
GAC Operational Updates, including Communique Review

Session 2

Session Objective

During this session GAC delegates will review the process for production of the ICANN85 GAC Communiqué with all committee delegates. Attendees will also “issue-spot” several important upcoming initiatives covered by the committee's annual plan including, consideration of the ICANN Continuous Improvements Program (CIP) Framework (how the committee can proceed deliberately to implement the effort) and the conduct of the annual GAC leader election (under the new election cycle being employed for the first time this calendar year). Delegates will also be asked if they think other “expected outcomes” in the committee’s annual plan should be emphasized or prioritized.

Background and Recent Developments

Process for GAC ICANN85 Communiqué -

The production of the GAC Communiqué is the most significant work product of the committee at each ICANN public meetings. GAC Communiqués have been produced for every one of the previous 84 ICANN Public Meetings (see <https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/icann84-dublin-communication>).

The Communiqué provides to the ICANN Board and the rest of the ICANN community the current priorities of governments regarding DNS policies in the form of information, issues of importance and, where appropriate, specific GAC Advice to the ICANN Board. The drafting and production process of the communiqué has evolved over time to maximize the committee’s effectiveness and efficiency in developing the document.

During this session, GAC Support staff will outline the process for this public meeting.

ICANN CIP Framework -

The ICANN Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) Framework is a new community-led model developed by ICANN stakeholders for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of ICANN’s various organizational structures and processes. It was developed by the Continuous Improvement Program Community Coordination Group (CIP-CCG) and published last July.

The framework responds to a recommendation from the Third Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT3) — specifically Recommendation 3.6 — which called for transforming ICANN’s traditional Organizational Reviews into a more *dynamic, ongoing improvement process*.

Some Key Features of the Framework include:

- Community-led Assessments: Each Supporting Organization (SO), Advisory Committee (AC), and the Nominating Committee will use the framework to evaluate their own processes.
- Principles-Criteria-Indicators Model: The framework introduces an approach based on *principles, criteria, and indicators* to guide assessment and improvement work.
- Iterative & Flexible: Rather than fixed, one-off reviews, the CIP is designed for *continuous cycles* of evaluation and enhancement that can be tailored to each community group's needs.
- Accountability & Transparency: Each community structure is expected to report on CIP progress at the end of assessment cycles, typically within three years.

With the framework finalized last year, the work now shifts to implementation — where each group can begin planning and conducting its assessments under the CIP model.

The GAC Leadership has had initial conversations about the framework and expects the three-year process to progress within the committee this calendar year.

GAC Annual Leadership Election 2026

At the ICANN83 Meeting in Prague last year, the GAC agreed to implement a new annual election cycle that would enable new GAC Chairs and Vice Chairs to align their terms with the ICANN annual meeting cycle. This year presents the first opportunity for the committee to follow this new cycle. In order to align the next GAC Chair term with the sitting of the new ICANN Board at the ICANN86 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The nomination period for the next GAC Chair will commence immediately after the ICANN85 meeting (13 March) and run until 24 April. If needed, a balloting period will be held from 18 May until 10 June, with the election concluding during the ICANN86 Policy Forum in Seville, Spain. The new GAC Chair's term will commence on the last day of the ICANN87 AGM in October of this year.

GAC Future Contributions to the ICANN Nominating Committee

The ICANN Nominating Committee (NomCom) is an independent committee tasked with identifying and selecting individuals for ICANN leadership positions. The ICANN Bylaws call for the NomCom to make a specified number of appointments each year to the ICANN Board of Directors (Board), the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council, the Country-Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) Council, and the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC).

For years, the GAC has had a reserved non-voting liaison position on the NomCom. However, this position has gone vacant for some years due to a lack of agreement within the committee on the proper role for this position. At one point back in 2015 a GAC Working Group was formed to help facilitate GAC consideration of NomCom participation.

There was an exchange of views on NomCom issues on the GAC e-mail list back in December 2017. Several members indicated support for the GAC taking up its position on the NomCom. Others

noted concerns about the NomCom’s requirement for confidentiality, which was raised as possibly creating problems of accountability and transparency for the GAC. While this issue was discussed several times in the GAC over the past years, there was never any GAC-wide consensus on the matter.

As of the GAC’s ICANN62 Panama City meeting (2018) there was no consensus in the GAC on whether the GAC should resume the position available to it on the NomCom. Consequently, the GAC agreed on developing public policy-focused criteria to be submitted annually to the NomCom as guidance it could use in selecting appointees to the ICANN Board. Since that time, every year the GAC has shared essentially similar criteria, in place of the committee appointing an individual to serve on the NomCom. The committee has made sure to emphasize that the lack of a GAC appointment in any given year to the NomCom should not create an assumption that no future appointments will be made.

With a new NomCom (2026) now in place and plans for that group to be more proactive in seeking community input, the GAC leadership considered that the committee resume some of those previous discussions to determine if GAC views of this topic have evolved. Session time has been identified for the Mumbai meeting to inform newer GAC delegates about these issues as a foundation for potential future discussions of this topic.

GAC Annual Plan (2025/2026)

Originally established by GAC Members in June of 2024, the committee’s strategic and annual planning regime has allowed the committee membership and leadership to take a more programmed approach to the work of governments in the ICANN multistakeholder community. The GAC [Strategic Plan](#) offers a long term view of general strategic priorities for the committee. The GAC [Annual Plan](#), which has now been through one initial cycle and has been updated for the current calendar year, sets out “expected outcomes” identified by the committee which enable the GAC Chair and Vice Chairs to frame initiatives and plan meeting cycles more efficiently. Both documents serve as a useful guide for communicating government priorities to external audiences and for helping remind GAC members of the committee goals throughout the year.

Session/Agenda Information

Session duration (45 min)

Presentations and Discussions

1. Review of the ICANN85 Communique Review Process - GAC Support Staff (10 mins)
2. ICANN Continuous Improvements Program Framework (20 mins)
3. GAC Leadership Election - 2026 - Overview - GAC Support Staff (5 mins)
4. AOB Matters Raised by Members

Further Information and Key References

- GAC [*Art of the Communique*](#) Overview Document - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MWMi-bluktnBq885joygATqscbJy-lLn-LZYVYYhs9Y/edit?tab=t.0>

- ICANN Continuous Improvement Program Framework (July 2025) - <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/cip-framework-02jul25-en.pdf>
- GAC 2026 GAC Chair Election Web page - <https://gac.icann.org/activity/2026-gac-chair-election>
- Transcript of ICANN78 GAC Discussions of NomCom Participation Options - https://gac.icann.org/transcripts/public/icann78-gac-session-4-gac-operational-matters-en-transcript.pdf?language_id=1 (starting at page 9 of the transcript)
- GAC Criteria Shared with ICANN 2026 Nominating Committee - <https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/gac-criteria-for-submission-to-the-2026-nominating-committee>
- GAC Strategic Plan 2024-2028 - <https://gac.icann.org/work-plans/gac-strategic-plan-2024-2028.pdf>
- GAC Annual Plan 2025/2026 - <https://gac.icann.org/work-plans/gac-annual-plan-2025-2026.pdf>

Document Administration

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