

**Recommendations of the
Communications /
Coordination Team**

ICANN GNSO Operations Steering Committee

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Contacts:

Mason Cole, Chair

(503) 459-5702

(503) 407-2555

mcole@oversee.net

Steve Holsten, Vice Chair

(703) 948-4357

sholsten@verisign.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thesis: too big a gap between GNSO and the rest of the world. Opportunity to close by elevating dialogue, using technology more effectively, and upgrading the discourse.

An element of the ICANN board's directive to restructure and improve the Generic Names Supporting Organization, or GNSO is to specifically improve communications and coordination within the GNSO and between the GNSO and the ICANN community and beyond.

As a sub-team of the Operations Steering Committee (OSC), the Communications and Coordination Team (CCT) reviewed the London School of Economics report (the foundation for initial recommendations to the board for GNSO restructuring), which identified known shortcomings of the GNSO's communications. Further, the CCT undertook a review of the tools available to the GNSO and its constituencies, as well as typical communications behavior within the GNSO and the community, and found opportunities for improvement even beyond the board's directed areas of review.

The problem

Though ICANN has made tremendous strides toward inclusiveness, people and institutions impacted by ICANN's work (and, by definition, the GNSO as a primary policymaking body within ICANN) remain largely unaware of ICANN and its activity. To continually improve to reflect global service provider and user perspectives, ICANN and the GNSO need more and better ways to solicit input and make users better aware of policymaking work.

Further, coordination between the GNSO and other parts of the community—or, even between GNSO bodies themselves—is sporadic, leading to inefficiency and needless difficulty in work and output.

Recommendations

The CCT broadly recommends that the GNSO consider its hoped-for near- and long-term outcomes, and communicate with those as context as a way to inform and remind current and future participants of the purpose of specific processes or proposals.

The CCT further recommends the following specific tactical actions as a way to achieve better fluency between the GNSO and the rest of the community, and coordination between the GNSO and other ICANN bodies:

- Develop new GNSO website requirements
- Improve document management
- Improve the GNSO's ability to solicit meaningful feedback
- Improve the GNSO's coordination with other ICANN structures, particularly (but not limited to) the ICANN board
- Encourage additional international participation through translation services
- Encourage understanding of opposing perspectives, spirit of cooperation, and civility

CONTEXT: GNSO REFORM AND COMMUNICATIONS

The CCT recognizes the broadening of ICANN's scope has significantly increased the level of worldwide interest and participation in ICANN's work. The reform and restructuring effort for the GNSO is a reflection of the need to better optimize ICANN's infrastructure to accommodate input, work and policy development.

There is, however, a gap between the anticipated operational capability of the new GNSO structure and its level of communication and coordination outside its own walls. Put simply, the GNSO's ability to communicate effectively, for many good reasons, has had to take a back seat to completing restructuring work.

Now that reform is nearly concluded, the GNSO would benefit from articulating its mission to the rest of the community and focusing on improvements to its communication tools. This will actually lessen the burden on the GNSO by establishing the correct context for its work, putting participants "on the same page" as the GNSO itself.

THE TASK OF THE CCT

Following the ICANN board's consultation and study regarding GNSO reform, it approved a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the structure and operations of the GNSO.

A key element of the board's desired outcomes is this objective:

Maximizing the ability for all interested stakeholders to participate in the GNSO's processes;

and

[improving] communications and administrative support for GNSO activities.

More specifically, the board asked for:

Improving Communication and Coordination with ICANN Structures: There should be more frequent contact and communication between the GNSO Council, GNSO constituencies and the members the Council elects to the Board, and among the Chairs of the GNSO, other Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs) ...

To that end, the CCT adopted as its mission, as defined in its charter:

To develop and implement a internationalized communications program that raises awareness of GNSO achievements to date and grows an all-access

culture that increases global participation and creates the most effective and credible GNSO for the future.

ABOUT THE CCT'S SCOPE

While the CCT carefully reviewed the board's recommended areas of focus, its first step was to discuss with others involved the GNSO process whether or not additional areas needed attention.

The broad answer is yes, there are multiple areas for improvement in GNSO communications and coordination—in fact, too many to reasonably address by the effort of this temporary team.

Accordingly, the CCT took care to focus in the areas where the GNSO can have the most immediate and meaningful impact toward the objective of better in- and outbound communications. Following the completion of GNSO restructuring and seating of the new council, and a period of operations under the new structure, the CCT recommends that the GNSO consider:

- Evaluating the impact of these initial recommendations, and seeing if adjustments should be made for better efficacy; and
- Considering other areas of communications improvement.

WHAT IS "COMMUNICATION" IN THIS CONTEXT?

The CCT also carefully weighed the idea of "communication" in the context of the GNSO. It would be very easy, for example, to make one set of detailed recommendations regarding the GNSO web site and document management functions and leave it at that.

However, the CCT believed that to be insufficient. While a good web site structure is pivotal to good communication (particularly regarding ICANN as a worldwide community), there are other areas that are equally deserving. The CCT believes it's important to not simply focus on the mechanics of communication; our recommendations will reflect this belief.

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Following its evaluation of the LSE report, the board identified known problems and proposed preliminary recommendations as areas of focus for communications improvement:

GNSO Web site

Problem

The GNSO's visibility on the Internet is very low due to serious deficiencies in the design of ICANN's web sites. (LSE Report, p. 50)

Recommendation

Develop new GNSO web site requirements:

- Collaboration Tools
- Portal services
- Search capabilities
- Content management
- Business processes
- Shared services
- Languages other than English (Patrick Sharry p9 BC comments, Summary of Board Actions p8, p12 3ii, 3iv. BCG/WG p. 42/43)
- Usability including review of Statistics ([London School of Economics](#) (LSE) p12, Rec7, para 3.8 3.10, Summary of Board Actions p12 3iii)
- Search engine optimization and content inventory
- GNSO low external visibility. Non-technology recommendations (LSE Rec 11, LSE p48 para 3.2, 3.5, 3.9. p56 3.17)
- Ability for Stakeholders to find out what is going on (LSE p48 3.1, LSE Rec10)

Document Management

Problem

Poor organization and inconsistent document management making progress and decisions difficult to track (LSE Report, p. 53)

Recommendation

Improve document management:

- Document management
- Document tracking
- Mail lists

Feedback Solicitation

Problem

Poor ability to solicit meaningful feedback

Recommendation

Improve GNSO's ability to solicit meaningful feedback (BGC Report, p. 37, para. 8)

- Prepare revised process for gathering and addressing public comment on policy issues
- Take into account developments in technology that facilitate community interaction

- Prepare a translation plan for documents associated with policy development
- Recommend ways to monitor and improve effectiveness
- Author documents explaining importance of significant issues

Board-GNSO Communications

Problem

Few formalized channels for GNSO council to communicate with Board

Recommendation

Improve GNSO's coordination with other ICANN structures

(LSE Report Recommendation 15)

- Transparency
- Open meetings
- Minutes
- Telephone vs. face-to-face

CCT-IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS

In addition to the board's areas, CCT members identified other areas where adjustments can yield significant benefits:

Time demands / Compression

Because the GNSO is not prioritizing its work, issues are dealt with concurrently. This gives very little time for thoughtful consideration of issues and constructive dialogue with the community, and for exchanges with the board and other stakeholders. The GNSO is "skipping across" issues rather than having substantive discussions.

Terminology / "Diplomatic-Speak"

Terminology used in ICANN circles can be intimidating, particularly for a newcomer. Many in the community have observed it takes several months, if not a year, to become proficient with ICANN-related terminology. This can dissuade participation.

Further, because ICANN is an international body with a very diverse community of well-intentioned participants, participants tend to speak in diplomatic tones. While decorum is always helpful, over-reliance on diplomatic-speak confuses issues and sometimes prevents direct and candid discussion.

Over-Emphasis on Technology Tools

While technology obviously creates efficiencies and can ease coordination difficulties, reliance on technology may not always be the correct answer.

The “Clutter” of Communications

The GNSO’s universe is very dense with work, conversation, meetings, documents and communications. This leads very often to unnecessary repetition—for example, reciting the history of an issue in every communication about the issue. This is unnecessary, can cause confusion and is inefficient.

Further, the GNSO has not historically done a good job of centralizing data. Information about the GNSO itself, its current work and collaborative efforts are not centrally located, nor is there a robust, searchable repository of useful information about the GNSO and its efforts. Stakeholder groups, working groups, advisory councils, etc., keep data where it’s convenient, without helpful access to others in the GNSO community.

Lack of Visibility into Board Discussions / Considerations of GNSO and SG Input

In conversation with others in the community, the CCT found that lack of visibility into the board’s discussions prior to making a decision is frustrating and leads to confusion. While, of course, the board is entitled to a reasonable measure of privacy and non-public discussion, the GNSO community becomes confused about whether or not its input on an issue was constructively considered or not.

Lack of Known Desired Outcome or Ultimate Objective.

Few communications within the GNSO “begin with the end in mind.” It would be helpful, particularly to new participants, to establish context and orient communications in a way that demonstrates an activity’s progress toward a clearly-stated, agreed-to goal.

Degradation in Civility

The CCT found that some in the GNSO community are discouraged by what is viewed as an uncivil or combative tone in recent discussions of issues, both online and in telephone or in-person meetings. ICANN has clearly stated its community is expected to:

- Communicate online with respect
- Listen carefully to others in order to understand their perspectives
- Take responsibility for their words and actions
- Keep criticism constructive

There is ample room for candid and frank discussion; such discussions need not be uncivil, combative or condescending.

The Prioritization Issue—Too Many Issues, Not Enough Time or Capacity to Thoughtfully Consider Them.

Finally, the CCT must highlight one of the more critical issues impeding good communication and coordination—the need to re-establish a reasonable capacity for conducting GNSO business. We’re including an example for illustration:

Context

By way of an example, recently, the Registrar Constituency was asked for feedback about how to structure its own interactions with the board, particularly during Constituency Day at ICANN international meetings.

The discussion produced two categories of answers—one dealing with the structure of constituency day and how to efficiently interact with the board; the other with the superseding issue of the workload ICANN is trying to bear with its current structure. The larger issue won't be solved by anything suggested by this team, but it's important enough to warrant inclusion as it directly affects the manner in which issues are discussed between the GNSO, its constituencies and the Board.

Capacity

It's clear that critical areas of ICANN are overtaxed—very likely this includes the board. While this has become evident in the tactical methods of handling ICANN's work, no small part of the problem is ICANN (the organization and the community) taking on more work than can be reasonably accommodated under current (or even modified) structures.

The problem exists in a vicious circle: The community grows and pushes more issues, policy and interests into the ICANN system, ICANN grows its staff to meet the "demand," ICANN work becomes better known, and more people join the community and push more into the system.

ICANN's own good intentions—to be a broadly inclusive organization willing to examine, if not address, any issue—works against it here. The threshold for introduction of an issue into community debate or policy development is sufficiently low that almost anything can be brought to the community's attention at any time. (The PPSC, obviously, is tasked with helping to resolve this issue—it's mentioned here because of the impact on communications between the board and GNSO.)

The CCT's discussions with ICANN staff and others in the community indicate there's a shared concern that there's more work in the ICANN system than staff and the community can thoughtfully discuss and handle. When issues are not prioritized, nearly all carry equal weight and demand simultaneous attention; time for thoughtful communication about issues between those responsible for them necessarily becomes constricted.

The CCT looks forward to the PPSC's recommendations about PDP reform and, following, is willing to add to this set of recommendations in view of the PPSC's results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve communications and coordination within the GNSO, the CCT makes the following recommendations.

GNSO Web site

The CCT shares the board's recommendation to develop new GNSO web site requirements (including, but not limited to, collaboration tools, search capability, content management, languages other than English, etc.).

Because a revamped GNSO web site is the fulcrum of a better effort to communicate and coordinate, this is the area where the CCT focused more than half its effort.

The CCT coordinated closely with the web design team of ICANN's staff to learn what efforts were already under way to redesign the site, and merged that effort with its own recommendations. The CCT has two main outputs for this task:

- A survey of GNSO web users (See Appendix B.)
- A set of business requirements for a "replacement" web site (See Appendix C.)

The CCT's belief is a stronger, easier-to-navigate, more intuitive web site will go a very long way toward improving the GNSO's efforts.

Feedback Solicitation

Link GNSO and ICANN sites

Access to the GNSO site should be readily available from the ICANN web page.

Take care with acronyms

The GNSO and ICANN should develop a dictionary of commonly used Internet, ICANN and GNSO acronyms. Conversely, ICANN and the GNSO should endeavor to use fewer acronyms whenever possible.

Summarize documents

All GNSO documents subject to public consultation should have summaries.

Easier document search system

The GNSO should consider developing, in coordination with ICANN staff, a system of document indexing to help users search for the documents they need.

Make localization policies consistent

The GNSO should continue developing consistent localization policies, including multi-lingual vocabularies of often-used terms. The GNSO should take into account in its planning that localization requires anticipation of sufficient time and cost in order to be consistent and informative.

Improve GNSO's ability to solicit meaningful feedback (BGC Report, p. 37, para. 8)

- Prepare revised process for gathering and addressing public comment on policy issues
- Take into account developments in technology that facilitate community interaction
- Prepare a translation plan for documents associated with policy development
- Recommend ways to monitor and improve effectiveness
- Author documents explaining importance of significant issues

Board-GNSO Communications

Given the already significant time burden facing the board and GNSO councilors, the CCT recognizes that *adding to* the time burden with additional communications and coordination duties cannot, at this point, be realistically considered.

The CCT recommends the following:

- Annually, the GNSO articulate for the board and the community its near-term objectives for policy development and coordination. (The CCT recognizes not all objectives are immediately visible, but many are.)
- ICANN staff assigned to GNSO support prepare a bi-monthly update of GNSO activity against its objectives and present it to the board.
- The board should receive a tutorial on use of the revamped GNSO web site.
- Staff supporting the board and the GNSO should make efforts, in a carefully focused way, to link the GNSO web site to the ICANN site.
- Promptly prepare and post detailed minutes from board and GNSO meetings.

[Note from Mason: I wanted to be particularly careful here about adding to the board's or the council's burden. It's already unbearable. I think we'll get more out of making what's already there more efficient vs. adding new communications. Other thoughts welcomed.]

Time demands / Compression

There is little the CCT can do to impact this problem except, as a part of the GNSO reform effort, encourage the GNSO to carefully order its business so as to not overwhelm the community and unintentionally dissuade participation. If thoughtful deliberation and attention—and quality interchange of views—are to be part of the GNSO's process, this is an important issue to tackle.

Terminology / "Diplomatic-Speak"

The GNSO should be mindful of ICANN's intent to be an inclusive organization and encourage participation through use of everyday language and minimal use of acronyms or jargon.

Consistent with the recommendation above, the GNSO also should use its web site as a tool to explain common industry terminology.

Uncluttered Communications

The GNSO should again carefully consider web site usage so as to avoid needless repetition and make information cleanly available and easily searchable. GNSO work groups and other participants should endeavor to make presentations and discussions fully relevant, while not revisiting the entire history of a process when not necessary.

Lack of Visibility into Board Discussions / Considerations of GNSO and SG Input

The CCT encourages the board to provide additional rationale behind its decisions, including what was considered from GNSO input on any decision.

Lack of Known Desired Outcome or Ultimate Objective.

The CCT believes the GNSO's work and communications would be much more efficient and easy to handle by all participants if proper context is established. Too often, ideas (and work teams) are formed to deal with an ambiguous or not well-defined issue, causing the group to wander.

Communications within the GNSO, and to its outside universe, would be much more productive and efficient if presented with the context of a hoped-for outcome.

Degradation in Civility

The CCT encourages ICANN and the GNSO to remind participants of its code of conduct:

- Communicate online with respect
- Listen carefully to others in order to understand their perspectives
- Take responsibility for their words and actions
- Keep criticism constructive

APPENDIX A: LIST OF CCT MEMBERS

- Sedar Acir - Registrar contact for Turkish Registry
- Fouad Bajwa - Non-Commercial Users Constituency
- Chris Chaplow - Commercial and Business Users Constituency
- Mason Cole - Registrar Constituency
- Steve Holsten - gTLD Registries Constituency
- Helen Lavery - DotAlliance
- Zbynek Loebel - Intellectual Property Interests Constituency
- Catherine Sigmar - gTLD Registries Constituency
- Antonio Tavares - Internet Service and Connectivity Providers Constituency
- Jaime Wagner - Internet Service and Connectivity Providers Constituency

APPENDIX B: GNSO WEB USERS: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

GNSO Web Users: Summary and Analysis

Based on in-depth interviews with users, August 2009.

In preparation for a redesign of gns0.icann.org, the Policy Team interviewed eight “power users” of the GNSO web site during August. User names were submitted by the GNSO Secretariat, solicited in an announcement posted to multiple GNSO mailing lists, and recruited by members of the OSC GNSO Communications Coordination Team. The users interviewed represented diverse GNSO constituencies, differing roles, and various levels of experience with the site. Most were North American; however, users residing in Australia, Belgium, and Bulgaria also participated.

Persons Interviewed	Role	Usage of gns0.icann.org
Graham Chenoweth	Registrar	Once/twice a month; leading up to international meetings, multiple times per day
Chuck Gomes	Ultimate GNSO “Deep Insider”	Daily, sometimes more
Dragoslava Greve	ALAC/Web Developer; multi-lingual	Not really a GNSO user; invited to comment as the web developer who improved the ALAC site.
Dan Halloran	Staff	“3 on a scale of 1 -10”
Gary Hill	Pres, Business Constituency; multi-lingual	Once or twice a week; more during lead-up to international meetings thrice yearly
Steve Metalitz	President, Intellectual Property Constituency	“Fairly high;” couple times per week
	Former Work Group Chair	“Not very often.” Bookmarks familiar goals; hasn’t seen GNSO home page in 6 mos.
Bruce Tonkin	Former GNSO Chair	“At least once a week”

Interviews ranged in duration from 20 minutes to 1 hour, with most occupying about 40 minutes. Some of the interviewees began the session rather reserved, but warmed up to the subject. In each case, by the end of the interview the participant seemed candid and open. The complete list of questions asked and detailed notes from each interview can be obtained by emailing scott.pinzon@icann.org.

All users, without exception, said the site was hard to navigate and they could not count on finding what they needed. Comments about the structure of gnso.icann.org included remarks such as “If you don’t already know where something is, the site doesn’t really lend you a hand,” “completely unusable,” and “a really horrible place.”

Many of the users take measures to avoid navigating the site, including:

- Bookmarking resources so they don’t have to find them again
- Having materials from the site emailed to them
- Utilizing Working Group or Constituency sites with friendlier navigation who re-post some of the material
- Subscribing to feeds that push the material.

Clearly, the site could be made more usable.

Most Common Tasks

What are most visitors to GNSO.icann.org trying to do?

Information Retrieval

By far, the most commonly cited task was “Looking for a particular document.” Users cited a wide variety of resources vital to them, including announcements, Final Reports, agendas, policy statements, and the ICANN Bylaws.

Most users felt contemporary documents were the most important to find, but searches for historical and archive material also found a strong voice. Active GNSO members want to know what’s going on now, but often find it essential to their duties to revisit and understand the history of individual policy issues, which can stretch back for years.

Guidance from this group of users indicates that gnso.icann.org needs to function very well as an information retrieval system both for current and older documents. Virtually all interviewees pled for material to be grouped according to issue.

Checking the Calendar

When asked, “When you come to the site, what are you trying to do?” the second most common response was, “Checking the Master Calendar.” Some even remarked that they check the calendar “quite a lot.”

Almost everyone felt the calendar could be improved, but opinions diverged on how. One user said the calendar should be reverse-sorted, pointing out that the interview was taking place in August, yet the calendar starts with January and makes you scroll down to the

current month. Another user felt it odd that links back to 2003 take up prime real estate at the top of the calendar, when that feature is unlikely to be used. From the Calendar, you can click on an Agenda, which shows motions that the Council will decide on; but from that list, you cannot click directly to see the detailed motions. Another user wanted filtering and sorting on the calendar, so that you can see what one group is doing without having to wade through events by all the other groups.

In short, any improvements we can make to the Calendar are likely to be appreciated.

Finding the State of a Policy

Multiple interviewees said they come to the site to “Look for the latest on a policy matter” or “Find out where some policy issue stands in the process.” Doing so was universally acknowledged as a difficult, unintuitive task. Some went to individual Working Group wikis to find the latest; others looked under Issues, or Policies; even Correspondence. Again, there were many strong requests for issues-oriented navigation that presented the latest on an issue but also made “deep dives” into the issue convenient.

Currently, the “latest” on a policy issue is not posted anywhere in a short, concise summary – with the possible exception of inside Policy Update. In our re-design, we should consider whether there are ways to provide updates on the status of a policy issue without overloading the web team with manual maintenance.

Other Tasks

Several other tasks were mentioned individually without being echoed by multiple interviewees. These included:

- Read Policy Update
- See what is on the agenda of the GNSO Council
- See mailing list archive of a working group
- Trying to catch up on what work teams are doing/have decided
- Visiting wikis

Setting the table for guests yet to arrive

Note that 6 of the 8 interviewees were GNSO insiders. Ms. Greve, the ALAC user, was very articulate in pointing out that there is no welcoming material for those new to GNSO. Even our existing “power users” mentioned in passing, that gns0.icann.org needs to present ways to help a new Working Group member, or even an idly curious visitor, understand the important work of the GNSO.

Notes from one interview where the user felt impassioned on behalf of new users: “What is GNSO? It never says. It needs an explanation. What are constituencies? For a newcomer, or new participant, what is it all about? You really need some explanation of what GNSO is. Right now it is just four letters.”

Suggestions included:

- Adding substantial content to an “About” tab

- Creating an org chart showing GNSO structures, with embedded links to details on those structures
- Updating/completing the glossary and the acronyms list
- Adding a feature where, if you hover your mouse over an acronym, its spelled-out version appears like a tool tip

Biggest Problems Perceived

Part of the survey asked interviewees what the worst aspect of the site was. Overwhelmingly, the top answer was “Navigation,” or some equivalent. Comments included, “Not sure where something will be found,” “I don’t know where to look,” “I’m sure there’s some underlying structure, but I can’t figure it out,” “Groupings of documents make no sense conceptually” and “It looks like this page grew organically and people just added stuff as it occurred.”

Users also complained that when they could find a logical grouping of documents, it was usually incomplete or hadn’t been updated in several months. “Things are not always consistently managed.”

Users also faulted the length of many of the pages. They referred to pages “that scroll down forever” and “take five screensful to get to the bottom” as problems, because they access the site from a laptop where excessive scrolling is difficult. One user asked that as many options as possible appear “above the fold,” meaning, immediately visible on the screen when you land on a page. As this request was repeated, we began asking subsequent users if they favored this approach even if it meant they must click several layers deeper to reach content. They strongly affirmed that they would rather click than scroll. The current iteration of the site has annoyed them in this regard.

Other complaints mentioned explicitly, but less often than the above:

- Text-heavy design/lack of negative space
- Proliferation of PDFs
- Most items are in one place only; should be “findable” in multiple places
- Council Resolutions organized by DATE instead of TOPIC. (To find a resolution, you have to know when it happened!)
- Wikis so hard to use, gave up and lets staff do it

Top Features Requested

What do GNSO web site users want? What do they think would be better?

Chunk Up the Info

The most-cited response to that question was: “chunk up the info,” as one user put it. In the words of a European participant, “the pages are a bit samey.” Users requested that the navigation should use more visual cues, more menus (but with shorter lists of options on the menus), for a cleaner look that is easier to understand when in a hurry.

All agreed that items should be “easier to find.” Some thought this required navigation oriented by the user’s role; some thought this required navigation oriented around issues; some thought the site should track what you use the most and automatically present those items to you when you return. Several asked for breadcrumb paths so you know where you are at any point. Whatever the technique used, all users want more logical categorization of content, presented with a cleaner, less cluttered, more visual interface.

Content Designed for Hurried People

The next most-requested feature really has more to do with content than web site techniques. All GNSO users want to know the latest news, in a hurry. Requests that addressed this same felt need included various suggestions toward a solution:

- “Have a digested version of what’s going on, rather than always having to read all the documents in depth”
- “You need a document naming or numbering system, so you can see if a document is the latest version.” (This user applauded how the SSAC numbers their final reports.)
- “Better search, with advanced features to allow exclusions. If I want the Final Report on PEDNR, I don’t want every time Joe or Sam mentioned it in every random meeting.” (Currently there is a Search box on icann.org, but not gnsso.icann.org, a glaring omission mentioned by a few participants)
- “Make the English in good, plain, simple language.” (This interviewee thought that would also help those who do not consider English their primary language.)

Three participants voiced a desire not to go to the GNSO site – they would prefer it if the information came to them. Each of them asked for ongoing RSS feeds that would push updates out to their reader (although they differed on what they thought the feeds should contain). Requests for RSS feeds included pushing the latest minutes, latest resolutions, latest drafts of an issues report, and notice of upcoming events.

GNSO users are volunteers whose lives are full with many other pursuits besides ICANN. When time comes for them to serve a working group or vote on an issue, their “other lives” often keep them preoccupied until the last minute. Yet they want to do a good job – so the context for many users is that they are cramming, trying to get informed hastily. This use case should be kept top of mind during the redesign.

Who’s Who

A third theme of desired features: the community wants to know who is responsible for what; or what human to turn to for greater involvement. Requests along this line suggested:

- “Show pictures of the officers of the Council”
- “For each given issue, list which Staff rep goes with it”
- “The Working Groups should say who in the community to contact if you have a question.”

There were various requests for contact information scattered appropriately across the site. This need might be felt less keenly if the site itself were more helpful; nonetheless, these users clearly wanted a path for personal engagement and interaction with someone knowledgeable. One interviewee even went on at length about ways to stimulate interaction at the international meetings. The suggestions were unrelated to the website, yet showed a keen desire among GNSO volunteers to know who to turn to in the community for each issue or concern.

Other Requests

Rounding out the list of requested features, here are one-off requests not already noted elsewhere:

- List all PDPs under way, with links to each specific PDP
- Please group related material, such as Issues/Policies; Glossary & Acronyms

Most Important Improvement

Every interview ended with the question, “Of all the things we’ve discussed, what is the one most important improvement we could make?” Here are all eight responses, recorded to give the reader a visceral sense of what matters to these users.

- “Focus on reorganizing and developing the space for people who do stuff on the working groups. That’s where the most important engagement with the site is, where people are actually looking to do work. If there’s a barrier to that, people do less or participate less richly, and that hurts the work product.”
- “Allow the user to orientate by what kind of user he is and what he would like to use. Structure the content; group it somehow by logical grouping, would be nice.”
- “Structure. So you can clearly see how the info is structured.”
- “Home page needs to be organized so it’s more usable with topics of links that help people go where they wanna go, and that it’s complete where they go. Also, making sure info is updated and linked in every possible direction – whether I go to a PDP, a motion, or something else, I can find ‘em whichever way I went.”
- “Most important would be to find stuff in the mass of the archive. That’s to do with search, with bundling up info to make it more successful; in one word, accessibility. Navigation, so you can work your way around the site as well.”
- “Better organized. More categories: arrange either by a step in the process, or a topic; what you see now is random. That list on the left is not even the same types of materials; the current list is totally random. So, if there were more categories, and they made sense, each category could have fewer items in it and would look easier. You could find your way.”
- “I guess new RSS feeds would be my number one wish-list thing.”
- “I can’t really answer that, because the GNSO site just isn’t that high a priority – I function okay without it. That’s why I’m struggling to come up with an answer.”

Clearly, if we can make gnso.icann.org more intuitively navigable, these users will consider that a major win. ##

APPENDIX C: BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS – GNSO REPLACEMENT WEBSITE



Business Requirements

[GNSO Replacement Website]

Project #: [TBD]
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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define a set of business requirements for the GNSO Website Replacement Project. This document contains statements and descriptions of the requirements that will apply to a replacement online internet presence for the GNSO.

Project Overview

The overall purpose of the GNSO Website Replacement Project is to provide a new online presence that provides the GNSO user community web-based capabilities to store, locate, access, and share information that is critical to its fundamental role in developing bottom-up policy as a Supporting Organization (SO) within ICANN. This project has been conceptualized into two phases with focus areas as follows: Phase I – website graphical interface, design, information architecture, navigation, basic collaboration, content sharing, and content migration; Phase II – enhanced collaboration features and document management.

The project objectives for Phase I are:

1. Design and implement a website information architecture and user interface that permits efficient and effective navigation and allows users to locate information quickly and with minimal effort.
2. Migrate all “live” content from the existing GNSO website to a website embodying changes in information architecture, navigation, aesthetic and content arrangement.
3. Enable in the website the content sharing capability of the existing multisite, multilingual content management system (CMS) used by ICANN. Content items should be stored centrally and reference-able everywhere, including other ICANN websites that participate in the shared content system.
4. Facilitate website content management by authorized GNSO staff without introducing a greater amount of work than continuing to send requests to Corporate Affairs.

By successfully completing the project’s objectives, the following project goals should be achieved:

1. The GNSO will have an intuitive online internet presence that is easy to navigate, searchable, and efficient to maintain by various distributed roles having responsibility for administration, content creation, and management.
2. The GNSO will have the ability to share content within its organizational website and across other ICANN websites.
3. The GNSO will have the ability to add new features to its online presence, including document management and enhanced collaboration capabilities that will

For more information about the project including background, references, and related documentation, please refer to the Communications and Coordination Team's (CCT) Charter located at: https://st.icann.org/icann-osc/index.cgi?osc_communications_work_team_charter.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in defining the requirements in this document:

1. The GNSO's current online internet activity is a reasonable and reliable predictor of its short-term future needs.
2. ICANN's Drupal Content Management System (CMS) can accommodate limited collaboration features.
3. Enhanced collaboration and all document management capabilities that have yet to be fully described in terms of business requirements (Phase II) can be provisioned separately from the CMS and can be linked to from the GNSO website.
4. Adequate technical and design support, as well as sufficient funding, will be made available to develop the online presence in the near term.

Business Requirements

Background: The Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) is a policy development body of ICANN that focuses on issues related to generic top-level domains (gTLDs), and as such, it is the largest area for policy development activities within ICANN. With approximately a few thousand HTML and non-HTML files – not including items in mailing list archives -- the current GNSO online presence is only second in size to ICANN.org. There are currently six self-organized GNSO constituencies, each recognized as representative of a specific and significant group of stakeholders. Constituencies are diverse in nature and activity, but collaboration and consensus building remain essential to the GNSO's policy development activities. Constituencies are committed to broad membership participation as well as open and transparent procedures and practices. Participants are globally dispersed although one of the goals of the overall GNSO improvements project is to expand participation further into every region of the world. Global participation also means that users will be operating through the widest spectrum of technology; therefore, the ultimate solution(s) must permit the broadest group of users to work and participate in the GNSO via its online presence.

GNSO Online Presence Requirements

Summary: Creating a new GNSO online presence, as envisioned in this document, means providing capabilities that enable the organization to increase process efficiency, improve productivity, and facilitate high performance collaboration among its user community. These capabilities should:

- help GNSO participants locate each other and communicate efficiently across organizational and geographic boundaries;
- incorporate an intuitive interface and support the continued use of common ICANN software productivity tools; and
- allow content owners (with appropriate authorization) to create individual and group pages and publish, store, share, and track information and documents.

The resulting online presence should be easy to use from the standpoint of an administrator, a content owner, an author, a contributor, or a visitor. The online presence should be capable of rapid deployment so as to result in the least amount of disruption to the on-going work of the GNSO during implementation. It is a core element of all capabilities that they support multiple languages and locales and that care is taken to help ensure that users are able to make effective use of all services in low-bandwidth environments.

To meet the changing and growing needs of the organization, especially as outreach efforts draw more participants, the GNSO's new online presence should provide the ability to augment capabilities already described in Phase I, for example, external document management and enhanced collaboration, which, if they cannot be integrated, can be linked to its website.

Usability, Navigation, Search

1. Due to the public, non-profit nature of the GNSO's work and the fact that its community members utilize many different computing platforms, the capabilities provided within the online presence must support multiple browsers as well as multiple operating systems and should not require the downloading or installing of any applets on visitor/client computers. Keeping the Least Developed Countries and the At-Large community in mind, the site must be useful and navigable even to users who have a slower (dial-up) connection to the Internet.
2. ICANN is an international organization and its GNSO community members are located in every region of the world. Its online users and visitors come from many different countries and their native languages are varied. The website must be capable of displaying and searching translated content in at least those languages determined by the ICANN Translation Policy and, where feasible, integrating industry standard translation tools. Distinct URLs should be available for supported language versions. There should be readily visible indicator text in native language and script to highlight specific pages available in corresponding languages; if no page is available in that language the indicator text should not appear.
3. The GNSO depends upon volunteers, from the community, to perform its policy development functions for ICANN. Volunteers, as such, do not spend most of their time working on ICANN tasks. Given the limited amount of precious time that they have to offer, their interactions within the GNSO online presence should be intuitive, efficient, and productive and should include easy-to-find, easy-to-use, navigation features (e.g. top menu bar, "breadcrumbs") so that users know where to go to find the information they seek, where they are in the website (at all times), and where they have been should they want to retrace steps. A user should be able to: (a) move forward and backward without error, (b) discover quickly where to go and what to do if they are temporarily lost, (c) find HOME and a website directory on every page, (d) know how to recover (or get help) if they encounter broken links or scripting errors, and (e) stay in the current website and not be transported elsewhere unintentionally. Features helpful to newcomers, such as a glossary of terminology and acronyms, should be noticeably present and easy to find.
4. The information architecture (a.k.a. taxonomy) of the website content should be organized logically and simply around the subject areas most frequently encountered by the GNSO community and individual content units/elements (e.g. documents) should be accessible with a minimum number of "clicks".
5. Because of the diversity represented in the GNSO community, multiple navigation paths should be carefully considered and constructed. The site should work well for each of the most prominent segments within the community. For example, newcomers should find what they need easily, but so should veteran Working Group members – even though the newcomer and the veteran probably want very different content. The implementation team should seriously consider the use of different 'user roles' to solve this important issue.

6. All content on the website should be fully indexed and searchable by means such as keyword, title, author, and date with results displayed in terms of relevance to the query. Search capability should also feature “highlighting” (e.g. bold) searched terms in displayed content and automatic correction for mistyped entries (e.g. “did you mean...?”). Users should be provided the option to search the local GNSO website, ICANN at large, or the entire internet.
7. Although these requirements specify the need for robust internal search capabilities, GNSO users also make use of external industry standard search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo) that should continue to be able to interpret and properly index its content.

Content Management

1. There are many varied and complex activities in motion at all times within the GNSO. To make the website dynamic and to ensure that its content remains up-to-date with the rapid pace of change, the website should provide tools that enable authorized content managers to create new pages (and update current ones) by using pre-defined theme elements that are consistent with overall website style, layout and design.
2. Consistent with the necessity to distribute the workload of creating and updating content on the website, there should be tools that remember the time and date of web content modifications together with the capability to rollback to prior web page versions when necessary.
3. Due to the sheer number of complex initiatives and the many different teams, groups, and staff personnel working on items at any time, the online presence should enable authorized content managers to simply and quickly update current events to keep the community informed of the latest progress, status, document versions, and decisions relating to particular topics (e.g. blogging?).
4. Consistent with providing lead topic and subject matter experts the ability to create news and event blogs, there should be a mechanism by which users can voluntarily subscribe (and unsubscribe) to such articles so that updates are delivered automatically (e.g. RSS feed, email alerts).
5. As mentioned in the Background section (above), the current GNSO website is home to more than thousands of files containing documents and other content elements. It is extremely important, due to the need for accuracy and precision, that redundancy, replication, and confusion be minimized to the largest extent possible. Content items should be stored in one place and referenced everywhere including other ICANN websites and portals.
6. As content items are added to the website and at other times when the need arises, the website should permit users and content managers to define useful information categories (e.g. keywords, tags, metadata) that provide contextual indications of the subject, audience, and/or intent so that navigation, aggregation and search functions are optimized.

7. GNSO has a need to announce significant news and other events that have broad applicability to its community. Placing such information on a banner(s) would be desirable so that users/visitors can be quickly noticed of critical information.
8. The online presence should provide the capability to import and upload multiple formats for documents, images, audio, and video.

Collaboration

There are certain collaboration capabilities that the GNSO needs desperately as highlighted by the pain points itemized below:

1. The GNSO sponsors and tracks a vast number of meetings and teleconferences that involve members of the community. Given the disparate time zones and the fact that many participants are engaged with multiple committees and working groups, it is mandatory that the GNSO maintain an aggregate calendar that enables its Secretariat, and others, to schedule activities to minimize overbooking and routinely inconveniencing participants from around the globe as to day of the week and time of day. The website should enable calendaring functionality that identifies participants, date/time, topic or purpose, logistics (e.g. call-in details, online meeting room links, etc.). In addition, the calendar should provide references (links) to MP3 recordings and transcripts, where applicable. In addition, for those users who manage their calendars using computer software (e.g. iCalendar standards), it would be ideal if there was some way that they could update their own calendars simply and easily from data posted on the GNSO website. Similarly, it would be helpful to users if they could be automatically notified any time a GNSO calendar meeting or event was changed/updated as to date/time/logistics.
2. The GNSO currently uses a separate website application called “Doodle” for participant scheduling. Ideally, the calendaring capability would be able to present multiple dates and times for community members to indicate availability for the purposes of scheduling meetings (e.g. polling).
3. The GNSO also makes use of separate meeting places such as “Adobe Connect.” Again, for simplicity and consistency, it would be helpful if some or all of these tools were integrated or, if that is not possible, provide links to facilitate access.
4. The GNSO currently employs a separate Website, called “Social Text Wiki” for collaboration. It would be ideal to include these capabilities within the replacement website, specifically the ability to create, modify, and administer a hierarchical sequence of pages (e.g. chapters, sections, subsections).
5. To make it easier and simpler for GNSO community member to locate and contact each other, provide the capability for a GNSO participant (e.g. constituency) repository or database containing information such as name, e-mail address, and affiliation.
6. The GNSO’s fundamental policy development mission necessitates threaded comment (e.g. discussion forum) capabilities relative to published content on the

website with the ability to organize and display posts chronologically by date or hierarchically by topic.

Document Management

1. The GNSO's need for sophisticated document management capabilities is well understood, but it is outside the initial scope of this project. As a temporary measure, perhaps it would be possible to provide something akin to an FTP space for the storage of the document versions with password protected access for download and upload by team members. With consistent file naming conventions, such capability would reduce emailing of documents, improve version coordination, and ensure that individuals knew and were working on the latest revisions. It would also provide a consolidated and permanent repository where important GNSO content versions could be retained and backed up periodically. Many file storage and collaboration websites exist; the implementation team is free to research and, if appropriate, recommend an existing, low-cost "cloud" resource as a solution if that is the most effective way to solve document management problems.

Administration

1. The GNSO is currently employing a sub-optimal process that requires all website changes to be forwarded for action to a central web-admin team. To permit easier updating and faster change that keeps pace with its dynamic environment, the GNSO would like to distribute content management control to a number of authorized managers who should have the ability to edit, update, and maintain the website via standard internet web browser tools. Content editors should have the ability to create pages and hierarchical menus as well as import text from various standard authoring tools (e.g. Word, or a simplified HTML editor) with minimal reformatting necessary to render properly on the website. Ideally, the platform would also support basic workflows such that content requiring multiple steps (e.g. authoring, approval, translation) could be managed efficiently and effectively within the website.
2. Consistent with the need to distribute work functions across members of the community and Staff, with proper authorization, the GNSO website should support the creation of multiple roles for various classes of users that provide different levels of access, security, and administrative privileges (e.g. website admin, authoring, page design, content editing, translation).
3. The "admin" system should possess a search capability for locating pages and document files that have yet to be published.

Reporting

1. In order to maintain the new website's effectiveness, website administrators and content owners should have the ability to track various traffic statistics which might include: number of unique visitors, total visits, page views, length of time

on website, bounce rates cross-referenced by visitor location, browser languages, network connections, referring websites, search engines and keywords used.

Security

1. Because the GNSO site will use collaborative tools where strangers could post content, pages where community input is accepted must be filtered according to industry best practices (such as those recommended by the [Open Web Application Security Project](#)), to prevent malicious input such as SQL injection, cross-site scripting, IFRAME-based attacks, or spam.

System Users

The solution should include the following users of the system.

No.	User Name	Role	Department	Location
1.	[This Section is TBD]			
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

System Integration

1. For the GNSO's mobile users to remain engaged when traveling, the infrastructure/platform should support a future project for the website to be rendered on mobile devices.
2. Requirements listed above should, wherever feasible, be implemented to leave as many options for the future as possible including, for example, the ability to incorporate future modules of user generated content such as polls, blogs, and online comments without increased development work beyond a reasonable level.

Data Migration

1. To the maximum extent possible, all content on the current GNSO website should be able to be migrated to the new website such that all existing document and other links work properly in the new environment.
2. The ability to create archive areas for older documents in each section which currently overload the present GNSO website.
3. The new online presence should be capable of being deployed so as to result in the least amount of disruption to the ongoing work of the GNSO during implementation.
4. In order that valuable content can still be found by search engines, the new website should have the ability to allow pages to retain the same URL that existed previously to the maximum extent possible.

Testing

1. In Phase 1, the GNSO would prefer to be engaged with ICANN Corporate Affairs employing an agile development methodology through which the Communications Work Team (representing the GNSO User Community) would be able to prototype designs, information architecture (e.g. taxonomy), and navigation. Testing, per se, would be done in concert with the building/prototyping process and according to ICANN I/T technical benchmarks.

Training

1. To be determined as capabilities are developed and as final functionality is implemented.

Documentation

1. Users should have access to help menus for capabilities provided within GNSO's online presence, including features, functionality, and content (videos, slides, tutorials, "how to" articles, etc.).
2. An introductory level handbook covering capabilities provided within GNSO's online presence should be created and kept up-to-date and be accessible online.

Support

1. Capability for users to seek help or call attention to operational problems either by e-mail, or online request that is ticketed and tracked. The implementation may require splitting responsibilities between GNSO, Corporate Affairs, and I/T using existing "ticketing" applications.

System Support

1. No unique requirements over and above those of ICANN.

System Availability

1. GNSO participants span the entire globe and as a result the website must be available 24/7 except during periods of maintenance.

System Recoverability

1. No unique requirements over and above those of ICANN.

Disaster Recovery

1. Daily back up of the data, files and configuration settings covered by GNSO's online presence must be performed along with maintenance of means for restoration of information and capabilities.
2. Additionally, a periodic archive copy of the website should be kept for records and posterity.

System Performance

1. No unique requirements over and above those of ICANN.

Licensing

1. No unique requirements over and above those of ICANN.

Audit, Controls, and Compliance

1. No unique requirements over and above those of ICANN.

Document Control

Document Approvers

Name	Title	Approval Status	Date
Mason Cole	Chair - CCT		17 Jul 2009
Chuck Gomes	Chair - OSC		
Avri Doria	Chair – GNSO Council		

Document Reviewers

Name	Title	Date Sent
Marc Salvatierra	Corp Affairs Website Development	5 Jun 2009
Scott Pinzon	Director – Policy Communications	13 Jul 2009
Rob Hoggarth	Sr. Policy Director	15 Jul 2009

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Description
1.0	27 May 09	Communications Work Sub Team 1 [Ken Bour, Chris Chaplow and Steve Holsten]	First Draft developed under auspices of Operations Steering Committee
1.1	10 Jun 09	Marc Salvatierra	Changed “website” to “online presence” in many locations and recommended other edits that the CCT Sub-Team accepted as providing clarification and precision.
1.2	14 Jul 09	Scott Pinzon, Director of Policy Communications	Recommended a number of additions and clarifications which were submitted to the team and approved for incorporation into the document.