ICANN | GAC
Governmental Advisory Committee

79 | COMMUNITY FORUM

GAC Strategic Planning

Session 11

Contents

Session Objective

Members of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee will discuss a set of proposed GAC Strategic Objectives to form the basis of a possible future GAC Strategic Plan. It is expected that this Strategic Planning effort will serve to bolster the GAC's proactive stance in ICANN deliberations, increase the Committee's readiness to provide timely and effective advice and policy input, and to assist in communicating the GAC's priorities with higher levels of governments and ICANN stakeholders.

Leadership Proposal for GAC Action

1. **Consider the proposed GAC Strategic Objectives** assembled by the GAC Chair and Vice-Chairs in consultation with all GAC Topic Leads, for adoption as a first step towards the possible development of a 5-year strategic plan.

Background

The role of the GAC, as provided in the ICANN Bylaws[1], has traditionally led to the GAC adopting a generally reactive posture, conducting its work and providing advice or policy input in reaction to developments in various ICANN processes.

In some instances, such a posture has led to unsatisfactory outcomes for governments, for participants in the ICANN community or for the ICANN Board. This was particularly the case during the preparation and launch of the 2012 round of New gTLDs. Based on this experience, and in connection with governments' concerns regarding priority ICANN issues such as New gTLDs, Registration Data and DNS Abuse Mitigation, GAC leaders and volunteers have adopted a more

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[1] See ICANN Bylaws, section 12.2(a)

proactive stance, aiming to drive and align ICANN policy outcomes with the public policy interests of governments.

Building on this evolution, the GAC Leadership is seeking to cement a level of proactivity in GAC activities, in a more systematic fashion, with a view to increasing the Committee's readiness to provide timely and effective advice and policy input. To this end, the GAC Chair has invited GAC Topic Leads, GAC Working Group leaders and representatives of the GAC in various ICANN processes to consider, in their respective areas of expertise, what should be the strategic priorities and objectives of the Committee for the foreseeable future.

The GAC Chair and Vice-Chairs are proposing a set of 8 strategic priority areas, drawing from deliberations of the GAC over the recent past, as reflected in GAC Communiqués and the GAC Action/Decision Radar. For each of these areas, the GAC Leadership proposes a set of Strategic Objectives which should be instrumental in supporting a more proactive stance of the Governmental Advisory Committee in ICANN deliberations.

It is expected that the proposed GAC Strategic Objectives will also provide an opportunity for governments to discuss and align their interests within the GAC, and serve as a vehicle for communicating the GAC's priorities with higher levels of governments and ICANN stakeholders.

The GAC leadership is considering building on these objectives to develop a GAC Strategic Plan which would include yearly outcomes deriving from each of the Strategic Objectives, thus delineating a path for their achievement.

Proposed GAC Strategic Objectives

1) Role of Governments in ICANN

The GAC will seek to reaffirm the critical role of governments within the ICANN multi-stakeholder model and ensure that governments can effectively pursue their public policy interests, through both existing and future ICANN processes and procedures.

In particular, the GAC will work to assess whether current ICANN structures provide sufficient and meaningful opportunity for advisory committees, including the GAC, to develop, influence, and modify policy outcomes.

2) Effectiveness of the Governmental Advisory Committee

The GAC will seek to increase participation of governments in its deliberations, and to enhance its effectiveness as a participant in the multistakeholder processes of ICANN, to ensure that the voice of governments is expressed, appropriately represented and duly taken into account in policy and strategic outcomes.

3) Future Rounds of New gTLDs

Leveraging the experience and lessons learned from previous rounds of New gTLDs, including on their costs and benefits, the GAC will seek to ensure that any future rounds of New gTLDs:
- Promote competition, consumer trust and consumer choice;
- Contribute to reducing the digital divide, in particular through the support of applicants from underserved and underrepresented regions and the promotion of Internationalized Domain Names
- Incorporate appropriate security, stability and resiliency safeguards
- Include appropriate procedures and capabilities for the GAC to address unexpected issues arising from specific or categories of applications, in particular issues affecting the global public interest such as Geographical Names.

4) DNS Abuse

The GAC will engage proactively in the work of the ICANN community and will provide advice on the activities of ICANN as they relate to governments' concerns regarding DNS Abuse[2], in order to:
- Promote the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS
- Reduce the incidence and harm of DNS Abuse in New gTLDs
- Support the continuous improvement of DNS Abuse mitigation and prevention standards and their effective enforcement by ICANN
- Review and identify Best Practices in preventing and mitigating DNS Abuse for wider adoption

In its work, keeping in mind the ever-evolving nature of DNS abuse, the GAC will seek to survey GAC Members and Observers to better understand how to address concerns and meet expectations of governments..

5) Domain Registration Data

The GAC will work to identify and recommend steps to promote and support the continued accessibility and improved accuracy of domain registration information, consistent with applicable privacy regulatory frameworks and in line with the GAC Principles Regarding WHOIS Services.[3]

Acknowledging continued evolution in the uses of WHOIS data, the GAC will work with the ICANN community to ensure that registration data policy reflects and addresses the complexities of the current domain name industry. This includes ensuring that legitimate requests made to registrars for domain registration data are met with access to meaningful data.

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[2] See GAC Statement on DNS Abuse (18 September 2019)
[3] These principles recognize both the need to safeguard·individuals' privacy and legitimate public interest uses of WHOIS data, including contributing to law enforcement investigations, combating fraud and misuse of intellectual property, complying with relevant laws, safeguarding the public, and contributing to user confidence in the Internet.

This data should clearly articulate the roles of each of the entities participating in the registration of a domain name, including the authoritative source of registration data and the end user of the domain name (e.g. beneficial user) to avoid confusion with other entities such as privacy and proxy services and/or resellers.

6) Universal Acceptance

The GAC will work collaboratively among governments and with all stakeholders to promote a multilingual Internet and to provide universal access by ensuring that all domain names, including new Top-Level Domains, Internationalized Domain Names, and email addresses are treated equally and can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.

7) Impact of New Technology on Internet Unique Identifiers

The GAC will increase understanding and raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities of new technologies as they relate to the Internet's unique identifiers. To that end, the GAC will leverage the expertise in the ICANN Community, governments and beyond, to share information and consider potential implications, for the benefit of GAC members and all stakeholders.

8) Internet Governance

The GAC will work to ensure that all participants are kept regularly apprised of developments in the Internet Governance (IG) ecosystem that impact the Internet's unique identifiers. The GAC may coordinate efforts among Members to make informed contributions to global IG processes, in support of the multi-stakeholder model.

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