As we prepare to meet at ICANN61, it might be helpful for those who new to this WG – and for all of us – to refresh our understanding of this WG's charter and objectives, our agreed approach to deliberation, and what we have accomplished thus far.

As you all know, our WG's charter splits our work into three phases. In phase 1, we are tasked with reaching consensus on requirements for gTLD registration data and directory services policy. If it is agreed that a new RDS policy framework and system are needed to support phase 1 requirements, this WG will continue on to define those policies and provide implementation guidance in phases 2 and 3.

Throughout this process, our charter tasks the WG with answering several foundational questions concerning the purposes for registration data, who should be permitted to access that data and how, and measures required for data protection, privacy, and accuracy.

At times, some have asked why the WG is focusing only on privacy or data or purposes, and have suggested we answer a different charter question "first." While it may appear – especially to newcomers - as though the WG is looking at questions in the "wrong" order, the answer is that we are taking an iterative approach to examine ALL of these tightly-interdependent questions by moving from one question to another and back again throughout deliberation.

For example…

Last February-March, we focused on privacy, receiving several presentations on data protection laws and developing questions answered by data protection experts during and after ICANN58. In parallel, we hammered out rough consensus agreements on a minimum public data set (MPDS) that is largely although perhaps not completely independent of natural person data subject to data protection laws. By ICANN59, we were ready to shift focus to data beyond the MPDS. We polled the WG on the entire dataset, including both existing WHOIS data elements and possible new data.

At that time, Rod Rasmussen presented an overview of purpose-based contact roles, and encouraged the WG to model data at a more abstract level. However, WG discussions soon got mired in details such as modes of contact and which modes might be required or optional or allowed under GDPR. At that point, we got a bit stuck because, if you haven't agreed upon purpose, you cannot really decide whether a phone number or street address is even relevant, much less strictly necessary or permissible to access under data protection laws.

To address these concerns, the WG sought independent legal analysis on the application of GDPR to registration data and directory services. In parallel with legal analysis, we hammered out some less controversial data element agreements that probably apply to any purpose requiring contact of some sort. While we had hoped that legal analysis would result in clarity

needed to reach WG agreements on role-based contacts and associated data, it soon became clear that reaching any agreement about contact data hinged upon purpose. We were completely stuck on contact data without any agreements on actual purposes for those contacts.

This is what led the WG to shift focus back to purposes just before ICANN60. In October, we formed small representative drafting teams to flesh out definitions for *possible* purposes and associated users, tasks, and data. Our goal was to gain shared a understanding of possible purposes through discussion in smaller groups, encouraging those familiar with each purpose to share experiences, and those less familiar to ask questions. By better understanding possible purposes, we hoped to lay a foundation for more effective deliberation and agreement on some of those purposes, including data needed for each of those purposes.

Since ICANN60, we hammered out rough consensus agreements on two of those purposes: Technical Issue Resolution and Domain Name Management. When agreement on the next purpose (Domain Name Certification) proved difficult, we tried to agree upon criteria used to decide whether a purpose is legitimate. And now here we are today, two weeks before ICANN61, presented with a suggestion to refocus on contacts at a more conceptual level.

We recap this history to help us all move ahead with full knowledge of the ground already covered, our iterative approach to addressing charter questions, and both agreements and challenges reached thus far.

- For those relatively new to the WG, we remind you that reading the [charter](#) and catching up on [past meetings](#) and [progress](#) is not just expected but essential to effective participation.

- For long-time WG members, we encourage everyone to re-read the [phase 1 working draft and related document](#)s to refresh your memory of past agreements and avoid repeating past discussions.

- Anyone looking for a refresher on the WG's charter questions and phased iterative approach may wish to replay the [newcomer webinar](#), linked to our [wiki landing page](#). If repeating that webinar live would be helpful, that can be arranged.

As we decide if and how to shift focus again , let's not start anew – let's build on what we've done to make sure we move forward.