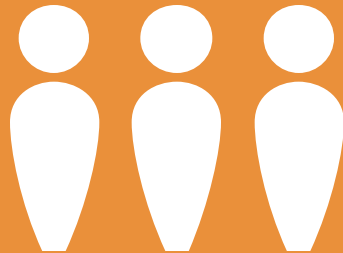
Trademarks and access to  
knowledge



Multilingual Internet



Freedom of expression



Human rights



Privacy and data protection

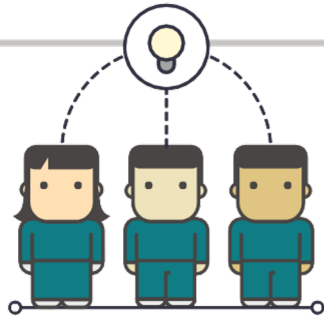


Jurisdiction

And more ... but only as they touch on ICANN's mission

# GNSO Policy Development Process

## IDENTIFY THE ISSUE



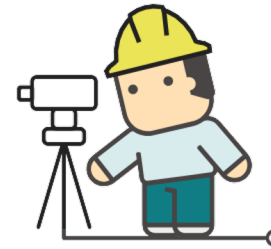
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- GNSO Council, ICANN Board or an AC identifies issue.
- GNSO Council considers if issue will result in consensus policy.

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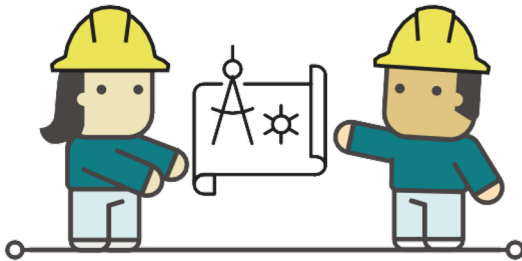
- If yes, GNSO Council requests Preliminary Issue Report.
- Staff publishes Preliminary Issue Report for Public Comment Period.
- Following Public Comment review, Final Issue Report is submitted for GNSO Council consideration.

## SCOPE THE ISSUE



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## INITIATE THE PDP



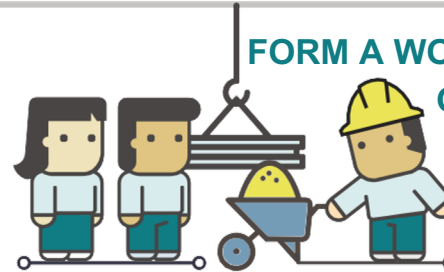
- GNSO Council considers Final Issue Report and decides whether to initiate PDP.
- If yes, GNSO Council develops/adopts charter for PDP WG.
- GNSO Council calls for volunteers to form PDP WG.

# GNSO Policy Development Process

- WG consults with Community and develops Initial Report for Public Comment Period.
- After reviews, WG submits Final Report to GNSO Council.

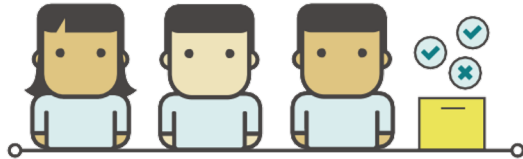
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## FORM A WORKING GROUP



5

## DELIBERATE THE FINAL REPORT



- GNSO Council reviews Final Report and considers adoption.
- If adopted, GNSO Council submits Final Report to ICANN Board.

6



## VOTE BY ICANN BOARD

- ICANN Board consults Community and GAC.
- ICANN Board votes on Final Report recommendations.



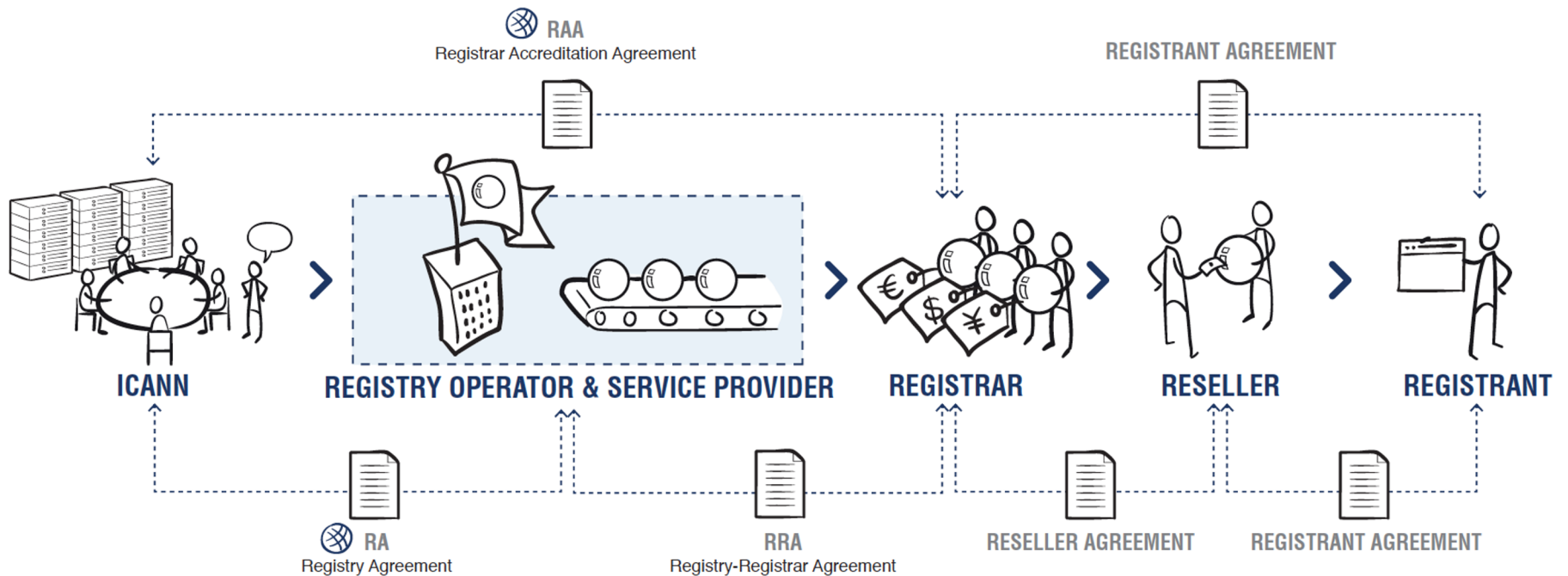
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# The Relationship Between Policy and Contracts



# What is ICANN “Consensus Policy”

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- All ICANN-accredited registrars and registries have contracts with ICANN that contain binding legal obligations:  
<http://www.icann.org/en/general/agreements.htm>
- In this context, “**Consensus Policy**”\* is a policy broadly supported by ICANN’s stakeholders, and which can bind ICANN-accredited registrars and registries

*\*Please refer to particular contracts for specific limitations and to the ICANN Bylaws for the overall context. Note that this presentation does not constitute legal advice or a waiver or modification of any ICANN agreement*

# Consensus Policy

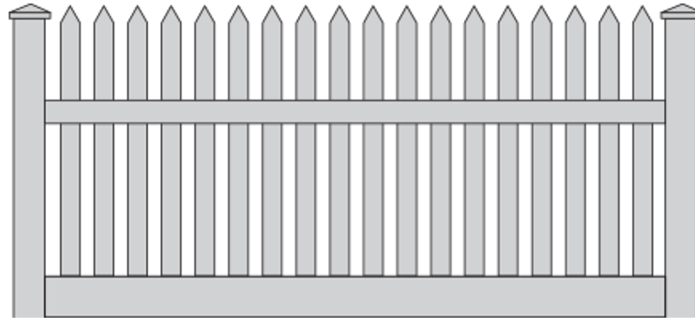
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In their contracts with ICANN, registries and registrars agree to comply with “consensus” policies adopted by ICANN; provided that (i) such policies do not unreasonably restrain competition, and (ii) the policies relate to:

- 1) Issues for which uniform or coordinated resolution is reasonably necessary to facilitate interoperability, technical reliability and/or stable operation of the Internet or domain-name system;
- 2) Registry / registrar policies reasonably necessary to implement Consensus Policies relating to registrars/registries; and
- 3) Resolution of disputes regarding the registration of domain names (as opposed to the use of such domain names)

*Detailed topics subjected to “Consensus Policy” are also further defined in the gTLD Registry and Registrar Agreements*

# The “Picket Fence”



- The general policy making authority granted to ICANN to preserve the stability and security of the DNS and the policy authority described in previous slide create a “picket fence” around ICANN’s authority.
- These policies can be imposed on ICANN contracted parties as they have been developed by the GNSO through the “bottom up” process described in the ICANN Bylaws.
- ICANN can establish policy and/or best practices affecting issues outside the picket fence, but can not mandate registry and registrar compliance with such policies.
- Concept of the “picket fence” has been included in the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) and the Registry Agreement (RA) since ICANN’s creation.

# How to Engage in the PDP

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Some PDPs have open membership models, meaning anyone can join. Others are more limited.

You don't need to join a PDP to get involved:

- Requests for input from SO/AC/SG/Cs

- Public comment periods

- Engage in policy committees through an SG/C

Engagement opportunities ICANN meetings:

- Working Group sessions, which are generally open to all

- Cross-community sessions and other meetings to share information and gather input

- Direct exchanges between PDP leadership and specific groups, (for example ALAC and GAC) on specific topics



# Potential Upcoming Opportunities to Get Involved

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Public comment periods - PDP final recommendations:

New gTLD Subsequent Procedures

Review of all Rights Protection Mechanisms in all gTLDs

New policy work:

Review of the Transfer Policy

Internationalized Domain Names

# Engage with ICANN



## Thank You and Questions

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