

Board Clarifying Questions on ICANN83 PRAGUE **Consensus Advice**

GAC Consensus Advice Item	Advice Text	Board Clarifying Questions
§1.a.i. Policy Development Related to DNS Abuse	<p>a. The GAC advises the Board:</p> <p><i>i. To urge the GNSO Council to undertake all necessary preparations prior to ICANN84 towards starting targeted and narrowly scoped Policy Development Processes (PDPs) on DNS Abuse issues, prioritizing bulk registration of malicious domain names and the responsibility of registrars to investigate domains associated with registrant accounts that are the subject of actionable reports of DNS Abuse.</i></p> <p><u>RATIONALE</u></p> <p>Before new strings are added to the DNS as a result of the next round, further work on DNS Abuse is needed to stem the increasing cost to the public of phishing, malware, botnets, and other forms of DNS abuse. Furthermore, the GAC encourages PDPs that are targeted and clearly scoped to achieve results according to shorter timelines.</p> <p>The GAC appreciates the wealth of proposals for further policy work recently expressed by different parts of the community and maintains they all deserve attention. The GAC supports multistakeholder action to achieve Consensus Policy outcomes and encourages, for the time being, prioritization of specific issues such as malicious use of bulk registrations.</p> <p>Given this timeline, the GAC encourages progress on commencing narrowly-scoped PDPs between ICANN83 and ICANN84.</p>	<p>We understand that ICANN staff has briefed the GAC topic co-leads on the path to launching a PDP on DNS Abuse before the end of the year.</p> <p>We understand that the GNSO Council expects to request an Issues Report at its August meeting. Once the Issue Report is drafted, it needs to be published for public comment and, based on that input, the Final Issue Report will be finalized. Once that happens, the GNSO Council can initiate the PDP and adopt the Charter.</p> <p>These procedural steps are an important component in ensuring that issues are well understood and to the extent policy development is initiated, that the work can be targeted and narrowly focused, with the aim to yield rapid outcomes.</p> <p>Does the GAC have any questions about the timeline?</p>

Board Comments on ICANN83 PRAGUE [Issue of Importance 3.b](#). “Next Round of New gTLDs: Applicant Support Program”

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3.b. Next Round of New gTLDs: Applicant Support Program	<p>The GAC recalled the agreed compromise¹ between the GAC and the Board which resulted from the GAC-Board Bylaws Consultation on the ICANN80 GAC Advice², including the Board’s agreement to conduct a review at the halfway mark of successful Applicant Support Program (ASP) applications. The GAC recalled the Board’s agreement to direct ICANN org to share results of geographic distribution of ASP applications with the IRT after 20 qualified ASP applicants to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any need for adjustments to Communications, Outreach & Engagement to target applications from underserved regions including developing countries, and if additional funding would be required if the number of approved applications exceeds the budgeted amount of 40-45. <p>The GAC recalls that country-level statistics can be made available by the relevant ICANN Government Stakeholder Engagement team if requested by a GAC member in their region. The GAC notes that this data will only be shared with the consent of applicants so that the relevant government can assist with targeted outreach and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding sharing country-level statistics, the Board understands this information would be shared with GAC members that requested it, via regional Vice-Presidents from ICANN’s Global Stakeholder Engagement team, with the intent of informing additional outreach and engagement efforts (for instance if there were zero applications from the GAC member’s country). The Board understands that, during ICANN83, ICANN staff proposed that if a GAC member would like to offer targeted outreach and support to ASP applicants from their country, they are welcome to share a government point of contact that ICANN org staff can then share with ASP applicants. This allows the ASP applicant to reach out to their government for support, if they choose, without ICANN compromising the business confidentiality of the ASP applicant. With regard to the review requested immediately, the Board would like to better understand the objectives of an immediate review: is it to raise awareness about the ASP among “prospective applicants [emphasis added] who are least connected to ICANN’s processes?” which would inform adjustments to Communications, Outreach & Engagement efforts? Or is the immediate review objective to support existing ASP applicants to complete their ASP application (which would not inform adjustments to Communications, Outreach & Engagement)? Based on the GAC-Board compromise, the Board understood that the review of the half-way mark was to inform adjustments in Communications,

¹ GAC Response to Board Update following Board-GAC Bylaws Consultation on ICANN80 GAC Advice (16 October 2024):

<https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/gac-response-update-following-board-gac-bylaws-consultation-on-icann80-gacadvise>

² GAC-Board Consultation Call on ICANN80 Advice (16 September 2024):

<https://gac.icann.org/sessions/gac-and-icannboard-consultation-call-on-icann80-advice-asp>

GAC Advice – ICANN83 PRAGUE Communiqué – Clarifying Questions and Updates for 31 July 2025 Board-GAC Meeting

GAC Issue of Importance	Issue of Importance Text	ICANN Board Comments
	<p>The GAC noted the current statistics presented by ICANN org on the status of ASP applications in process and, in particular, the very small number of completed applications submitted, given that there are only about 5 months left in the 12-month ASP application window. Furthermore, the GAC notes concern that the current process may not reach potential applicants who are least connected to ICANN's processes. The GAC expressed concern that with the current pace of applications there may be no opportunity to conduct a review or determine any adjustments to the current Communications, Outreach & Engagement plan before the ASP application deadline. This review could identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the obstacles preventing applications from moving forward more rapidly, and recommend appropriate mitigation activities; draft applications that may not be completed before the deadline, and targeted improvements to ensure the ASP achieves its inclusive purpose. <p>The GAC is therefore of the view that such a review should now be conducted immediately, rather than after 20 qualified applications, in order to provide sufficient time for any project implementation course corrections, including Communications, Outreach & Engagement adjustments necessary to maximize the number of ASP applications completed and submitted for evaluation before the</p>	<p>Outreach & Engagement and if additional funding would be needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the objective of an immediate review is to support existing ASP applicants to complete their application, the Board understands that ICANN staff have already issued a survey to ASP applicants to: identify potential obstacles and ways to improve the process, determine the likelihood of the applicant submitting a complete ASP application, and to collect contact details if the applicant would like the Applicant Counselor to reach out to them directly. As outlined in a 5 June 2025 blog, ICANN staff have developed additional ASP applicant readiness materials and have published the list of pro bono service providers and mentors for applicants to use if they need assistance completing their ASP applications. Based upon the work already underway, what additional activities in an immediate review is the GAC requesting for existing ASP applicants? How does the GAC envision activities related to existing ASP applicants would inform adjustments to Communications, Outreach & Engagement? Regarding Communications, Outreach & Engagement efforts for the ASP to date, the Board understands that ICANN Communications and Global Stakeholder Engagement teams have been focused on raising awareness about the ASP in underserved regions, namely, Asia Pacific, Latin America, Middle East, and Africa regions. This is in line with the GNSO Guidance Process for ASP Guidance Recommendation 1: "Increase awareness of the Applicant Support Program of the next round of gTLD applications among those who may need and could qualify for support" and related Implementation Guidance: "Target potential applicants from the not-for-profit sector, social enterprises and/or community organizations from under-served and developing regions and

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	deadline.	<p>countries. This should not exclude any entities from outreach efforts, such as private sector entities from underserved and developing regions and countries, recognizing the goal is to get as many qualifying applicants as possible.” Aside from continuing to focus on raising awareness among prospective applicants in underserved regions, what additional adjustments (“course corrections”) would the GAC suggest to Communications, Outreach & Engagement and how would an immediate review of applications in the pipeline inform those changes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lastly, the Board understands that ICANN staff will propose a discussion with the GAC and broader ICANN community to share updates on efforts to date to support applicants in the ASP pipeline, as well as to gather input and ideas from the GAC and broader community on how to best support applicant progression.