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## GAC Discussion with CCG RoR

### Session 11

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#### Session Objectives

The *Review of Reviews* effort is a community-led evaluation of how ICANN does reviews—why they exist, how they’re conducted, and how they might be restructured to be more sustainable and useful. A Cross Community Group (Reviews CCG), formed in late 2025, is steering this work by developing principles, identifying challenges, and shaping proposals that will be discussed further at ICANN meetings in 2026. During this session the co-chairs of the Reviews CCG will share where the work stands and the importance of government participation in the effort.

#### Background

In May 2025, the ICANN Board acknowledged that the existing system of reviews used to hold ICANN accountable and transparent had become too complex and may not be fit for purpose going forward. This followed ongoing community discussion and recommendations—including from the Third Accountability and Transparency Review (ATR3)—that the reviews system needed to be reassessed.

In response, the Board supported a community-led work effort to design a better review program and to conduct broad community dialogue focused on what and how reviews should be conducted in the future to best support ICANN’s accountability, transparency, and effectiveness.

The *Review of Reviews Cross Community Group (Reviews CCG)* was formally established in September 2025 after a charter developed by ICANN’s Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs) was approved by the Board.

The Reviews CCG brings together members from SOs, ACs (including the GAC), the ICANN Board, and ICANN org to assess the entire reviews system (including periodic reviews, annual reviews, and specific reviews) and propose how it should operate in the future.

- Clarifying the *Purpose of Reviews* – Drafting guiding principles on *why* reviews should happen.
- Identifying Challenges & Opportunities – Looking at what has and hasn’t worked in past reviews.
- Exploring Future Design Options – Considering elements such as review frequency, triggers for initiating reviews, and expected outputs.

The Reviews CCG's work has been a prominent item in recent ICANN community-wide sessions including preparation for ICANN85. ICANN has also sponsored public webinars and opportunities for broader community participation in late 2025 to support the dialogue on reviews.

While this *Review of Reviews* process is underway, the Board has deferred initiating new traditional *Specific Reviews* (like the fourth Accountability and Transparency Review and others) to avoid overlapping efforts and to allow the CCG dialogue to inform what comes next.

There is also a broader "continuous improvement" work stream—originally part of ATRT3 recommendations—that is continuing in parallel and informing the CCG's thinking. The GAC will learn more about the CIP Framework during GAC plenary session #2 during ICANN85.

## Recent Developments

Ongoing updates on the Reviews CCG effort are regularly being shared by GAC participants via email with the full committee. The CCG participants are hoping to encourage and increase feedback from GAC members regarding GAC-specific issues.

The Reviews CCG work is being addressed via a number of topic categories (i.e., "buckets") in a serial order:

- Bucket A subgroup - how to maximize benefit from the ICANN strategic plan, operating plan, etc.
- Bucket B subgroup - CIP Framework - replacing the organizational reviews
- Bucket C subgroup - Structural reviews - are there any internal enhancements that can be exercised by SO-ACs? If so, encourage those efforts. If new groups are identified, then this work should be done more holistically as structural reviews would be more appropriate place for that work. The current challenge appears to be where that line is to be drawn.
- Bucket D subgroup - Ad hoc reviews - any other review matters that evolve/come up "on demand" during CCG discussions
- Bucket E subgroup - leaving the door open for a future "review of reviews" exercise similar to this current effort

Members of the Reviews CCG reported during the ICANN85 Prep Week that a proposed draft outline of a suggested reviews system has been developed for community discussion at ICANN85. The draft includes a potential timeline for several types of review towards which the Reviews CCG is presently converging. Input received from discussions at ICANN85 and online will inform the next draft iteration that will be submitted for public comment. Comments received on the proposal submitted for public comment will inform the drafting of the report. The draft materials were shared with GAC members by the topic leads responsible for this area. See the next section for a link to those documents.

## Key Reference Documents

- Reviews CCG Factsheet - <https://icann-community.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CDOR/pages/656769059/Factsheet>
- Reviews CCG Charter - <https://icann-community.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CDOR/pages/454459443/Charter>
- Draft Proposal Outline of Reviews CCG for ICANN85 - <https://icann-community.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CDOR/pages/893026339/Draft+Proposal+Outline+for+ICANN85>

## Document Administration

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|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>             | ICANN85 - Session #11 - Discussion with CCG RoR         |
| <b>Distribution</b>      | GAC Members (before meeting) and Public (after meeting) |
| <b>Distribution Date</b> | Version 2: 5 March 2026                                 |