Agenda Item 26: Meeting with At Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

Issues

Agendas for GAC bilateral meetings of this type tend to change up until the last minute for a range of reasons. However, the following issues are likely to be raised:

1. Need for new gTLDs in light of the Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice (CCT) Report.
2. GDPR issues including Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP).
3. GAC-ALAC Joint Statement on enabling inclusive, informed and meaningful participation in ICANN.

GAC Action Required

1. Need for new gTLDs

The Final Report of the CCT Review found that:

- Competition and consumer choice had been increased by gTLD expansion in the 2012 round, but consumer confidence is more difficult to measure.

- Further work would be needed to determine key demand-side issues, including how consumers view and participate in the domain name market.

- A number of additional safeguards and data collection would need to be in place as a prerequisite for any further expansion of the number of gTLDs.

ALAC and GAC are both participants in the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP (see briefing for Agenda Item 8). It is not yet clear whether the CCT Recommendations will be integrated into the work of the PDP or run as a separate process in its own right for purposes of public comment and Board reaction.

2. GDPR Issues including EPDP

See separate briefing for the GAC under Agenda Items 10, 11, 17, 18 and 19. Issues will have developed further by the time of the meeting with ALAC.

This is understood to be mainly an opportunity for an exchange of views on the most recent developments, in particular with regard to access and accreditation requirements for WHOIS data.

Some ALAC members are interested in GAC member views on whether there are tensions at the national level between law enforcement and privacy public policy objectives.

3. GAC-ALAC Joint Statement (attached)

The Board's response to the GAC and ALAC advice[1] conveying the Joint Statement was essentially that ICANN Org is already doing, or is planning to do, all of the measures proposed

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[1] GAC Abu Dhabi Communique

by the GAC and ALAC. This is debatable. However, follow-up on this has not been a GAC priority.

ALAC may again seek GAC views on the extent to which the ICANN Information Transparency Initiative (ITI) is a useful step towards the aims of the Joint Statement. The ITI is focused on improving access to and findability of ICANN's published information through the implementation of a first-ever document management system (DMS) and the enforcement of content governance. ITI will begin with content on https://www.icann.org, which includes over 104,000 webpages, reports, correspondence, infographics, and audio and video files. The project officially kicked off in January 2018 and is expected to deliver that increased transparency of information and improved search in December 2019.

The GAC was briefed on the ITI by ICANN on 15 May 2018 by webinar.

Current Position

The outgoing Chair of the ALAC Council is Alan Greenberg. The incoming Chair is Maureen Hillyard. The ALAC Liaison to the GAC is Mr Yrjö Länsipuro. The GAC coordination person to ALAC is Ms Ana Neves (Portugal).

Further Information

ALAC website.

Document Administration

Title	Meeting with At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)
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ATTACHMENT: GAC-ALAC JOINT STATEMENT

Enabling inclusive, informed and meaningful participation at ICANN
A joint statement by ALAC and GAC

Abu Dhabi, 1st of November 2017

In order to enable inclusive, informed and meaningful participation by all stakeholders at ICANN, the GAC and ALAC ask ICANN, inter alia:

- To develop a simple and efficient document management system that allows – even to non-insiders – an easy and quick access to ICANN documents. As a minimum, every document should have a title, a date and/or reference number; it should identify the author and indicate intended recipients, and make reference to the process it belongs to. Acronyms should be explained.

- To produce executive summaries, key points and synopses for all relevant issues, processes and activities, made easily understandable to non-experts so that all stakeholders will be able (a) to quickly determine if a particular issue is of concern to them and (b) if yes, to participate in the policy process easily and effectively, on equal footing with other stakeholders. This should be done at least for issues put up for public comment.

Rationale:

One of ICANN's core values is to seek and support *"broad, informed participation reflecting the functional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Internet at all levels of policy development and decision-making to ensure that the bottom-up, multistakeholder policy development process is used to ascertain the global public interest and that those processes are accountable and transparent"* (Bylaws Section 1.2.c.ii)

It is also critical to the legitimacy of ICANN that it allows all stakeholders to participate meaningfully in its processes, and to express their needs and interests. Only by taking them into account can ICANN claim to act in the global public interest.

Enabling informed, inclusive and meaningful participation in the complex processes and activities of ICANN is a challenging objective. Access to relevant information is the first prerequisite among many others. ICANN today is a remarkably open and transparent organization that produces and publishes massive amounts of information about all aspects of its activities. But paradoxically, the sheer volume of the information has turned into a problem for many stakeholders.

The more information is available, the greater the need for a logical and user-friendly document management system. And the more complex the substance matter in their details, the greater effort is needed to present relevant issues – in an understandable form.

The information flood is especially challenging for stakeholders who have limited resources to deal with ICANN-related issues and are not able to become "ICANN insiders" that follow and participate in ICANN's work on a daily basis. This is in particular but not only the case for many end-user volunteers and government representatives. That is why the GAC and the ALAC are taking up the issue.

To address the problem, a multi-pronged approach is necessary. Bringing order to the document management system, as suggested above, should be relatively easy and could be considered "low-hanging fruit". The GAC and ALAC acknowledge the ICANN Board's recent decision to start such an effort on its core web sites but stress that that this must be extended to all ICANN documentation.

A further step will be to re-focus ICANN's communications on enabling informed participation of all stakeholders in the true sense of the core value cited above. There is a gap between informing the

potentially interested public via the website and newsletters, and experts with extensive and complicated documents understandable only by them. For a non-expert stakeholder who wants be an informed participant, the former material is often not very useful and the latter takes too much time and effort to be of use. If ICANN really wants to maximize informed participation, there should be an effort to arouse the interest from all stakeholder groups.

What is needed are summaries and synopses, infographs, videos and other innovative ways of presenting information, so that a stakeholder will be able (a) to quickly determine if a particular issues is of concern to him/her and (b) if yes, to enter into the policy process easily and effectively, on equal footing with other stakeholders. Attention should be paid to using plain English (and if possible translations into other languages) in order to allow non-native English speakers to understand the issues. Providing such easy understandable information is particularly important when an issue is put out for public comment. This would lower the barrier for non-insiders enabling them to understand what is relevant for them and how they can make their voice heard. In communicating about the process of IANA transition and enhancing accountability, ICANN has proven that it is actually possible to break down complex issues into key elements that are understandable and allow for interaction with a wider community.

We are aware that the concrete requests made above alone are not sufficient to allowing for inclusive, informed and meaningful participation at ICANN's processes. Other issues like ensuring that all input is fully considered, managing workload, setting priorities and working on sustainability of a volunteer-based system also need to be looked at. But we are convinced that implementing the elements listed above will contribute to achieving this goal of shared concern.

Thomas Schneider   Alan Greenberg
GAC Chair   ALAC Chair