

GAC/ICANN Board Communique Clarification Call - ICANN83 Communiqué

31 July 2025 - 1300 UTC

In the spirit of issue spotting and candid information exchange, these high-level summary notes are intended to reflect the general nature of the discussion during the GAC/ICANN Board Communique Clarification Call - ICANN83 Communiqué. Certain specific aspects of the meeting discussions are provided to enable understanding of the flow and context of the discussions.

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I. Welcome

Tripti Sinha (ICANN Board Chair), reminded participants that this meeting between the ICANN Board the GAC is an important step to prepare for ICANN84 and to review and clarify the ICANN83 Prague Communiqué, following the previous ICANN Board acknowledgment of the Communiqué and the GAC Consensus Advice it includes. She also reinforced that the ICANN Board takes the GAC Communiqué very seriously.

II. Opening Remarks

Nicolas Caballero (GAC Chair) welcomed all participants and reviewed the subject matters to be discussed during the call: DNS Abuse and the Applicant Support Program for the Next Round of New gTLDs.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) welcomed the conversation between the ICANN Board and the GAC on both the GAC Advice regarding Policy Development Related to DNS Abuse and the specific Issue of Importance related to the Next Round of New gTLDs: Applicant Support Program, in the Prague Communiqué.

III. Clarifying Discussion On GAC Advice regarding Policy Development Related to DNS Abuse

GAC Advice §1.a.i

a. The GAC advises the Board:

- 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.**

Board Clarifying Question(s):

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. 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. 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.

Does the GAC have any questions about the timeline?

Discussion

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) stressed that the issue of DNS Abuse is very important to the ICANN Board, and that the ICANN Board has followed with great interest proposals for micro PDPs by ICANN stakeholders in the GNSO, including the NetBeacon Institute. She confirmed that work is underway in initiating a PDP on DNS Abuse and that ICANN org has briefed the GAC Topic Leads on this matter recently. It is expected that the GNSO Council will request an Issue Report during its August meeting, that once this report is drafted, it will be submitted for Public Comment, then finalized based on the comments received, and the PDP will then be initiated. In terms of timeline, the ICANN Board expects the Public Comment proceeding to be completed in October, which would enable the GNSO Council to formally adopt the PDP Charter and initiate the PDP shortly afterwards. Becky Burr highlighted that this process will enable the ICANN community to narrow the scope of the PDP. She confirmed that the ICANN Board understands the GAC Advice and that it does not have clarification questions about it. She invited questions from the GAC on the timeline.

Nicolas Caballero (GAC Chair) expressed concern with the general timeline and suggested that a structural solution should be found to reduce its length, in light of continued concerns of governments and law enforcement agencies with the prevalence of DNS Abuse.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) clarified that the PDP will be launched before the end of this year and that a significant amount of work is being done at the moment to enable a successful PDP, including an Issue Report that will start to be written, then published and refined. She referred to a specific type of PDPs (EPDPs) which can skip the development of an Issue Report, but in this instance, she stressed that following the traditional PDP process will enable the ICANN Community to move more expeditiously during the policy development

phase. She indicated moreover that ICANN Contracted Parties (Registries and Registrars) are committed to moving the work forward. She concluded by noting that serious work is starting now and that the ICANN Board hopes this will expedite the policy development process.

Susan Chalmers (United States) thanked Becky Burr for her presentation and confirmed interest in a narrowly scoped PDP and indicated that the timeline makes sense, recognizing that a lot of work needs to go into preparing the launch of a successful PDP. She also recognized the progress of the GNSO DNS Abuse Small Team which has managed to conduct its work much faster than originally planned. Noting that the Public Comment proceeding regarding the Issue Report will be ongoing or will have concluded before ICANN84 in Dublin, she suggested that provisions be made in the ICANN84 schedule to convene a multi-stakeholder session on this matter and leverage the opportunity for interactive cross-community discussions.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) welcomed this suggestion and confirmed that the ICANN Board will work with ICANN org to this aim, recognizing that this is one of the critical topics for ICANN84 along with the Review of Reviews.

Marco Hogewoning (Netherlands) wondered whether, one month into the timeline, the GNSO Small Team is on track for meeting the mid-August deadline ? While agreeing with the necessity of the preparatory steps for a successful PDP, he also wondered whether there was any possibility to expedite that part of the timeline.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) stressed in response that work is ongoing, that the NetBeacon proposal was made in the form of an Issue Report which should facilitate the drafting process, and that work is not waiting on the GNSO Council's formal request, which is still necessary however for a relevant Issue Report to be drafted and finalized.

T Santhosh (India) noted that per the timeliner presented, the PDP is expected to begin in December 2025 and end in June 2026. He wondered what formal steps this includes and what effects it will have on the roll out of the New gTLD application process planned in April 2026.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) noted that 6 months is an estimation of the time a tightly scoped PDP would need to complete its work and that this could be reduced should there be agreement on a very narrow and tightly scoped PDP. In terms of formal process steps during policy development, she indicated that those were mainly related to forming the PDP Working Group, electing its Chair, establishing its working methods according to its Charter and planning for appropriate Public Comment opportunities. She stressed that the outcome of a PDP, so called Consensus Policy, is automatically binding on ICANN Contacted Parties by virtue of provisions in the Registry Agreement and the Registrar Accreditation Agreement which require Registries and Registrars to comply with such policies when adopted. Hence, she confirmed that even if the PDP completed after the launch of the New gTLD application window, new obligations related to DNS Abuse would become binding on new Registries in any case.

Gemma Carolillo (European Commission) acknowledged the ICANN Board's taking into account of the GAC Advice regarding Policy Development Related to DNS Abuse with the understanding that that one or more PDPs will take place on this matter before the initiation of a new round of New gTLD applications. She stressed that this was very important for the GAC. A second very important aspect for the GAC, she noted, is that these PDPs be narrowly scoped, which she confirmed was also expected to be the case. She shared that GAC Topic Leads on DNS Abuse (European Commission, Japan and United States) had a good opportunity to discuss this with ICANN org. She also reinforced the importance of making good use of the time in Dublin during ICANN84 to enable productive cross-community discussions. She suggested that ICANN aim to share

preliminary results of the Public Comment proceeding on the Issue Report before ICANN84 to support those discussions. She also stressed that the way a PDP is conducted is instrumental in its success and therefore drew attention to the importance of choosing a professional moderator, an appropriate representation structure for interested stakeholders, and working methods including in-person meetings, to enable productive, accurate and swift policy work. She concluded by suggesting that it would be important for those who apply for a New gTLD in the upcoming application round to know what obligation they will be bound to.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) concurred that how a PDP is conducted, the skills of its Chair, and whether or not professional moderation is employed, are very important factors in ensuring policy work is completed in a timely and efficient manner.

IV. Clarifying Discussion On GAC Issues of Importance on the Next Round of New gTLDs: Applicant Support Program

GAC ICANN83 Issues of Importance 3.b.

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:

- 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.

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.

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:

- 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.

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-gac-advice>

² GAC-Board Consultation Call on ICANN80 Advice (16 September 2024): <https://gac.icann.org/sessions/gac-and-icann-board-consultation-call-on-icann80-advice-asp>

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 deadline.

Board Clarifying Question(s):

1. 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.

2. 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, Outreach & Engagement and if additional funding would be needed.

3. 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 and Engagement?**

4. 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 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?

5. 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.

Discussion

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) noted that 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. She flagged the Board’s understanding that the agreed compromise between the GAC and the Board mentioned in the ICANN83 communiqué refers to the agreement to hold a review after 20 successful Applicant Support Program (ASP) applications to determine if there should be a change in the outreach and engagement strategies and whether additional resources needed to be found. The request in the ICANN83 communiqué notes that an “immediate review” should occur in lieu of waiting for 20 successful applications. Prior to addressing this request, Becky Burr noted that the Board has additional questions to better understand the objective and scope of this immediate review: is it to raise awareness about the ASP among *prospective* applicants who are least connected to ICANN’s processes, or to support *existing* applicants to complete their ASP application?

Nicolas Caballero (GAC Chair) responded that both points made by Becky Burr apply: i.e. raise awareness and immediate review to support existing applicants.

Becky Burr flagged that ICANN org staff issued a survey to identify potential obstacles encountered by applicants during the submission process and whether an application counselor should reach out to these potential applicants. As such, for applications that are in the pipeline, ICANN org staff already has work underway, but the Board would welcome input from the GAC on what additional activities ICANN org should consider.

Tracy Hackshaw (Universal Postal Union), responded that both answers are applicable, and noted that the intended rationale from the ICANN83 communiqué is to ask how the community can help the success of the Applicant Support Program (ASP). Tracy noted that at the moment there is a gap in knowledge for GAC members since for example the survey results were not shared other than anecdotally, which makes it difficult to determine the reason why applications are not coming through. Tracy further underscored that the GAC would indeed like to understand what is stopping applications being finalized, and whether the initiated ones are “real” applications. Based on the compromise language on 20 successful applications, optimistically that mark should be reached now, unfortunately he stressed that the situation is worse than anticipated and the GAC would like to understand why. He noted that challenges being experienced by applicants would be helpful to be known, is it an issue with the forms, lack of interest or language barriers? Finally, if this is an outreach and communication issue, what is really happening and how can the community help.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) expressed the Board’s commitment to making the ASP a success and enabling prospective applicants to submit ASP applications, noting alignment between the Board and the GAC on this point. She noted that ICANN org’s Engagement Team should meet with interested GAC members to discuss

the scope of the review being suggested and finalize it to determine collectively what can be done to make this program a success.

T Santhosh (India) expressed concerns with the Board's suggestion to ask prospective applicants (especially from underserved regions) to independently initiate contact with their government representatives, since this would be an undue burden on them and may undermine the program's intent of proactive and inclusive support. T Santhosh further underlined that outreach should not rest solely with the applicant, but instead advocated for ICANN to take a proactive approach to share information about applicants with their relevant governments, with consent from the applicants.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) noted that more information on the scoping of the review from the GAC would be helpful and that further conversations between GAC members and the ICANN org Engagement Team should occur.

Tracy Hackshaw (Universal Postal Union) added that a specific issue identified by GAC members is the apparent lack of traction in the Latin American region compared to Africa and Asia Pacific regions where impact was identified. He repeated that the exact challenge is unclear (i.e. is this a lack of interest in the ASP, lack of resources or engagement?), but given the size of the region and the amount of work being conducted in the region by ICANN org, a different approach may need to be taken.

Kurtis Lindqvist (ICANN CEO) stressed that, to date, ICANN's communications and engagement efforts for the ASP have been focused on underserved regions and undertaken with the same level of resources; He assured GAC members that engagement efforts for the ASP will continue through November of this year.

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) added that ICANN's Next Round [Champions toolkit](#) is a useful tool for GAC members who wish to engage with potential applicants specifically designed to help governments and members understand the tools available for them to help support this.

V. Any Other Business

a. ICANN org update on matters pertaining ICANN org interactions with AFRINIC

Gemma Carolillo (European Commission) asked ICANN org to provide an update on recent ICANN org interactions on the topic of AFRINIC, noting this is a topic GAC members are following closely and that GAC members are appreciative of the steps taken to date by ICANN org.

Kurtis Lindqvist (ICANN CEO) reiterated that ICANN's role is to ensure that any of the regional registries like AFRINIC, meets the criteria set forth in ICP-2 and serves as a functioning registry and representative of the community it serves. This is the basis of the recent communications submitted by ICANN to AFRINIC. He provided an update on recent events pertaining to the government of Mauritius, which appointed an inspector with the mandate of investigating the events that led to AFRINIC's current status in the courts of Mauritius, as well as actions taken by the court-appointed Receiver and one particular resource member to determine if these are in accordance with Mauritian law. ICANN has been kept up to date on these events by various stakeholders including the government about this, and has legal representation in Mauritius to advise on these matters. In parallel the Receiver announced that there will be a second attempt at an election, which is currently being prepared. Kurtis Lindqvist further noted that ICANN continues to monitor what occurs and how this election is being prepared. He stressed that ICANN is highly committed to ensuring that all RIRs are functioning and compliant with ICP-2 and that a reconstituted AFRINIC with a functioning Board and CEO appointment would be in the best interest of the African community.

Christine Arida (Egypt) expressed appreciation for the measures ICANN is taking and for its close follow up. She further noted that an election process is launching with very tight timelines and little official communications, which is alarming to GAC members in the African region.

b. Status of EPDP Phase 1 and 2 pertaining to Registration Data

Marco Hogewoning (Netherlands) recalled discussions during ICANN82 pertaining to the Registration Data Process and the implementation of EPDP recommendations. He asked Board members if an update on the process set forward to commence on the EPDP phase 1 and 2 concerning registration data could be shared.

Theresa Swinehart (ICANN org) noted this item is currently on track, and that further information would be submitted to GAC members after this meeting.

Susan Chalmers (United States) quoted text present in the ICANN83 Issues of Importance section for Accuracy of Registration Data, asking Board members to kindly review this text in preparation for the upcoming meeting between the GAC and the Board to address Issues of Importance (Board/GAC Interaction Group Meeting).

Becky Burr (ICANN Board) agreed with Susan Chalmer's proposed approach and underscored that the Board will stand ready to speak about this topic at the upcoming meeting.

VI. Closing Remarks

Tripti Sinha, ICANN Board Chair, thanked Becky Burr for facilitating the discussion on behalf of the Board and summarized key takeaways to prepare for a productive bilateral meeting in Dublin, potentially engaging a professional facilitator. Tripti Sinha stressed that every effort will be made to expedite the DNS abuse PDP, but even if this were to be ratified post April 2026, there is still an obligation from Contracted Parties that they must abide by the policies. Tripti Sinha thanked the GAC for sharing input and advice on how to better refine the ASP process. On the topic of Afrinic, Tripti Sinha stressed that the Board is very committed to ensure that Afrinic returns to good health since this is very important to the African continent and for the functioning of the internet. Tripti Sinha noted this meeting included a good and candid discussion, thanked participants for joining and adjourned the meeting.

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V. Meeting Participants

GAC

Nicolas Caballero, GAC Chair
Klaus Parrer, Austria
Suada Hdzovic, Bosnia and Herzegovina
David Bedard, Canada
Rida Tahir, Canada
Jose Hernandez, Cayman Islands
Thiago Dal-Toe, Colombia
Rafael Cordero, Costa Rica
Zdravko Jukić, Croatia
Manal Ismail, Egypt
Christine Arida, Egypt
Gemma Carolillo, European Commission
Rudy Nolde, Germany
Samantha Scotland, Guyana
T Santhosh, India
Eoin Carney, Ireland
Adriano Daddario, Italy
Kazuki Imao, Japan
Tomonori Miyamoto, Japan
Marco Hogewoning, Netherlands
Babagana Digima, Nigeria
Ibiso Kingsley-George, Nigeria
Amina Ramallan, Nigeria
Russell Woruba, Papua New Guinea
Sasa Kovacevic, Serbia
Iñaki Gil-Osés, Spain
Craig Stanley- Adamson, United Kingdom
Esther Jaromitski, United Kingdom
Susan Chalmers, United States
Isabel Gates, United States
Beatriz Rodriguez, Uruguay
Shanea Lewis, CTU
Tracy Hackshaw, UPU

ICANN Board

Tripti Sinha, ICANN Board Chair
Becky Burr
Alan Barrett
Chris Buckridge
Amitabh Singhal
Byron Holland
David Lawrence
James Galvin
Maarten Botterman
Miriam Sapiro
Patricio Poblete
Wes Hardaker

ICANN Org:

Kurtis Lindqvist, ICANN CEO
Andrew Chen
Berry Cobb
Cristian Wheeler
John Jeffrey
Kristy Buckley
Laurent Ferrali
Leticia Castillo- Sojo
Russ Weinstein
Sally Newell-Cohen
Steve Chan
Theresa Swinehart
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