ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

Prague, Czech Republic, 16 June 2025

GAC Communiqué – Prague, Czech Republic[1]

The Prague Communiqué was drafted and agreed in a hybrid setting, during the ICANN83 Policy Forum, with some GAC participants in Prague, Czech Republic, and others remotely. The GAC's discussions during this public meeting are reflected in the GAC Meeting Minutes and the transcripts of all sessions, available at https://gac.icann.org/meetings-records/. The Communiqué was circulated to the GAC immediately after the meeting to provide an opportunity for all GAC Members and Observers to consider it before publication, bearing in mind the special circumstances of a hybrid meeting. No objections were raised during the agreed timeframe before publication.

I. Introduction

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) met in Prague, Czech Republic, in a hybrid setting including remote participation, from 9 to 12 June 2025.

Eighty (80) GAC Members and nine (9) Observers attended the meeting.

The GAC meeting was conducted as part of the ICANN83 Policy Forum. All GAC plenary and working group sessions were conducted as open meetings.

The Governmental Advisory Committee mourns the loss of Nigel Hickson, an outstanding champion of a free, open and secure Internet, and an ardent contributor to the multi-stakeholder governance of the Internet. Nigel was highly esteemed in the ICANN community and the wider Internet Governance ecosystem, beloved among his GAC colleagues and his counterparts in many governments and international fora, to whom he was an influential expert, a thoughtful leader, a deeply caring mentor and a dear friend. Nigel Hickson will be remembered as a remarkable and genuine man, a role model whose intelligence, dedication, humility, kindness and humour have left an indelible mark on the GAC and ICANN, in the service of the global public interest.

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[1] To access previous GAC Advice, whether on the same or other topics, past GAC communiqués are available at: https://gac.icann.org/

II. Inter-Constituency Activities and Community Engagement

Meeting with the ICANN Board

The GAC met with the ICANN Board and discussed:
- ICANN Policy Development
- Accuracy of Domain Registration Data
- Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation
- Community Statements of Interest
- Deferral of the Accountability and Transparency Review (ATRT4)

Meeting with the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

The GAC met with members of the ALAC and discussed:

- Applicant Support Program (ASP) and Equity in the Next Round of New gTLDs
- Public Interest Frameworks and the Role of ICANN Advisory Committees

Meeting with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

The GAC met with members of the GNSO Council and discussed:
- Accuracy of Domain Registration Data
- DNS Abuse Mitigation
- Registration Data Request Service (RDRS)
- Urgent Requests for Disclosure of Registration Data and Law Enforcement Requestors Authentication

Meeting with the Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

The GAC met with members of the ASO and discussed:
- Public Comments on the Governance Document for the Recognition, Maintenance and Derecognition of Regional Internet Registries
- Feedback and Participation from Regional Engagements
- Next Steps and Expected Timeline to finalize the new Governance Document

Meeting with the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

The GAC met with members of the SSAC and discussed:
- Access to Registration Data
- Free and Open-Source Software
- DNS Blocking

Cross Community Discussions

GAC Members participated in relevant cross-community sessions scheduled as part of ICANN83, including regarding the WSIS+20 Review, and ongoing discussion of the ICANN Public Meetings Strategy (How We Meet Discussion Group).

III.   Internal Matters

1. GAC Membership

There are currently 184 GAC Member States and Territories and 40 Observer Organizations.

2. GAC Elections

The 2025 election process for GAC Vice-Chairs will be initiated shortly after the ICANN83 meeting. The initial nomination period will close on 10 September 2025. If needed, a balloting process will be conducted from 3 October until 27 October 2025 (concluding during the ICANN84 public meeting), after which time the election results will be announced.

3. GAC Working Groups

- **GAC Public Safety Working Group (PSWG)**

The GAC PSWG continued its work to advocate for improved measures to combat DNS Abuse and promote lawful, effective access to domain name registration data. In the weeks prior to ICANN83, the PSWG met with multiple ICANN stakeholder groups to discuss topics of mutual interest. The PSWG contributed to the GAC discussions on DNS Abuse Mitigation and on WHOIS and Registration Data Issues, which highlighted several aspects of the PSWG's ongoing work. Key takeaways involving PSWG workstreams included potential topics for narrowly scoped Policy Development Processes (PDPs) to address DNS abuse, law enforcement authentication, the next steps regarding the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) and continued progress on work related to "Urgent Requests" for disclosure of registration data.

4. GAC Operational Matters

Pursuant to GAC Operating Principle 53, GAC Members finalized revisions to the GAC Operating Principles regarding the timing of annual committee leadership elections and the terms of the GAC Chair and the GAC Vice Chairs. GAC members in attendance agreed to revise GAC Operating Principle 31 to adjust the committee's annual election cycle to conclude during the second meeting of the calendar year. This revision will enable leadership transitions to take place at the end of the ICANN Annual General Meeting when the ICANN Board and other ICANN communities also begin their leadership terms. GAC Members in attendance also agreed to revise GAC Operating Principle 21 to adjust the term limit of the GAC Chair to three consecutive terms of two years and the term limits of the GAC Vice-Chairs to two consecutive terms of two years.

5. GAC Strategic Planning

The GAC Leadership reported on its ongoing work with GAC Topic Leads to develop the next GAC Annual Plan 2025/2026 and reviewed expected updates to some of the GAC Strategic Objectives and various Expected Outcomes.

A draft of the next GAC Annual Plan is expected to be shared after ICANN83 for GAC Members' consideration and input, with a view to endorse the plan during ICANN84.

6. Capacity Development

The ICANN83 GAC Capacity Development session focused on the New gTLD Program Next Round Applicant Guidebook and particularly on matters of GAC interest related to the applicant journey, community input, objections and appeals, contention resolution, and application evaluation. The very engaging and well attended session was instrumental in preparing for the productive GAC plenary discussions that followed on the next round of New gTLDs.

The GAC thanks the ICANN org Next Round team for facilitating the Capacity Development session. The GAC Leadership and Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG) co-chairs will assess the results from the post session survey and will work with the USRWG to continue delivering capacity development opportunities for GAC Members. In that context, the GAC also learned about regional capacity development activities that are taking place in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, and agreed to encourage similar activities in other regions.

IV. Issues of Importance to the GAC

1. Domain Name Registration Data

a. Registration Data Request Service (RDRS)

The GAC looks forward to reviewing the draft final report of the RDRS Standing Committee foreseen to be ready in August 2025. The GAC expresses its concerns regarding the reduced use of the tool in light of the departure of certain registrars from the pilot and reiterates its recommendation that RDRS participation should be made mandatory for all gTLD registrars to increase its utility. The GAC also welcomes the increased use of the tool by law enforcement requestors as per the latest metrics report of May 2025 and renews its call for the RDRS to continue operating beyond its pilot period and for enhancements to be made to the RDRS as previously identified by both the ICANN Board and the GAC, including improved integration for requests related to privacy and proxy services. To that end, the GAC welcomes the Board's comment during ICANN83 that ICANN is developing an analysis of which envisioned enhancements to the RDRS would require new policy development and which ones could be completed based on existing recommendations or policies. The GAC looks forward to ICANN completing this review and sharing it with the community as soon as possible, as the GAC expects it will be useful in outlining possible next steps.

Further, the GAC notes that work on authentication solutions for law enforcement requestors is proceeding in the Urgent Requests work track. The GAC reiterates that one important enhancement to the RDRS would be to ensure it can incorporate these future authentication solutions. Promoting awareness and education regarding the RDRS should also remain an important priority. To that end, it may be warranted to contemplate policy requiring links to RDRS (or successor systems) from Registration Data Directory Services that Contracted Parties are required to provide. The GAC further emphasizes the need to improve the RDRS platform's usability, particularly for small actors and first-time requesters, through user interface enhancements and clearer guidance for users.

b. Urgent Requests for Disclosure of Registration Data

The GAC appreciates recent progress made in the two parallel tracks of work regarding Urgent Requests for disclosure of domain name registration data. In the authentication track, the GAC supports the ongoing efforts of the PSWG to develop technical mechanisms to authenticate the identities of law enforcement requestors submitting Urgent Requests. The GAC appreciates the participation of ICANN community members in the Practitioners Group established by the PSWG to work on this issue, as well as the ongoing collaboration with ICANN staff whose expertise has been invaluable in the exploration of potential solutions.

In the policy track, the GAC urges rapid progress in the Registration Data Policy Implementation Review Team (IRT) discussions regarding the timeline for responses to authenticated Urgent Requests. The GAC urges the IRT to advance its discussions promptly, as the IRT has not yet resolved the timeline for responses to Urgent Requests after its three 90-minute discussions to date, including a meeting at ICANN83. The GAC reiterates its position that given the vital public safety interests related to Urgent Requests, responding to such requests within 24 hours is considered an appropriate timeline, which is also in line with ICANN's proposal for consideration by the IRT. The GAC encourages exploration of what conditions would facilitate Contracted Parties processing Urgent Requests within this timeline.

The GAC intends to continue following both work tracks. Swift progress is essential, as the GAC notes that after its Advice in the ICANN79 San Juan Communiqué issued 15 months ago, and despite the GAC's Follow-Up on Previous Advice in the ICANN80 Kigali Communiqué, the policy regarding Urgent Requests is still not in place.

c. Accuracy of Registration Data

The GAC continues to emphasize the importance of accuracy in domain registration data. The GAC remains concerned about the pause in the work of the Accuracy Scoping Team since 2022 and encourages the new GNSO Small Team on Accuracy to learn from the previous scoping experience. At the same time, the GAC welcomes the separate preliminary ideas shared during ICANN83 by the GNSO regarding the work of the new GNSO Small Team covering possible next steps on accuracy, based on responses given by the GAC and other community members to the GNSO's recent threshold questions. In particular, the GAC notes with interest the idea to investigate shortening the timeline for registrars to perform registration data validation and verification. The current timeline under the Registrar Accreditation Agreement is 15 days. However, presenters during the ICANN83 briefing on DNS Abuse observed that attempts to mitigate phishing attacks require swift action because cybercriminals often register many new domains in just a few hours, exploit them, profit from abusive activities, and abandon those domains within just a few days. This is increasingly exacerbated by the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as discussed by the presenters.

The GAC looks forward to receiving information about the final recommendations made by the GNSO Small Team and any other possible next steps on accuracy. In addition, the GAC noted the explanations provided by the Board during ICANN83 regarding accuracy-related requirements in ICANN's contracts and looks forward to additional details, as discussed in the session, regarding how ICANN ensures compliance with the full set of accuracy requirements. The GAC also welcomes further information from Contracted Parties on their practices related to accuracy. The GAC notes that receiving further details and clarifications to address questions from GAC members would be helpful to inform continued discussions within the GAC.

2. DNS Abuse

DNS Abuse remains a significant concern for governments involved in ICANN. The GAC welcomed last year's contract amendments establishing obligations for Contracted Parties to mitigate and disrupt DNS Abuse, as a first step. Further work is necessary, however, to stem the increasing cost to the public of phishing, malware, botnets, and other forms of DNS Abuse.

During the ICANN83 DNS Abuse session, the GAC appreciated learning about the anti-abuse practices from the local host country code top-level domain (ccTLD) – cz.nic - and the latest analysis and findings in the Phishing Landscape 2024 report by Interisle. These interventions underscored the vast scale of phishing campaigns, the substantial costs imposed on society, and the critical importance of proactive DNS Abuse prevention and mitigation. The rapid weaponization of domain names used for phishing campaigns makes swift action essential. The GAC continuously explores a wide range of options, including proactive practices, collaboration within the broader ecosystem, requirements for registrants offering subdomain services, as well as links between addressing DNS Abuse and work on domain name registration data.

The GAC is pleased that several community stakeholder groups share its view that more work is needed to address DNS Abuse. Continued efforts are necessary, and the upcoming new round of generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) set to open next year, underscores the urgency to act swiftly.

In particular, the GAC has discussed, both before and during ICANN83, several proposals for further policy work. These discussions involved representatives from the Net Beacon Institute, which recently issued a White Paper proposing different PDPs to address DNS Abuse, and the Contracted Parties House. It is encouraging to see that the GNSO Small Team on DNS Abuse plans to deliver its recommendations on this topic before the next ICANN meeting. The GAC believes that the full spectrum of ideas so far discussed—including both proactive and reactive measures—deserves attention. The discussion has included specific issue areas, such as associated domain checking, bulk registrations, gating Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), investigating subdomains, public reporting of abuse statistics, the relationship between the timeliness of registration data verification and DNS Abuse, and transparency reporting obligations. Given the time constraints leading up to the next application round for New gTLDs, the GAC recommends prioritizing specific topics, as outlined in the GAC's ICANN83 advice.

3. Next Round of New gTLDs

a. Implementation Review Team (IRT)

The GAC noted the submission by the IRT of the complete draft of the Applicant Guidebook for Public Comment. The GAC recognized the tremendous efforts of the IRT in the delivery of this milestone in preparation for the Next Round of New gTLDs, and thanked the GAC's IRT representatives for their participation in this critical work.

b. Applicant Support Program (ASP)

The GAC recalled the agreed compromise[2] between the GAC and the Board which resulted from the GAC-Board Bylaws Consultation on the ICANN80 GAC Advice[3], including the Board's agreement to conduct a review at the halfway mark of successful Applicant Support Program (ASP) applications. The GAC recalled the Board's agreement to direct ICANN org to share results of geographic distribution of ASP applications with the IRT after 20 qualified ASP applicants to determine:

- any need for adjustments to Communications, Outreach & Engagement to target applications from underserved regions including developing countries, and
- if additional funding would be required if the number of approved applications exceeds the budgeted amount of 40-45.

The GAC recalls that country-level statistics can be made available by the relevant ICANN Government Stakeholder Engagement team if requested by a GAC member in their region. The GAC notes that this data will only be shared with the consent of applicants so that the relevant government can assist with targeted outreach and support.

The GAC noted the current statistics presented by ICANN org on the status of ASP applications in process and, in particular, the very small number of completed applications submitted, given that there are only about 5 months left in the 12-month ASP application window. Furthermore, the GAC notes concern that the current process may not reach potential applicants who are least connected to ICANN's processes. The GAC expressed concern that with the current pace of applications there may be no opportunity to conduct a review or determine any adjustments to the current Communications, Outreach & Engagement plan before the ASP application deadline. This review could identify:

- the obstacles preventing applications from moving forward more rapidly, and recommend appropriate mitigation activities;
- draft applications that may not be completed before the deadline, and
- targeted improvements to ensure the ASP achieves its inclusive purpose.

The GAC is therefore of the view that such a review should now be conducted immediately, rather than after 20 qualified applications, in order to provide sufficient time for any project implementation course corrections, including Communications, Outreach & Engagement adjustments necessary to maximize the number of ASP applications completed and submitted for evaluation before the deadline.

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[2] GAC Response to Board Update following Board-GAC Bylaws Consultation on ICANN80 GAC Advice (16 October 2024): https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/gac-response-update-following-board-gac-bylaws-consultation-on-icann80-gac-advice

[3] GAC-Board Consultation Call on ICANN80 Advice (16 September 2024): https://gac.icann.org/sessions/gac-and-icann-board-consultation-call-on-icann80-advice-asp

c. GAC Readiness

GAC members highlight the importance of GAC readiness in preparation for the Next Round of New gTLDs, notably regarding opportunities for GAC interventions after the "reveal day" of string applications. GAC volunteers are encouraged to collaborate with GAC topic leads to monitor timelines and milestones related to the next round applications process, including actively preparing for GAC Early Warnings, GAC Advice and other opportunities for input to applicants, the ICANN Board, and ICANN org.

Some concerns were expressed within the GAC about potential increased spam and abuse in connection to the expansion of the DNS. It was suggested that the GAC consider, in advance of evaluating applications, how the Committee should approach discussions on Early Warnings and other instruments at its disposal in order to protect the public interest.

4. Governance of the Regional Internet Registries

The GAC appreciates the ASO for providing an overview of the feedback received on the efforts to review and revise the RIR Governance document, currently in place as Internet Coordination Policy Two (ICP-2). Discussion covered common issues received during the public consultation period. Reflecting on the draft document that was subject to Public Comment, the GAC notes that it would appreciate more background on the rationale behind a number of changes that were introduced in this document. For the upcoming version, the GAC asked for a redline version, with brief rationale on feedback that was not accommodated. Additionally, a number of members asked for more information on the expected implementation and timelines to operationalize the outcomes. As an issue of importance, the GAC remains committed to provide the ASO with the necessary feedback in intersessional work and is looking forward to a broader community discussion during the ICANN84 meeting on the new revision of the draft RIR Governance document. A useful reference in terms of multistakeholder process are the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, which could be considered by the ASO going forward.

5. Community Statements of Interest (SOI)

The GAC acknowledges the latest Public Comment opportunity shared by ICANN seeking comment on an updated version of the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct Concerning Statements of Interest. The GAC appreciates the continuing progress on this matter by the Board and staff, and reinforces the importance of concluding the effort by the end of this calendar year at the latest. The GAC welcomes the Board's affirmation in its meeting with the GAC during ICANN83, that the updated Draft Code of Conduct would not expand existing disclosure requirements for GAC representatives.

6. Deferral of the Fourth ICANN Accountability and Transparency Review (ATRT4)

The GAC notes the intended deferral of the ATRT4 review process, as well as the decisions adopted by the Board recently on other accountability mechanisms as explained in the 27 May letter from the Board Chair to the GAC Chair[4]. In this regard, the GAC recalls the essential character of the ATRT reviews as mandated by the Bylaws and their central role for the well-functioning of ICANN's multistakeholder accountability, transparency, and governance. Accordingly, the GAC calls on the Board to expedite consultations on the matter with the multistakeholder community, with a view to finding a common ground approach for a way forward respectful of Bylaws obligations as soon as possible.

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[4] ICANN Board Chair letter to SO/AC Chairs - 27 May 2025:
https://gac.icann.org/advice/correspondence/incoming/20250527/update-on-icann-reviews

V. GAC Consensus Advice to ICANN Board

The following items of advice from the GAC to the Board have been reached on the basis of consensus as defined in the ICANN Bylaws[5]:

1. Policy Development Related to DNS Abuse

a. The GAC advises the Board:

      i. To urge the GNSO Council to undertake all necessary preparations prior to ICANN84 towards starting targeted and narrowly scoped Policy Development Processes (PDPs) on DNS Abuse issues, prioritizing bulk registration of malicious domain names and the responsibility of registrars to investigate domains associated with registrant accounts that are the subject of actionable reports of DNS Abuse.

RATIONALE

Before new strings are added to the DNS as a result of the next round, further work on DNS Abuse is needed to stem the increasing cost to the public of phishing, malware, botnets, and other forms of DNS abuse. Furthermore, the GAC encourages PDPs that are targeted and clearly scoped to achieve results according to shorter timelines.

The GAC appreciates the wealth of proposals for further policy work recently expressed by different parts of the community and maintains they all deserve attention. The GAC supports multistakeholder action to achieve Consensus Policy outcomes and encourages, for the time being, prioritization of specific issues such as malicious use of bulk registrations.

Given this timeline, the GAC encourages progress on commencing narrowly-scoped PDPs between ICANN83 and ICANN84.

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[5] Bylaws section.12.2.(a)(x) The advice of the Governmental Advisory Committee on public policy matters shall be duly taken into account, both in the formulation and adoption of policies. In the event that the Board determines to take an action that is not consistent with Governmental Advisory Committee advice, it shall so inform the Governmental Advisory Committee and state the reasons why it decided not to follow that advice. Any Governmental Advisory Committee advice approved by a full Governmental Advisory Committee consensus, understood to mean the practice of adopting decisions by general agreement in the absence of any formal objection ("GAC Consensus Advice"), may only be rejected by a vote of no less than 60% of the Board, and the Governmental Advisory Committee and the Board will then try, in good faith and in a timely and efficient manner, to find a mutually acceptable solution. The Governmental Advisory Committee will state whether any advice it gives to the Board is GAC Consensus Advice.

VI. Next Meeting

The GAC is scheduled to meet next during the ICANN84 Annual General Meeting in Muscat, Oman on 25-30 October 2025.

ICANN83 | PF – ICANN Board and GAC Meeting
Tuesday, June 10, 2025 – 13:45 to 15:00 CEST

DAN GLUCK

Hello and welcome to the ICANN83 ICANN Board and GAC meeting on Tuesday, the 10th of June at 11:45 UTC. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted in the proper form in the Zoom chat pod.

Interpretation for this session will include all six U.N. languages and Portuguese. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom room. When called upon, participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. Please state your name for the record and the language you will be speaking when speaking a language other than English. Please speak at a reasonable pace and allow for accurate interpretation. I will now hand the floor over to GAC Chair, Nico Caballero.

NICO CABALLERO

Thank you very much, Daniel. Welcome, everyone. I hope you enjoyed your lunch. I have the pleasure of introducing my board colleagues, Chris Chapman, Becky Burr, Tripti Sinha, Board Chair, Mr. Kurtis Lindqvist, ICANN CEO, and my distinguished vice chairs, Marco Hogewoning from the Netherlands, and Mr. Jorge Cancio

from Switzerland. This session will be running till 3 o'clock p.m., and then we'll have a, hopefully, good coffee break.

And as regarding our agenda for today, we'll be talking about some, let's say, prearranged questions that we have already sent to the Board in advance of this meeting. We'll try to make sure to allocate enough time to a good Q&A session, and then we'll be giving some closing remarks.   So with that, let me welcome again my distinguished Board colleagues. And we have, as you can see… if we can, please move to slide number three.

So these are the five main topics we have for discussion today with the Board, the first one being ICANN Policy Development, the second Registration Data and Accuracy, the third one, Privacy and Proxy Accreditation, Community Statements of interest, and then topic number five, deferral, and that's an important word, Deferral of ATRT4 Review. So with that, let me welcome again the Board. Tripti, over to you.

TRIPTI SINHA   Nico, first, on behalf of the board, thank you very much for this bilateral session. It's always proven to be a very healthy dialogue between the two groups, and we've seen some excellent outcomes from these discussions. So, without any further delay, we'll start running the questions.

NICO CABALLERO	Yes, unless Kurtis wants to say anything at this point. Not necessary, but it's up to you, or we can just dive in and get straight to the questions, whatever you prefer. Okay, so let's dive in. Next slide, please. We have topic number one, which is, ICANN -- sorry. Alan, can we check your audio and video? Can you say anything in order to make sure that we can hear you?
ALAN BARETT	Hello, this is Alan Barrett. I hope you can hear me.
NICO CABALLERO	Perfect. Thank you so much. So, again, with that, we're already on slide number four, and the topic here is ICANN Policy Development. I'm not going to read the whole background because that was sent beforehand, but just in order to give some color and to provide some quick background.
	Let me just say that GAC members support the view that ICANN should improve the current approach to policy development and move expeditiously toward a framework of more focused and narrowly scoped policy development process as soon as possible, in our opinion, designed to facilitate more effective decision making and practical outcomes as I said before, on a faster timeline. So with that, I'll give the floor to my colleague from the Netherlands for the question. Marco, please go ahead.

MARCO HOGEWONING	Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, colleagues. So, yeah, the question to this topic is how consistent with the new ICANN Strategic plan, how can the Board and the ICANN CEO prompt this type of step change in the organization's approach to make policy development more efficient and effective without contemplating a wholesale change in the ICANN policy development process itself. And of course, then our committee is mostly interested to hear how we can assist in those efforts. Thank you.
TRIPTI SINHA	Thank you very much for the question. My colleague, Alan Barrett, will take the lead in responding. Alan, over to you.
ALAN BARETT	Thank you. This is Alan Barrett from the Board. The Board appreciates the GAC's interest in improving the policy development. We think this is very important. And we also share the hope, which we heard expressed in another GAC session earlier today, that new policies could be developed within months rather than years.
	So, as you rightly point out, Strategic Objective 1.2 in the next five-year strategic Plan is about enhancing the agility and effectiveness of the policy and device development. And therefore, some objectives and most of those have been identified for heightened attention. So this is really a very important topic for the Board. Some of the things that we want to improve are clearly defining the

scope of each PDP, making policy developments faster, making it easier for new volunteers to contribute.

And we think that we can improve all of these things by having narrowly developed partners for policy development groups. Of course, that's not going to fix everything, but we do think it will contribute to all these factors. And so the GNSO Council is already moving towards narrowly scoped policy development program. And, as an example, the Latin script Diacritics PDP was recently started, and they're ahead of schedule, and I think that's partly because of the small and clearly defined scope of the process.

So the Board, of course, welcome to further discussion with the GAC and with the entire community. But we think that the DNSO Council is the best place to drive this process. So we suggest that the GAC would directly encourage the GNSO Council to continue or refine their efforts to create narrowly scoped PDPs in the future. Thank you. Happy to add more if needed.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you so much for that, Alan. As a matter of fact, we did talk to the GNSO, like an hour ago, an hour and a half ago about this, so thank you for that feedback, Alan. So the idea today is to have some feedback from the room as well, from our GAC members in the room and online. So basically, after providing background on each of the topics and after the questions, the idea is to open the

floor in order to see if there are any comments or questions regarding each one of the topics.

So I'll pause here in order to see if we have any kind of question or comment regarding ICANN Policy Development at this point, based on the question that was just answered. I don't see any hand online.   Oh, sorry, I have Switzerland, sorry, U.S., and then Switzerland. Please go ahead, U.S.

SUSAN CHALMERS

Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the response to our question. Certainly, a narrowly scoped charter would be a step in the right direction towards a narrowly scoped PDP. So we appreciate that.

But in our view, the GAC is looking for something a bit more proactive, perhaps dealing with how the PDPs are managed and conducted. We did ask for a step change, and so we'd be interested in hearing any other ideas and also continuing on this conversation, and we will do that as well with our GNSO councilors. Thanks.

BECKY BURR

I think you've asked for some. I do think that the scope issue is a very significant issue, and I think we all agree on that. You are absolutely correct that the management skills, for example, of the Chairs of the PDP is a critical issue as well, and ICANN does provide and is providing enhanced training.   And that's something that

we've looked at a lot. What kinds of skill sets do PDP leaders need to help drive consensus?

There are also issues related to attendance, consistent attendance, making sure that the people who have views are there that also involves scheduling PDP calls at a time where the group can be present. And that, of course, presents some challenges in our global environment.

So I think that there are many things in addition to simply the narrow scope, although that's probably the issue that has created the most difficulty in the past. But there's no doubt that ensuring that we have strong, very well-trained Chairs who have the tools they need to drive the process forward is critical as well.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you, U.S. Thank you, Becky. I have Switzerland and the European Commission. Switzerland, please go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO   Thank you, Nico. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record. So, just to add on what prior speakers have said, I think the narrowly scoped PDPS is very important. At the same time, there are many other factors, and some of them probably are in the hands also of the Board or of ICANN Org in terms of resources, of secretariat support for the different PDPs.

And there, of course, it's a delicate issue, but aiming at very clear deadlines, very clear timelines, where there is also closure and there is also pressure on the participants in coming to a result. Sometimes we have a sort of open-ended timelines that are moved time and again, and that's not helpful.

And as an organization and as a community, I think we have been able, perhaps not so much in PDPs, but in other efforts which are very, very wide, like the IANA transition and the ICANN accountability, where we did the job in more or less 18 months on the really substantive issues. So if we did that, we should be able to talk about months as a matter, of course, when we are talking about narrowly scoped PDPs, as for instance on DNS abuse, what we are discussing here during these days in Prague.

It shouldn't be a surprise or something exceptional that we talk about months when we are talking about such efforts. And we have grown accustomed to see a PDP as something that takes two, three, four, five years, and then we have the IRT to implement it. So we should really change that habit. Thank you.

BECKY BURR

Another aspect of the work that's going on is the Board ready recommendations that the GNSO council is working on. And just this goes to the IRT and the implementation, we need to be sure, as we are going through the PDPs, that the recommendations that are coming out of them are implementable and to the extent that we can build that check on implementation into the policy

development process so that everybody sitting around the table has the tools to understand whether the recommendation is implementable at a reasonable cost, then hopefully you can compress the implementation timeline as well.

And I think that's one issue that we've seen in some PDPs, where recommendations have come out of the PDPs, implementation has started, and it's turned out or the Board has gotten the recommendations and determined that the recommendations were impractical, always well intentioned, but that they had some deficiencies that made implementation very difficult. And that further elongates the process and exacerbates the IRT and the lengthy implementation issues, which I think are as significant as the length of the PDPs themselves.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you, Becky. I have the European Commission next.

GEMMA CAROLILLO   Thank you very much, Nico. Gemma Carolillo for the European Commission. I will not be repeating what the colleagues just said.

NICO CABALLERO   Can you speak closer to the microphone, Gemma? Thank you. Thank you.

GEMMA CAROLILLO

Sorry. So I was saying, I'm not going to repeat what the colleagues said about the scoping and the timing of the PDPS because we are fully aligned on that. I just also wanted to add one more element for reflection, is this regard the meaningful participation to the PDPS in terms not only of allowing people to express themselves, this is very important, but also to make sure that people represent view that are representative of the communities they belong to.

Because sometimes we have what I consider a sort of good practices in the GAC, at least of the PDPs we have participated where we consulted with our group before going to meetings and this helped kind of conveying the positions from the GAC. We do not see this happening necessarily from other groups, and it would be helpful in moving forward the discussions if the voices were representative. Thank you.

BECKY BURR

That's a really, really good point. Thank you for making that. There is one other point that the Board has been discussing quite a bit, and that is the role of the Board liaisons in the PDPs.

And this has been a delicate issue that's evolved over time, but in general, we've been moving towards having Board liaisons who are actively involved in the process, who are checking in, just as you were talking about consulting with other GAC members before you go into the policy development, having the Board liaisons ensure that the Board is fully up to speed on what is going on so that we

spot issues and can flag issues as they come up. And that's another aspect of what we think can contribute to more effective PDPs.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you, European Commission. Thank you, Becky. I have India next.

SUSHIL PAL   Thank you. This is Sushil from India. Can the PDP process and the implementation review team, can it not be handled together? Because normally, when you formulate a policy, I think implementation aspects should also be considered at the same time, we can't be hoping to formulate policy which are non-implementable. Can it be done in parallel so as to avoid that repetition? I'm saying it since you're talking about a step change in the process. That's why.

BECKY BURR   So I think it's hard to do it completely in parallel, but you're absolutely correct that the thinking about implementation has to be pushed into the policy development process so that you don't have a policy that comes out where there's not been thinking about how it's going to be implemented and whether it's practical, and then the IRT sits down and starts from the beginning.

So I think it's not so much a question of running implementation in parallel with policy development, but building more of the thinking

about implementation into the policy development process itself. So policy and implementation should go hand in hand as the policies develop.

They should always be thinking about, is this implementable? How will we implement it? What will it take to implement it? Will it work? And then, if you do that properly, the implementation process should be comparatively simple.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you, India, for the question. Thank you, Becky. Before we move on, Becky, I do have a question regarding, you mentioned something related to the proposals being reasonable or implementable. So, from an internal mechanics point of view, how and who establishes, who decides what is reasonable or implementable by consensus? And please excuse my utter ignorance, because reasonable… who decides what's reasonable?

BECKY BURR   I think it's the product of a conversation. There's no top down, or at least there shouldn't be. Ideally, if the Board or Org is observing, following a policy development process, and it sees something emerging that is going to be difficult or disproportionately burdensome, or cripplingly expensive, that needs to be flagged in the conversation so that the policy development team can understand that. They can argue with that about whether they agree with those things, and then a consensus solution comes out

of that. That's what ideally happened, and that's what has not happened as well as it should in the past.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you very much. So I see no hands up at this point, which means we're okay to move on to the next topic.

CHRIS CHAPMAN   Nico.

NICO CABALLERO   Sorry.

CHRIS CHAPMAN   Nico, do you mind if I just…?

NICO CABALLERO   No, no, no. Please go ahead.

CHRIS CHAPMAN   The reason why I like this question so much is because it talks about step change, and that's what we all, individually and collectively discern, that we need a step change. And so all these things that have been mentioned, none of which I disagree with, all need to be captured. I think the key is that we have to be far more agile about policy implementability, if there's such a word, and

ensuring that we keep those going as opposed to doing it in a clunky way.

So there's lots of ideas that could come out, but it's the step change. We want a significant, substantive improvement in the interactiveness and the confidence with which people do it and not taking sides and not taking offence that someone's got a view. I think we're all pointing in the right direction, we've got to coalesce around all these points and make it happen. So I like the question very much. Step change, we want a step change.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you, Chris. Any other comment or question, in the room or online? I don't see any hand up. I don't see any hand in the room either. I'm sorry, online. So let's move on to slide number five, and the next topic is Registration Data. I'm not going to read the full background, but just to give some color before the question.

The GAC basically mentioned back in Seattle, ICANN82 in Seattle, that it would be helpful to receive more information about the current levels of compliance with the existing requirements related to accuracy in ICANN's RAA or Registrar Accreditation Agreement. So with that, Marco, can you help me with a question, please?

MARCO HOGEWONING   Thank you, Nico. Yes, so the question is, following the conversation we had in the BGIG call, can the ICANN Board provide suggestions regarding which additional data can be made available within the

current limitation, or which (contractual) obstacles can potentially be removed in order to provide the GEC with a greater understanding of the current levels of compliance? So I sense that what we're seeking here is a bit of open, out-of-the-box thinking.

TRIPTI SINHA   Thank you, Marco, for this question. Indeed, it's an important topic, and Becky will take the lead on this as well.

BECKY BURR   And thank you for the question. So if we just take a couple steps back. The very first step here is that registrants are required to provide accurate information in their registration agreements, and they are required to update their information within seven days of its changing. Taking that as the baseline, in the Registrar Accreditation Agreement, there are some very specific contractual requirements about data accuracy.

So, first of all, within 15 days of the registration or inbound transfer of a domain name or a change to registrant information, a registrar must validate the data format is correct in accordance with the applicable country or territory standards, that's the validation piece. Second, they must verify the email address or the telephone number of the registrant and the account holder if they're different, by sending communication and requiring an affirmative response in a manner designated by the registrar.

And if the registrar doesn't receive an affirmative response from the registrant, it has to verify the information manually or suspend the registration until it can verify it. If the registrar has previously validated or verified the same information and is not in possession of facts or knowledge or circumstances that suggest that it's no longer valid, it's not required to take further action. So there's a requirement that the data be accurate, and there are some steps built into the contract with the registrars that require them to verify that in very specific ways, that the data is accurate.

If a registrar is notified that there's an inaccuracy, then the registrar has to take reasonable steps to investigate and, where applicable, correct that inaccuracy. And that is true, even if there's no notification from a third party. But if the registrar has any information that suggests that the contact information is inaccurate, it has to validate, verify or re-verify the registrant's information. Now, all of those process steps that I've just described, those are in the Registrar Accreditation Agreement, and ICANN can and does have audit compliance with those process steps, and that's a very important piece of this.

If there's any information about a registrant willfully providing inaccurate information or failing to update the information or respond to accuracy inquiries in 15 days, the registrar has to terminate or suspend the domain name registration or place it on client hold. So we have very specific steps, and those are ICANN's current contractual handles. In other words, that ICANN can audit

for compliance with those processes to make sure that a registrar does all of those things.

And if ICANN gets a complaint about inaccuracy, and ICANN does have an easy-to-use process for submitting complaints, ICANN can investigate that, ICANN can look at the data and require it to be corrected or require the registrar to suspend the account, as we've said.

Prior to May of 2018, ICANN was able to do a scan and do accuracy reporting and do analysis of the data. A couple of things have happened since then. The first is that, in response to data protection requirements, registrant data, very, very limited registrant data is available for public viewing.

And the other thing that's happened is a very high percentage of registrations in the G space, at least, and probably in other spaces, are registrar-affiliated privacy or proxy provider addresses. Now, that information is generally accurate by default.

You know who the registrar-affiliated privacy or proxy service provider is, and if they don't provide their own contact information, accurate contact information, that's a world of hurt. But as a result, we've seen two things. One, we don't have a number, but I've seen estimates of 60, 75% of registrations are behind privacy and proxy.

So that squeezes the inaccuracy in terms of what ICANN can get at in the first instance, down quite a bit. ICANN does not have the contractual ability to go in and audit all of a registrar's data. It,

frankly, wasn't something that was necessary in the days when WHOIS information was freely available. But even if it did, it's not clear that would be particularly useful because it would be auditing the 75% of names that are behind privacy and proxy registrations.

So, as I said, ICANN doesn't have the contractual ability to conduct a random audit of a registrar's list of registrants, of their registration data.   We've talked about whether seeking that authority would provide a benefit. And for two reasons, I think it would be quite limited benefit.

One is most of the data is privacy proxy registrations. And two, we do not have a clear sense and we believe that there would be very significant questions about whether that processing, that access to a large field of data where you have no reason to believe any particular data element is inaccurate, might not be proportionate, and therefore consistent with data protection laws.

So I'm trying to answer the, what are the contractual things that we can do? And short of a… it's not clear what we could do short of a contractual agreement to be able to audit. And even if we had that, it's not clear it would provide the kinds of results we're talking about.

So what can ICANN do short of that? It can really focus on making sure that the registrars are adhering carefully to the processes that they're required to adhere to make that a focus of audits. And I know Jamie's probably here and he can tell you that is a big focus.

ICANN can aggressively investigate when it gets complaints about inaccuracy. But I will say we have very clear statistics that show that since 2018, the number of complaints about accuracy that we receive has dramatically decreased. And I'm not asserting that's because the accuracy has increased or changed. It is simply a function of the fact that most of the data is accurate in the sense that it's registered in a privacy or proxy service, and other people are not seeing the data because it's not publicly available.

So there's a little bit of an issue, and all of us are talking about what the solution is. There's a significant perception that there are accuracy problems, there's significant pushback on that, and we, frankly, just don't have the data, we have anecdotal data. So one of the things that we can do, and I am not going to endorse on behalf of the Board, any specific PDP.

But one thing we should think about is whether some of the PDP ideas that we've been talking about, that you heard from the NetBeacon Institute earlier this morning, whether the ways of getting at abuse are actually more effective ways of dealing with perceptions and concerns, and the reality of inaccuracies.

So, for example, if registrars, when they got a complaint about abuse, were required to investigate, to look at all of the strings associated with that same registrant or account to the extent that there are inaccuracies in the registrant data, that would have a significant trickle-down flow.

And so I think I'm not waving the flag on accuracy, I'm definitely not, and I can guarantee that Jamie is pushing very hard on the audits. But I do think that we need to think hard about what other tools we have other than directly data access and audits.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you so much, Becky, for that very detailed explanation. Now, I myself got a little bit lost. So going back to what you mentioned, when you say 67%, is that related to privacy and proxy services or to levels of compliance with the RAA? Sorry, sorry, I got a little bit lost.

BECKY BURR   I'm not going to speak to the levels of compliance. I think they're actually pretty high. I can't tell you a number of what percentage of registrations are associated with a privacy or proxy provider. But we know that it is high and that it is increasing. I have heard estimates of 75%. I think some registrars have instituted privacy and proxy by default because they believe under data protection law they are required to do that. So I don't know what the exact number is, but it's a significant percentage, probably more than a majority of registrations are associated with privacy or proxy services.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you so much. It was not a binary question or a finite math kind of question, but more like fuse logics, kind of things,

percentages. Thank you so much for that. Let me open the floor, then at this point for my distinguished GAC colleagues. Comments or questions? And I see two hands already. I have the European Commission and then India.   Please go ahead, European Commission.

GEMMA CAROLILLO

Thank you, Nico. Gemma Carolillo for the European Commission. Thank you very much, Becky, for the very detailed explanation. I just wanted to make a couple of points because the question does not happen in the vacuum, in a way. We have had discussions about accuracy with all constituencies and groups, with the GNSO, with the Board, and within the GAC for very long. And as part of the last communiqué, one element that we discussed was, okay, we are not necessarily advocating for new requirements, but let's first understand how the current requirements are abided by the contracted parties.

And one thing which came out also out of the Accuracy Scoping Team effort was that there was not a clear understanding about what the requirements are and how these are implemented. Just to give an example, and I hope I'm quoting correctly the registrar agreement.   The data that need to be accurate according to agreement is a very long list. And the very long list, for example, includes the identity of the registrant. But then when you go into the WHOIS specifications, this is restricted to a number of a smaller portion, let's say, of data.

And during the accuracy scoping team in the first place, it was not clear in the first place what was the understanding of what data need to be accurate among those that are collected. And there were different views, and we heard even from ICANN Compliance that they act, for example, in case of complaints of inaccuracy, also for cases concerning the identity. But this is not what is proactively necessarily required of the contracted parties.

I think it would be very helpful at some point to make clear what is, because you said, ICANN can audit the processes that are in place, it would be very helpful to have an overview for this group, for the GAC, of the processes that are in place, what is exactly checked, and what the contracted parties exactly do. And also, since this is what you can measure without accessing the data, if I understood correctly.

What is the level of compliance, at least concerning the processes that you have observed? Like this, we can have a more informed discussion of are these requirements enough, because otherwise we are talking about wishful requirements that cannot be checked, and then it becomes less constructive discussion. Thank you.

BECKY BURR   Thank you. I believe Jamie Hedlund is probably here somewhere, and I just want to give him an opportunity to respond if you have something to add.

NICO CABALLERO	Jamie, if you could, please come to that table over there and just grab the microphone. All yours.
JAMIE HEDLUND	Thanks. And just to be clear, the question is about the audits and what we plan to do going forward with audits.
BECKY BURR	I think there are two questions.
NICO CABALLERO	Closer to the microphone, please.
BECKY BURR	There are two questions. One is the audits and the focus of the audits, and I think the other is the European Commission's questions about how clear is it about what data elements need to be provided and which data elements need to be correct. That was a concern that came out of the data Accuracy Scoping team. So, you may have answers on that.
JAMIE HEDLUND	Can everyone hear me now? Okay. So on the first one for the audits, what we do is we make sure that the registrars have processes in place and we ask detailed questions about the processes that they have in place to comply with the accuracy

requirements. We ask them for examples as well, demonstrating that they do, in fact, follow through, implement those processes.

And as you mentioned, we don't have a legitimate basis under existing privacy rules to go on a phishing expedition and ask them to validate and verify, or demonstrate to us that they validated and verified all of their registrants and provide the associated data with that.

And then, on the second question, whenever we get an accuracy complaint or when we do the audit, we make sure that they comply with all the requirements, the ones that are particularly relevant are the validation and verification requirements.

BECKY BURR   So, on the other question, in terms of confusion about which data elements are required to be accurate?

JAMIE HEDLUND   Yeah, I'm not sure what that involves, we'd have to get back. I'm happy to.

BECKY BURR   Okay, so maybe there's an offline conversation so we can clarify that and follow up for you.

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NICO CABALLERO	Thank you. So, European Commission, you're more than welcome to ask Jamie directly.
GEMMA CAROLILLO	Thank you, Nico. We'll do.
NICO CABALLERO	Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. I have India next. Please go ahead.
SUSHIL PAL	Thank you. This is Sushil from India. I think just a question as to why there is a delay for 15 days between the registration and the time for the validation, because if I'm a malicious actor, I would use this 15-day period to actually use my domain name for the malicious purposes, and then never validate. So is it possible that we do the registrations along with the validation, or will that require a separate PDP?
BECKY BURR	It would definitely require either a PDP or a contract negotiation to speed it up, but I have heard that suggested before, and I think that is probably one of the things that people are thinking about. But I agree with you that we know that to the extent that people are using domains maliciously, often it is very soon after registration.

NICO CABALLERO	Thank you very much again, Becky. Thank you, India, for the question. Are there any other questions in this regard, Registration Data and Accuracy? I don't see any hand online. I don't see any hand in the room. Thank you so much. So let's move on to the next topic, which is Privacy and Proxy Accreditation. And for that, we'll go straight to the question. Marco.
MARCO HOGEWONING	Thank you, Nico. So, continuing this, "Among other possible enhancements, the Board and the GAC have both expressed interest in the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS), better facilitating requests for registration data in cases involving the privacy or proxy services that you just mentioned. Procedurally, what would be the most efficient way to pursue this possibility, since the Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation Implementation, IRT, is proceeding in parallel, but is not aimed at addressing questions about the RDRS? I hope that's clear.
BECKY BURR	Thanks. I'm going to be quiet after this answer. So ICANN has been looking at how implementation of the RDRS enhancements give us an opportunity to map out and potentially test an integrated approach for centralizing the process for submitting third party requests for both gTLD non-public registration data and data concerning gTLD registrants who use privacy and proxy services.

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One of the key questions that we have to answer and that ICANN is working on with the IRT is whether and how the existing recommendations that are the Privacy and Proxy, PDP and the EPDP phase 1, 2, whether those can be aligned with subsequent work on the RDRS and also the registration data policy and other procedures. The initial scope of RDRS didn't include processing of requests for data from privacy and proxy service providers, and RDRS wasn't built specifically for that.

Nothing prevents existing registrars with affiliated privacy and proxy services from processing such requests via RDRS, and we know that some are. One large registrar is already doing this, has publicly stated that it's working on RDRS disclosure requests for domains where the underlying data is affiliated with their privacy and proxy services. No other registrars participating have publicly confirmed that they're considering this approach, but there may be others.

What we have to do right now and what ICANN Org is working on and what I have a bit of a draft on, but it's not completely finalized, is how do we get from where we are now with all of the policy recommendations that are on the table to an enhanced RDRS that includes privacy and proxy service providers?

We have to determine whether this can be done through implementation, whether existing policy covers it, or whether new policy is needed. It's probably some combination of all three of

those things. Hopefully, it's very little new policy that is needed to get there, but that is the analysis that's on the table right now.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you, Becky. Thank you so much. Do we have questions or comments in this regard? Netherlands, please go ahead.

MARCO HOGEWONING   Thank you, Becky. For the Netherlands, and then I'm sorry for putting you on the spotter a bit, but you say you have draft analysis. On what timelines can we expect further involvement of that thinking that you just introduced?

BECKY BURR   At the risk of being summarily dismissed before from the Board before my time, which is very short, I will endeavor to get a timeline on that and get back to you. I don't have a timeline right now and I just got a draft, a very preliminary draft myself, but I will take it as my job to get back to you with a timeline.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you so much for that again, Becky. The floor is still open. Questions, comments? I don't see any hand online or in the room. One last chance. Daniel, I see you waving your hand. No? We're good? All right, cool. So the next topic is Community Statements of Interest, and I'm going to give a very short background here.

Some GAC members have acknowledged the latest public comment opportunity shared by ICANN Org, seeking comment on an updated version of the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct Concerning Statements of Interest or SOIS, as you all know. Some GAC members have noted additional language added to the document which addresses government representatives. And with that, Marco, could you please go ahead with the question.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Yes, thank you. So as Nico said, GAC appreciates the continuing progress on this matter by the Board and Staff and looks forward to it to being concluded by the end of the calendar year at the latest. GAC members reviewing the new SOI red-lined language have interpreted the new language not to put any additional obligations on GAC representatives beyond the present expectation outlined in the current SOI process. The question is, does the Board members and senior ICANN staff have the same interpretation of that new version?

TRIPTI SINHA

Thank you, Marco, for the question. As you know, transparency is very important to the ICANN Board and to ICANN Org. And thank you very much for your attention to the red line language. The Statement of Interest process, as posted for public comment, is providing clear expectations on ICANN participants to declare their interests behind their participation in ICANN processes.

So, the red line language provides some more detailed examples of how to do so. So long as individual GAC representatives are participating in ICANN processes on behalf of the GAC or on their governments, and not on behalf of any other entity or interests and are already in the practice of making these declarations, and it's very obvious in these meetings that you do make such declarations.

Then, those individuals should not anticipate any change in obligations. So this supports our enhanced focus on full disclosure for our SOI processes. And also since we have enhanced this code of conduct, if the GAC sees the potential of refining your own processes and practices, if appropriate, please do so. So if you have any other questions, please ask me.

MARCO HOGEWONING   Thank you, Tripti. And, of course, just trying to keep it simple, was discussing this with a couple of other members over lunch. I think the current system is, I tick the box and say, I represent the Dutch government, and that's it. And I think the key question is, in the new version, would that be exactly the same process, is my understanding?

TRIPTI SINHA   Yes, exactly. That should suffice. If you're participating on behalf of the GAG or your government, that should suffice.

NICO CABALLERO

Thank you very much Netherlands. Thank you Tripty for the answer. The floor is still open, any other comments or questions? And I have Switzerland, please go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO

Thank you, Nico. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record. Was just wondering whether I didn't hear it or did you react on what we are saying about the timeline, Tripti? Do you have an expectation of this work being concluded before the end of this calendar year, or how do you see the timeline for adoption?

TRIPTI SINHA

Kurtis, can you take that?

KURTIS LINDQVIST

I mean, the expectation is that following the public comment, that everybody agrees and we send it to the Board. The idea is to send it to the Board after this public comment for approval.

Sorry, if you want a date, I can't remember when the next Board meeting is. No, no, well, maybe Board workshop September, that's probably realistic. It's a month in between, so I don't know exactly how fast you can process the comments, but they're following process there.

NICO CABALLERO	Thank you so much Switzerland, thank you Curtis. The floor is still open. I don't see any hand online. I don't see any hand in the room either, so let's move on.
	Topic number five is Deferral of ATRT4 Review. And the background is that we know the intended deferral of the ATRT4 review process, as well as the decisions adopted by the Board recently on other accountability mechanisms, as explained in the 27th May letter from my distinguished friend Tripti to myself. In this regard, the GAC recalls the essential character of the ATRT reviews as mandated by the bylaws and their central role for the well-functioning of ICANN's multi-stakeholder accountability, transparency, and governance. So that's broadly speaking, the background. Marco, please.
MARCO HOGEWONING	And accordingly, the GAC expresses concerns about this further deferral and calls on the Board to expedite the preparations for undertaking the bylaws mandated review process in consultation with the multi-stakeholder community and to present a corresponding timeline as soon as possible. So I think the question at hand is, can you already introduce us to such a timeline?
TRIPTI SINHA	So thank you very much for the question. As you know, this is a very important topic that's being discussed across our community. So if I could take this back a few steps and look at the genesis of our

reviews, and it goes back over a decade now, and it was to hold the ICANN community accountable, transparent, and effective. And we came together on specified timelines and schedules of doing these reviews in good faith and in earnest, as a community, and people very generously gave of their time.

And we've done many such reviews, and in particular, if I could focus on what happened in 2024, which is ATRT4 was postponed because several recommendations were an outcome of ATRT3 and they had not been implemented. So the Board chose to defer it by 12 months. Fast forward to the present time, there were still some hiccups in the process of implementation. And we looked at where we were on the topic of reviews and whether they were actually producing the outcomes, which is, were they holding us accountable, were they ensuring transparency and effectiveness.

And we were not sure that that was indeed the case, and it became quite obvious the mechanics and the constructs and how these had been put together were not delivering the outcomes. And in Seattle earlier this year, we polled the community during our bilateral meetings. We met with all the different constituencies and we asked them their thoughts on where we were. And it's been 10 years since the IANA transition, and it's time to perhaps take a step back and see are things working and is it time for us to evolve these?

And there were variants of opinions. And we, subsequent to that, received letters from several chairs, which confirmed the variants

of opinions. And we also received a letter from the PHR chairs and they very clearly stated that the PHR, by the way, the holistic review was an outcome of the ATRT3, and the chair said that there was no consensus and there was ambiguity in the language of the recommendations.

So the Board was put in a very complex position, and we decided that it was probably a good time to see how we could reimagine, the community needs to reimagine the process and how we conduct these reviews to ensure that we get outcomes on accountability, transparency, and effectiveness. So on May the 19th, we deferred ATRT4, and we have started a community-driven dialogue on how best to evolve the reviews. Two weeks ago, at the prep meeting, we held the first open meeting with the community, and we got some very honest feedback.

And since then, the ccNSO has taken the lead in providing some guidelines. Kurtis and I had a meeting with the SO/AC Chairs, a roundtable meeting, and those guidelines were shared with the Chairs of the SO/AC roundtable. And this particular bylaw, by the way, that comes into question relates to accountability to the community. And our fiduciary obligations require that we do the right thing, which, on occasion, will necessitate a balancing of requirements contained in one place against good judgment or fiscally responsible and efficacious decisions against our bylaws.

So we are not in compliance with the time requirements for the reviews as we have deferred ATRT4 again. However, we have not

cancelled the reviews. So we're just providing the community with time to work through the obvious issues with these reviews that arose in trying to follow the bylaws and questions regarding the need from the ATRT4 for a holistic review.

So we have a blueprint that was provided by the ccNSO, and Org is now working with the SO/AC Chairs, and we will attach some timelines and hope to get this done hopefully by, those dates are not yet finalized, but I know what I've seen so far is there's going to be a session in Oman and hopefully in Mumbai which is ICANN85, we should potentially have a process in place to ensure that this can be put back in motion. And go ahead, Becky.

BECKY BURR   Just one tiny correction, because I want to make sure we're careful about this. The very thoughtful roadmap that Tripti is talking about was drafted by the chair of the ccNSO, so I don't think it's a ccNSO document.

TRIPTI SINHA   Correct. Correct. Absolutely. Yeah.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you so much for that. You're referring to the ccNSO chair, Alejandra, right? We got a copy of that as well. So thank you so much, Tripti, Becky, for the answers. Let me open the floor for

questions or comments at this point. I have Switzerland. Please go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO

Thank you, Nico. And so Jorge, Switzerland, for the record. And thank you, Becky and Tripti for the details. I think this helps in understanding where we are going and where we are coming from on the question of reviews, and I'm looking forward to the community discussions, which is what we were also calling for in the question when we drafted it like two weeks ago. So it's good to see that those discussions are ongoing.

What I would like to also comment, or to include a remark, is that, of course, you have the fiduciary duty to abide by the bylaws and we have here a situation where we are not exactly abiding by the bylaws. So it's as you have the responsibility and you've taken the responsibility to defer these reviews, I think it's also in your responsibility to guide and steer the community into a timely process where we can get back to abiding, to complying with the bylaws, because these reviews, as you mentioned before, are really central, part of the accountability mechanisms to the larger ICANN community.

So we have to make sure that it is respected. And also in the context that we are having now in wider internet governance discussions, that we can very openly and very clearly say that those accountability measures are being complied with, and if there's a delay, there are very good reasons and there is a timeline to get to

closure on this so that we don't have an open-ended process where the bylaws are de facto suspended in their validity. So just wanted to share that with you.

TRIPTI SINHA   Thank you very much for that. I want to reassure you that they are not being suspended of anything. This was an act of full accountability and transparency by us deferring it because we want to make this more effective. And we saw no purpose in pursuing something when it was not producing the outcomes and we are indeed very committed to accountability, transparency and effectiveness.

And that is indeed why we postponed it and we're putting some very tight timelines around it. We want the community to come together and define the process. And as I said, I don't want to speak too soon, but the document that I last saw is potentially looking at Mumbai as the end point when we could launch this and get back into a schedule and effectively deliver on our mandate.

So I want to reassure you over and over again that in no way is this being suspended. We are certainly not in compliance with the time requirements, and however, as our bylaws require us to ensure accountability, we are abiding by that, we're just taking some time to better define the process.

NICO CABALLERO	Thank you so much for that, Tripti. When you say Mumbai, we're talking March 2026. Is that correct? Next year.
TRIPTI SINHA	Correct.
NICO CABALLERO	Okay. Thank you so much. The floor is still open. Any other comment or question? Chris, please go ahead.
CHRIS CHAPMAN	Nico, I'd just like to supplement what the Chair said. To the contrary perception, the board really welcomes accountability. We're not avoiding it, we want to shine a light on accountability. And to some extent, weighing up all the various elements within the fiduciary obligations we have, it's a courageous thing to do. It's transparent, it's out there in the open, it's provoking discussion, there are various views about it.

All those views are informed and relevant. Implicitly, explicitly, we think that the current review system has out served its purpose, we don't think it's fit for purpose going forward. And my own view is that I'm not sure that we have yet got down to basically reassessing, reimagining what accountability means. All of the work that's been done in these reviews historically has been excellent, first-class, highly committed, passionate work.

That's never in doubt. But I'm personally interested in whether the community is interested in coming up with a laser focus on what accountability means, as opposed to a broad suite of recommendations that may not roll up into a sufficiently focused demand of the Board for accountability, because the Board does welcome that accountability and is looking forward to it. Thanks, Nico.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you very much, Chris. Certainly, reassuring by all means. The floor is still open. Any other comment or question? I don't see any hand online and don't see any hand in the room either. I will be very happy to give you back 10 minutes of your time for an extra round of good… Excuse me. Oh, sorry. I have Egypt. Coffee is going to be, it's going to have to wait. Manal, please go ahead.

MANAL ISMAIL   Coffee is going to be delayed by just one minute, and apologies, I thought we have Any Other Business, so I left my hand to any other business. Just to thank the Board for identifying ICP-2 as a topic for engagement during prep week at ICANN82, and to thank Kurtis and ICANN for the recent notice that was sent to AFRINIC calling for immediate action to ensure transparency and fairness in AFRINIC's upcoming board election process.

The letter is very timely, flagging two key issues of concern to us and to many others in the AFRINIC community. Full transparency

is key at this critical time to help restore stability and trust to AFRINIC's governance. So we look forward to being kept updated on further developments, including response to ICANN's notice and to knowing potential next steps in that respect. Thank you.

KURTIS LINDQVIST   Well, thank you, Egypt. Yes, I mean, we have published a statement and we will continue to focus very much and follow the developments around AFRINIC under our obligations and duties, and we will keep being transparent about what we think is very important for the success with AFRINIC. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO   Thank you, Egypt, thank you, Kurtis. I have India next.

PRADEEP VERMA   Hello, I'm Pradeep from India. So what are the steps and the measures are being taken by ICANN to strengthen the ICANN contextual compliance, especially for this disposal of the cases. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO   Could you please repeat your question about contractual compliance?

PRADEEP VERMA   Yeah, ICANN contractual compliance, the steps and measure being taken by ICANN to strengthen the ICANN contractual compliances.

NICO CABALLERO   Is that measures taken by ICANN to strengthen the compliance?

PRADEEP VERMA   The ICANN contractual compliance.

NICO CABALLERO   Contractual compliance, where we can put our cases of DNS to the ICANN platform.

KURTIS LINDQVIST   I'm not completely sure I understand. So you can today, if there's breaches of contractual compliance, those get reported to the compliance function who will follow up and either launch an audit or look into the following facts around that. And those are quite strong and they follow what is currently in the contracts. So that's how the compliance function works today. Are you looking for further work from the compliance function on the contracts? Is there a gap between the compliance and contracts? Could you elaborate a little bit on that question? Thank you.

PRADEEP VERMA   Yeah, so ICANN is a website, ICANN is a portal, dedicated portal, where we can, for any DNA abuse, we can make a complaint on

that. So registrar and registry has to make action on that. So I am referring to that portal of the ICANN.

KURTIS LINDQVIST   So when you make a complaint to the compliance function, they will initiate an investigation on that complaint. That's how it works today, and that's the work we do on those complaints. Is that what you're wondering? Is it if we can strengthen that?

PRADEEP VERMA   I think maybe I am unable to explain that, but there's a portal developed by ICANN to whom we can make a complaint about the DNS abuse and other domain abuse on that, so registrar or registry has to make an action on that.

KURTIS LINDQVIST   So when you make a complaint to us, we will follow up with the registry, registrar about that complaint. Yes, we will investigate that.   And Compliance will see that through and investigate whether that complaint is… so, when anyone makes their complaint, the compliance function will follow those complaints up with the register registrar and investigate whether the complaint has merit or not.

If it has merit, they will be an enforcement from compliance in that. If it's not within ICANN's scope, as in not within our contractual authority, then we can't take it further.

NICO CABALLERO

Thank you so much, India, for the question. Thank you, Kurtis, for the answer. We have time for one more question from Papua New Guinea. Russell, please keep it short and sweet and straight to the point. Please go ahead.

RUSSELL WORUBA

Thank you, Chair. I just want to thank the Board for this meeting, especially Kurtis. We had a Pacific Telecom meeting last month and Sally was good enough to attend and to show support for the region and we very much appreciate it, and we are working on other ministerial meetings, which we will be engaging with the ICANN Org and the Board. Just to Mr. Chapman, your good point, would that be part of the process as to how we look at the whole transparency discussion, or would that be taken sort of independently?

CHRIS CHAPMAN

Well, I think it's an essential part of the reconsideration. I'm happy to be disagreed with other members around the board, but I think what we're saying is that part of that discussion with the community is, do you want to look at, again, what lies at the heart of, what is the focus of accountability? Do we want to get really, if I'm addressing the right question, do we want to come down to Tintax, get back to first principles as to what accountability means?

Because, frankly, I haven't come across a Board member who is not professionally proud of the role they do. They are hugely cognizant of the responsibilities and the value of and the extreme importance globally of what happens within the ICANN ecosystem. And we're not shying away from accountability, we're wanting to embrace it further, but we're wanting to make it even more meaningful. So I think it's an open point for discussion, and maybe the community thinks that the accountability definition and the concepts that sit around it are fine.

In which case, that's the community, all the very divergent parts of it, or diverse parts of it, come to that conclusion, that's fine, I'll be the odd one out. But I just sense that there's a greater opportunity to get down and dirty about what accountability means in the context of the ICANN performance. We've just, for example, and I'm just floating this out there, we've just about to embark on the first year of the next five-year strategic plan, which is supplemented by annual organizational and financial plans.

And we've got a new president and CEO who's spent the last five, six months settling in, doing a sanity check, doing an environmental scan, who's, in my opinion, and I'll say this because I was chairman of the search committee, but I think he's doing a wonderful job. And we have very high expectations on him. And not a part of, but a central core of that is delivering on the strategic plan annually and over the five-year period. And there is a lot in that strategic plan. It's a very informed strategic plan.

Again, I'm biased because I co-chaired with Maarten, Maarten Botterman, the strategic plan. But it's a really well-informed, community-accepted, community-contributed-to document that sets out where ICANN and the community want to go over the next five years. And delivering against that is absolutely vital. So I couldn't think of a better definition of what is accountability other than delivering against that strategic plan. That's food for thought. But thank you for your question.

NICO CABALLERO

Thank you so much for that detailed answer, Chris. Thank you, Papua New Guinea, for the question. That's all we have time for. I'm sorry there's a hand raised, but we're absolutely out of time.

Thank you so much to the Board. Thank you, Chris. Thank you, Becky. Thank you to my distinguished Board Chair. Thank you, Kurtis, and my vice chairs, Switzerland and Netherlands. Thank you so very much. We'll have a 30-minute break, and we'll reconvene at 3:30 sharp. Enjoy your coffee. Thank you so much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]