

GAC Discussion on Review of Reviews

Session 4

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Session Objective

The Review of Reviews is a collaborative effort that brings together ICANN's Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees, ICANN Board members, and ICANN org to manage a fundamental evaluation of the reviews set out in the ICANN Bylaws as a whole system, including their implementation, and propose a refreshed system of reviews.

Reviews are part of how ICANN remains accountable. A modernized review system will:

- Adapt and update the reviews process to reflect today's environment and future needs rather than relying on processes developed more than a decade ago
- Reduce unnecessary burden on the ICANN community and org
- Improve trust and transparency
- Ensure reviews lead to actionable and implemented outcomes
- Support a more effective and resilient multistakeholder model

At ICANN86, GAC discussions will explore the committee's perspective on the potential desired outcomes of this cross-community effort.

Leadership Proposal for GAC Action

1. Solicit GAC feedback on specific questions from the CCG's current proposal that are relevant to the GAC and government concerns
2. Prepare for the expected Public Comment proceeding following ICANN86
3. Provide opportunity for GAC members to ask questions of the CCG Co-Chairs

Current Status and Recent Developments

The Review of Reviews Cross Community Group (CCG) is nearing completion of the third of its four planned phases of work. The CCG's first two phases of work comprised: (1) fact-finding; and (2) analysis and development of initial proposals. In Phase (3), the CCG is finalizing proposals that will be presented for discussion at ICANN86, following which an initial report will be published for Public Comment. Phase (4) will see the CCG complete its report and submit its recommendations to the ICANN Board. This is currently planned for August 2026.

The CCG is proposing a refreshed review system that will consist of three types of reviews:

- Accountability and Transparency (every 5 years, deferrable), to assess how ICANN has executed on its Mission in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, its Bylaws, its Commitments and Core Values, and its transparency obligations set out in Article 3.1 of the ICANN Bylaws.
- Structural Review (every 15 years, deferrable and subject to a threshold to determine whether or not the review should proceed), divided into three phases. The first phase (6 months) will involve an external landscape assessment. In the second phase (15 months), a cross-community group will be convened to review all the SOAC structures (including the GAC and the Nominating Committee), investigate any existing or longstanding issues, and produce recommendations (if any), informed by the outcomes of Phase One. The third phase (12 months) will examine the implications of the recommendations, including to determine if changes are desirable to improve the overall effectiveness of ICANN.
- On-Demand Review (no fixed cadence, requires a high threshold including alignment across the SOACs, Board and staff), which can include topics such as:
 - Special topics (e.g., aspects of the New gTLD Program, security and stability, Review of Reviews); or
 - Emerging topics identified by the community or the Board that meet the specific criteria for a review, is not a topic that involves policy development, and is a topic that cannot be adequately addressed through Bylaws-mandated processes.
 - A Consequential Effects Review, which is initiated automatically in the event that an SO or AC [including the GAC], decides to make changes to its own structure, to examine the effects of the changes on the broader ICANN system; and make recommendations for how affected mechanisms should be adjusted.

In its [Mumbai Communique](#), the GAC had noted its special interest in the following topics:

- How important reviews – such as the Security, Stability, and Resiliency (SSR) Review and the Competition, Consumer Trust, and Consumer Choice (CCT) Review that are closely linked to the ICANN's mission established in the Bylaws – will be accommodated in the refreshed proposal;
- How the overall cadence and workload will look like after compiling all reviews on one timeline;
- How the final proposal will be driven by a functional approach, taking care that each review has a distinct function and a clear added-value, be mindful of resources, and be

communicated in clear, plain language, enabling those unfamiliar with ICANN to understand how the review system works.

The CCG will hold a dedicated [community session](#) at ICANN86, to continue discussions and solicit community feedback on the refreshed reviews system it is proposing in its Draft Report, with the aim to have an updated version to publish for Public Comments shortly after ICANN86.

Key Reference Documents

- [Review of Reviews Wiki Space](#)
- [ICANN86 Prep Week Webinar on Review of Reviews](#)
- [Refined Outline of Suggested Reviews System](#) (April 2026)

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