GAC Strategic Planning

ICANN83 Plenary Session

10 June 2025

ICANN | GAC
Governmental Advisory Committee

82 | COMMUNITY FORUM

Agenda

1. **Background on the GAC's Strategic Planning Effort**

2. **Development of the GAC 2025/2026 Annual Plan**

3. **Highlights of Anticipated Revisions in Expected Outcomes for selected GAC Strategic Objectives**

GAC Strategic Planning Background

GAC Strategic Planning

Governmental Advisory Committee

Kigali, Rwanda, 17 June 2024

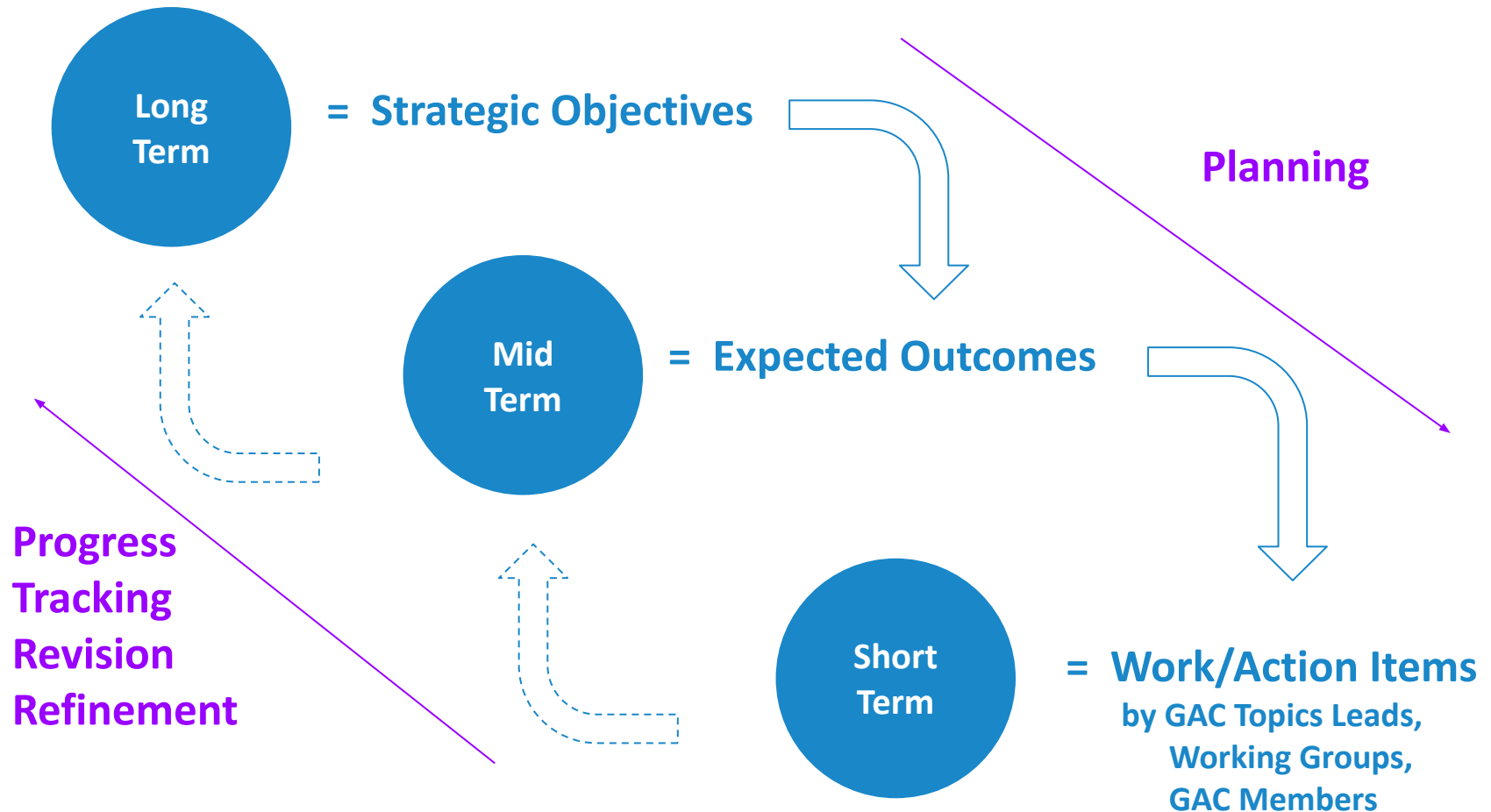**GAC Communiqué – Kigali, Rwanda[1]**

III.   Internal Matters

4. GAC Strategic Planning

Building on a process initiated in December 2023 by the GAC Chair and Vice-Chairs, considering the GAC plenary discussion during ICANN79 in San Juan, and several consultations of the GAC Membership intersessionally, the GAC finalized and endorsed the 4-year GAC Strategic Plan (2024-2028) and the corresponding 2024/2025 GAC Annual Plan[2].

The GAC expects that these Strategic and Annual plans will serve to bolster the GAC's proactive stance in ICANN deliberations, increase the Committee's readiness to provide timely and effective advice and policy input, and to assist in communicating the GAC's priorities with higher levels of governments, new GAC Members, and ICANN stakeholders.
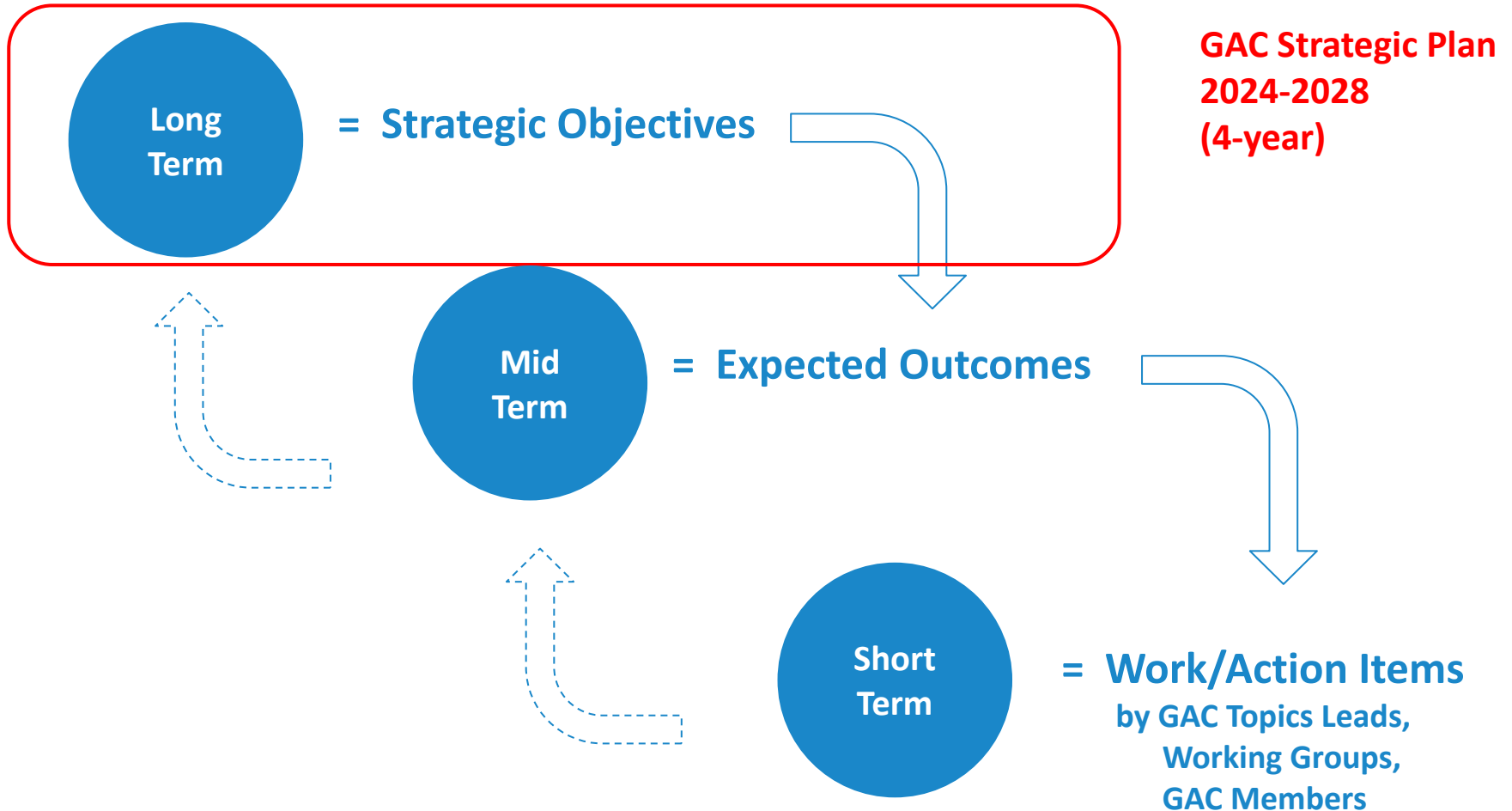
Reminder: Approach to Developing the GAC Strategic Plan

Strategic Objectives <u>determine</u> *Expected Outcomes*, which <u>determine</u> *Action Items*

Long Term = **Strategic Objectives**

Mid Term = **Expected Outcomes**

Short Term = **Work/Action Items**
by GAC Topics Leads, Working Groups, GAC Members

Planning

Progress Tracking Revision Refinement

Completion of Action Items <u>inform</u> attainability of *Expected Outcomes, which* <u>inform</u> achievability of *Strategic Objectives*

Reminder: Approach to Developing the GAC Strategic Plan

Long Term = **Strategic Objectives**

GAC Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (4-year)

Mid Term = **Expected Outcomes**

Short Term = **Work/Action Items** by GAC Topics Leads, Working Groups, GAC Members

GAC Strategic Plan 2024-2028

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028
Endorsed by the GAC on 17 June 2024

GAC Mission, Vision and Values Statement

Consistent with ICANN's Article of Incorporation and ICANN's Bylaws, including ICANN's Mission, Commitments and Core Values, in the following statements, the GAC aims to propose specific statements for the sole purpose of the Committee's Strategic Planning.

Mission

To provide public policy advice to ICANN on issues that affect the stability, security, and global interconnectedness of the Internet's unique identifier systems and to exercise its powers and rights to ensure accountability of the ICANN Board and organization, as a Decisional Participant in ICANN's Empowered Community.

Vision

The GAC envisions a future where the Internet's unique identifier systems remain a trusted and reliable foundation for the global digital ecosystem, reflecting the needs of all users and stakeholders across the globe.

Values

- **Transparency and Accountability**: The GAC strives for open and inclusive policy development processes that ensure all voices are heard.
- **Multistakeholder Governance**: We recognize the importance of a collaborative approach where governments, the private sector, civil society, and the technical community work together for the benefit of the internet.
- **Global Policy Consideration**: We advocate for policies that are developed with a global perspective, taking into account the needs of diverse communities and cultures.
- **Stability and Security**: We prioritize the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems to ensure their continued smooth operation.
- **Human Rights and International Law**: the GAC's values center on harnessing the use of digital technology, and specifically the Internet's unique identifier systems, for the benefit of humanity, upholding human rights and international law in the context of the digital age.

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GAC Strategic Objectives 2024-2028

1) Role for Governments in ICANN

In support of reaffirming the critical role of governments within the ICANN multistakeholder model, the GAC will seek to ensure that governments can effectively pursue their public policy interests, through both existing and future ICANN processes and procedures. In particular, the GAC will work to assess whether current ICANN structures provide sufficient and meaningful opportunity for the GAC, to develop, influence, and modify policy outcomes.

2) Effectiveness of the Governmental Advisory Committee

The GAC will seek to increase active and meaningful participation of GAC Members in its deliberations and operations. The GAC will also work to enhance its effectiveness as a participant in the multistakeholder processes of ICANN, including by ensuring that the voice of GAC members is expressed and appropriately represented, and by leveraging collaboration and alignment with other ICANN constituencies.

3) Future Rounds of New gTLDs

Leveraging the experience and lessons learned from previous rounds of New gTLDs, including on their costs, benefits and accessibility, the GAC will seek to ensure that any future rounds of New gTLDs:
- Promote competition, consumer trust and consumer choice;
- Contribute to reducing the digital divide, in particular through the support of applicants from underserved and underrepresented regions and the promotion of Internationalized Domain Names
- Incorporate appropriate security, stability and resiliency safeguards
- Include appropriate procedures and capabilities for the GAC to address unexpected issues arising from specific or categories of applications, in particular issues affecting the global public interest such as Geographical Names.

4) DNS Abuse

The GAC will engage proactively in the work of the ICANN community and will provide advice on the activities of ICANN as they relate to governments' concerns regarding DNS Abuse[1], in order to:
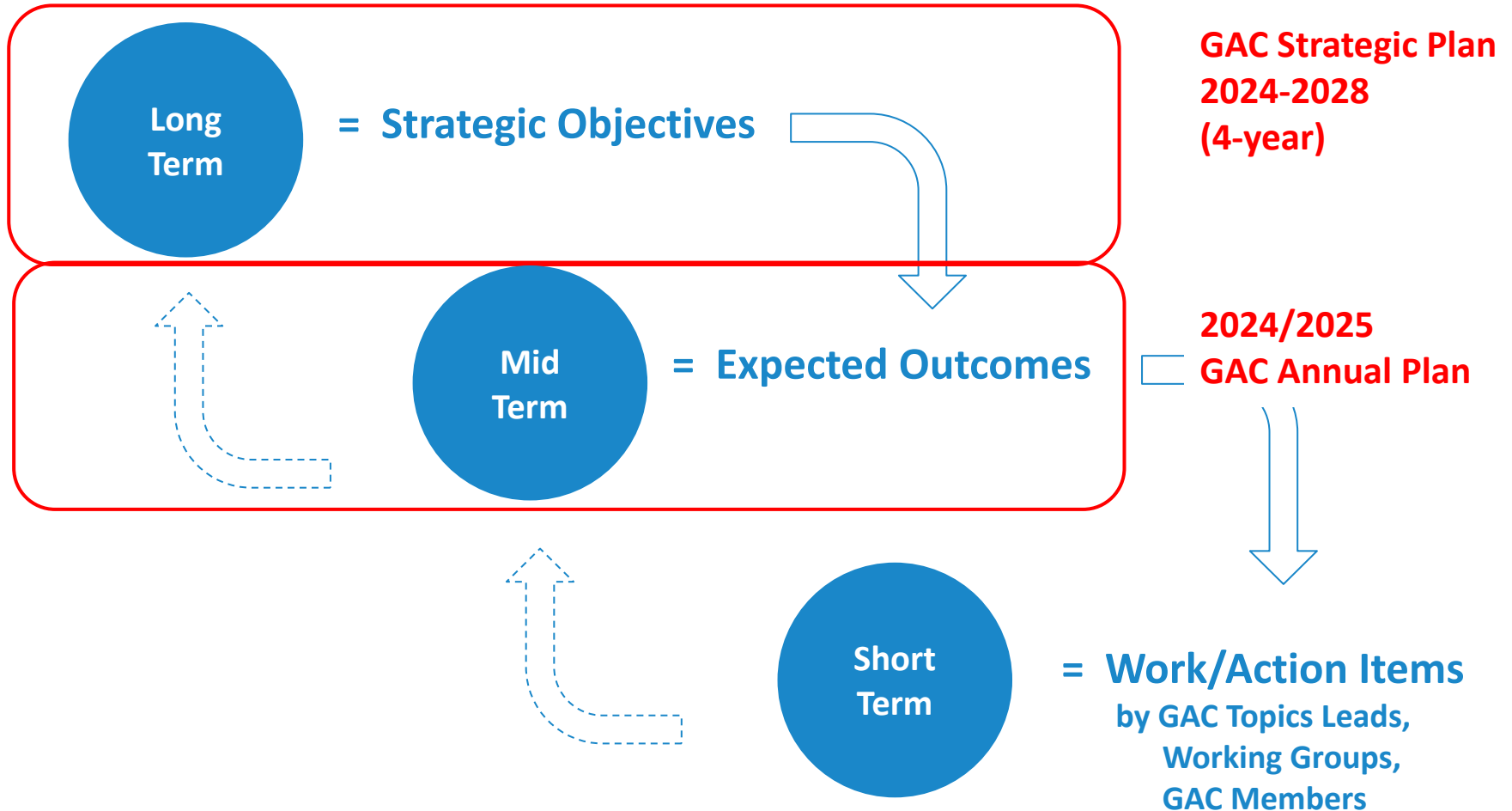- Promote the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS
- Reduce the incidence and harm of DNS Abuse in existing gTLDs and New gTLDs
- Support the continuous improvement of DNS Abuse mitigation and prevention standards and their effective enforcement by ICANN
- Review and identify Best Practices in preventing and mitigating DNS Abuse for wider adoption
- Review, assess and encourage implementation of concrete measures to combat Phishing, Pharming, Botnets, Malware and Spam, in partnership with relevant institutions that deal with the issue.
- Provide GAC members capacity building workshops, sessions and potentially whole programs, either on a permanent basis or on an ad-hoc approach, in order to enhance understanding of these issues.

In its work, keeping in mind the ever-evolving nature of DNS abuse, the GAC will seek to survey GAC Members and Observers to better understand how to address concerns and meet expectations of governments.

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[1] See GAC Statement on DNS Abuse (18 September 2019)

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https://gac.icann.org/work-plans/gac-strategic-plan-2024-2028.pdf (3 pages)

Reminder: Approach to Developing the GAC Strategic Plan

Long Term = **Strategic Objectives**

GAC Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (4-year)

Mid Term = **Expected Outcomes**

2024/2025 GAC Annual Plan

Short Term = **Work/Action Items**
by GAC Topics Leads, Working Groups, GAC Members

Diagram adapted from https://www.gartner.com/en/insights/strategic-planning

GAC Annual Plan 2024/2025

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ANNUAL PLAN 2024/2025
Endorsed by the GAC on 17 June 2024

GAC Strategic Objective 1 - Role for Governments in ICANN

4-year GAC Strategic Objective (2024-2028)
In support of reaffirming the critical role of governments within the ICANN multistakeholder model, the GAC will seek to ensure that governments can effectively pursue their public policy interests, through both existing and future ICANN processes and procedures. In particular, the GAC will work to assess whether current ICANN structures provide sufficient and meaningful opportunity for the GAC, to develop, influence, and modify policy outcomes.

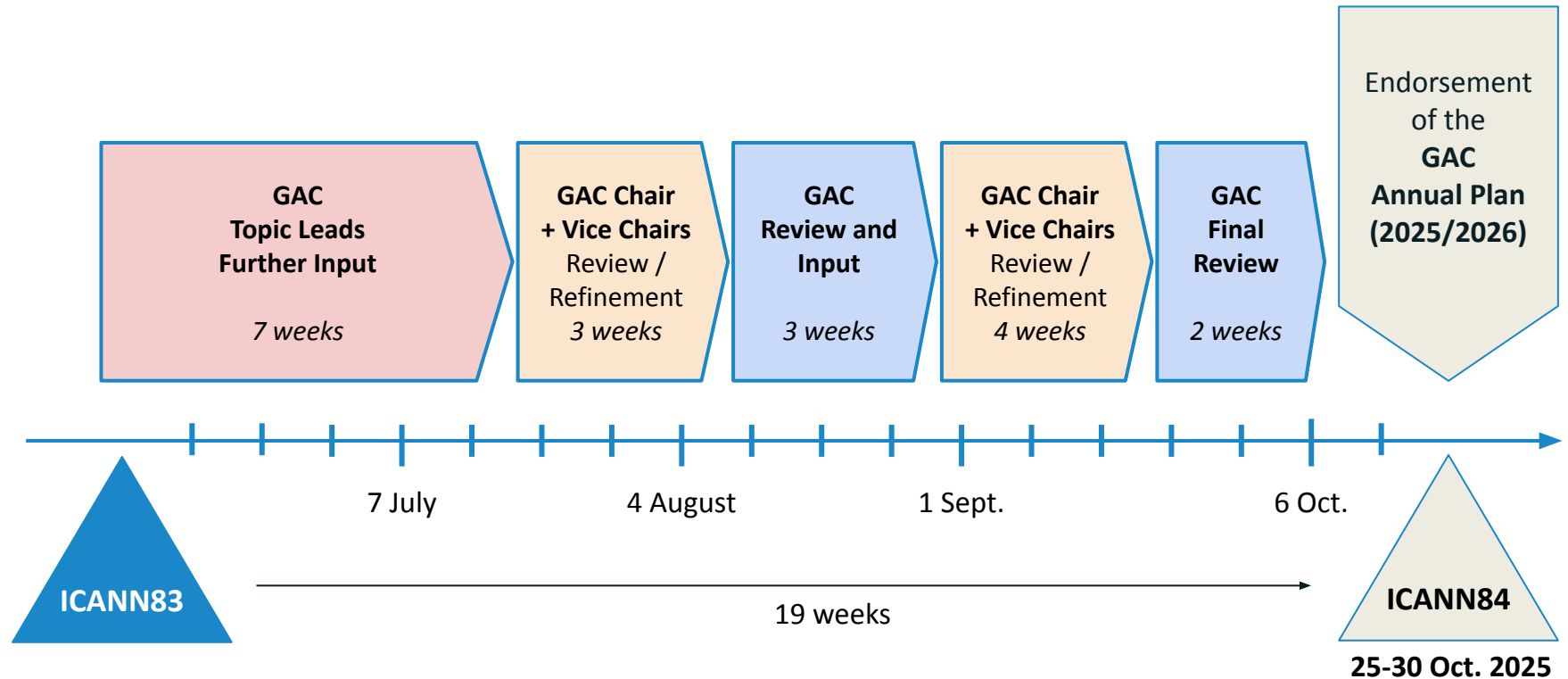**Expected Outcomes in 2024/2025**

1.1. **Stakeholder's Understanding of the Role of Governments**: Enable all stakeholders to gain a clearer understanding of the role of governments in ICANN processes, including the GAC, leveraging the attendance and participation of senior levels of governments during the High Level Government Meeting (HLGM), and particularly its discussion of ICANN, the Multistakeholder Model and their role in the wider Internet Governance ecosystem.

1.2. **Discussion of Current Issues at Senior Levels**: Discuss current public policy issues and challenges such as those relating to Digital Inclusion, and those referred to in the GAC Strategic Plan, at the most senior levels of government as practicable. These discussions may occur among governments bilaterally or multilaterally, as well as between governments and the ICANN leadership, before, during and after the ICANN80 HLGM.

1.3. **Non-Represented Governments**: To promote broader participation in the GAC, seek to establish contacts with governments who are not yet, or not currently, represented on the GAC with the collaboration of ICANN's Stakeholder and Government Engagement teams

1.4. **Transparency of ICANN processes**: Encourage ICANN to make all its processes accessible to governments and citizens of the world through transparent processes, including Statements of Interest (SOI) where appropriate, and accessible tools.

1.5. **Governmental Advisory Committee Influence on Policy Outcomes**: Consider case studies and initial assessment of specific ICANN policy areas or processes where there are concerns with sufficient and meaningful opportunities for the Governmental Advisory Committee to develop, influence, and modify policy outcomes.

Resources

- **ICANN80 High Level Government Meeting (HLGM) in Kigali, Rwanda**: the agenda of the discussion to be held among senior representatives of governments, the related opportunities to attend and speak during the event and the Chair's report of the meeting are expected to contribute to meeting several of the expected outcomes for the coming year in this strategic area of interest to the GAC

- **ICANN Government Engagement function**: this dedicated team of ICANN org, along with their colleagues in the wider Stakeholder Engagement function will be a resource to GAC Members to engage bilaterally with ICANN leadership as needed, as well as to conduct outreach to governments not yet represented in ICANN.

- **Advisory Committees of ICANN** other than the GAC, that is the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) and the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC), and their leaders in particular, will be important resources for the GAC as it conducts its own assessment of its ability to influence ICANN policy outcomes.

Development of the GAC Annual Plan 2025/2026

Annual Plan 2025/2026: Milestones To ICANN84

**GAC
Topic Leads
Further Input**

7 weeks

**GAC Chair
+ Vice Chairs**
Review /
Refinement
3 weeks

**GAC
Review and
Input**

3 weeks

**GAC Chair
+ Vice Chairs**
Review /
Refinement
4 weeks

**GAC
Final
Review**

2 weeks

Endorsement
of the
**GAC
Annual Plan
(2025/2026)**

7 July

4 August

1 Sept.

6 Oct.

ICANN83

19 weeks

ICANN84

25-30 Oct. 2025

Current GAC Strategic Objectives "Caretakers"

1. **Role for Governments in ICANN**   Jorge Cancio (Switzerland)

2. **Effectiveness of the GAC**   Zeina Bouharb (Lebanon)
                                            Ian Sheldon (Australia)

3. **Future Round of New gTLDs**   Marco Hogewoning (Netherlands)
                                            Thiago Dal-Toe (Colombia)

4. **DNS Abuse**   Thiago Dal-Toe (Colombia)

5. **Domain Registration Data**   Ian Sheldon (Australia)
                                            Thiago Dal-Toe (Colombia)

6. **Universal Acceptance**   Christine Arida (Egypt)

7. **New Technology**   Nico Caballero (GAC Chair)
                                            Christine Arida (Egypt)

8. **Internet Governance Awareness**   Christine Arida (Egypt)
                                            Jorge Cancio (Switzerland)

9. **Internet Number Resources**   Marco Hogewoning (Netherlands)

Highlights of Anticipated Revisions in Expected Outcomes for selected GAC Strategic Objectives

ICANN | **GAC**

Governmental Advisory Committee

Role for Governments in ICANN (Strategic Objective #1)

GAC Leadership Caretaker: **Jorge Cancio (Switzerland)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (updated)

In support of reaffirming the critical role of governments within the ICANN multistakeholder model, the GAC will seek to ensure that governments can effectively pursue their public policy interests, through both existing and future ICANN processes and procedures. In particular, the GAC will work to assess whether current ICANN structures live up to the highest standards of openness, inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability in the spirit of the multistakeholder approach, and provide sufficient and meaningful opportunity for the GAC, to develop, influence, and modify policy outcomes.

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Integration of the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines as reference for assessing the performance of ICANN's multi-stakeholder model processes (**1.4 Transparency of ICANN processes** and **1.6. GAC influence on policy outcomes**)

- New expected outcome to **Establish a periodic informal exchange between GAC Leadership and Board Governance Committee**

- Planning of the next **High Level Government Meeting (HLGM)**

Effectiveness of the GAC (Strategic Objective #2)

GAC Leadership Caretaker: **Ian Sheldon (Australia)** with collaboration of **Zeina Bouharb (Lebanon)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (unchanged)

The GAC will seek to increase active and meaningful participation of GAC Members in its deliberations and operations. The GAC will also work to enhance its effectiveness as a participant in the multistakeholder processes of ICANN, including by ensuring that the voice of GAC members is expressed and appropriately represented, and by leveraging collaboration and alignment with other ICANN constituencies.

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Conduct survey of GAC Membership

- Renewed focus on Increasing the level of engagement and participation in the GAC (including exploring innovative methods to run GAC sessions and incentives for active participation in the GAC)

- Continued focus on capacity development and onboarding of new GAC Members

Future Rounds of New gTLDs (Strategic Objective #3)

GAC Leadership Caretakers: **Thiago Dal-Toe (Colombia)** and **Marco Hogewoning (Netherlands)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (updated)

Leveraging the experience and lessons learned from previous rounds of New gTLDs, including on their costs, benefits and accessibility, the GAC will seek to ensure that any future rounds of New gTLDs:

- *Promote competition, consumer trust and consumer choice;*
- *Contribute to reducing the digital divide, in particular through the support of applicants from underserved and underrepresented regions and the promotion of IDNs*
- *Incorporate appropriate security, stability and resiliency safeguards related to the DNS and addition of new TLDs*
- *Include appropriate procedures and capabilities for the GAC to address unexpected issues arising from specific or categories of applications, in particular issues affecting the global public interest such as Geographical Names.*

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Continued efforts to support New gTLD applications from Underserved Regions and to monitor appropriate implementation of GAC Advice and input into Next Round rules and procedures
- Prioritization of GAC documentation and procedures for response during the application round (GAC Early Warning and Advice)

DNS Abuse (Strategic Objective #4)

GAC Leadership Caretaker: **Thiago Dal Toe (Colombia)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (updated)

The GAC will engage proactively in the work of the ICANN community and will provide advice on the activities of ICANN as they relate to governments' concerns regarding DNS Abuse, in order to:

- *Promote the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS.*
- *Reduce the incidence and harm of DNS Abuse in existing gTLDs and New gTLDs.*
- *Support the continuous improvement of DNS Abuse mitigation and prevention standards and their effective enforcement by ICANN.*
- *Review and identify Best Practices in preventing and mitigating DNS Abuse for wider adoption*
- *Review, assess and encourage implementation of concrete measures to combat Phishing, Pharming, Botnets, Malware and Spam, in partnership with relevant institutions that deal with the issue.*
- *Provide GAC members capacity building resources* ~~*workshops, sessions and potentially whole programs, either on a permanent basis or on an ad-hoc approach,*~~ *in order to enhance the GAC's understanding of these issues.*

DNS Abuse (Strategic Objective #4)

GAC Leadership Caretaker: **Thiago Dal Toe (Colombia)**

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Build on the findings of the February 2025 survey of GAC Members

- More concrete and timebound outcomes

- Continue advancing ICANN policy work on DNS Abuse before further delegation of New gTLDs

  - Further commitments from Contracted Parties and ICANN org

  - Implementation of current obligations (contracts and consensus policies)

  - Best practices and cross-industry collaboration

- Buliding subject matter capacity of GAC Members on DNS Abuse

  - Briefing and training material on the fundamentals of DNS Abuse

  - Develop a better understanding of market/industry dynamics, as well as new trends (techonology and threats) to inform GAC deliberations

  - Provide GAC Members examples of guidelines and best practices (such as trusted notifier programs) to assist in policy development in their respective jurisdiction

Domain Registration Data (Strategic Objective #5)

GAC Leadership Caretakers: **Ian Sheldon (Australia)** and **Thiago Dal Toe (Colombia)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (unchanged)

The GAC will work to identify and recommend steps to promote and support the continued accessibility and improved accuracy of domain registration information, consistent with applicable privacy regulatory frameworks and in line with the GAC Principles Regarding WHOIS Services.

Acknowledging continued evolution in the uses of WHOIS data, the GAC will work with the ICANN community to ensure that registration data policy reflects and addresses the complexities of the current domain name industry. This includes ensuring that legitimate requests made to registrars for domain registration data are met with access to meaningful data. This data should clearly articulate the roles of each of the entities participating in the registration of a domain name, including the authoritative source of registration data and the end user of the domain name (e.g. beneficial user) to avoid confusion with other entities such as privacy and proxy services and/or resellers

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Switch from a workstream monitoring approach to driving concrete and timebound outcomes via robust engagement of relevant stakeholder groups, including the ICANN Board, based on GAC Advice and input as necessary.

Universal Acceptance (Strategic Objective #6)

GAC Leadership Caretaker: **Christine Arida (Egypt)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (unchanged)

The GAC will work collaboratively among governments and with all stakeholders to promote a multilingual Internet and to provide universal access by ensuring that all domain names, including new Top-Level Domains, Internationalized Domain Names, and email addresses are treated equally and can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Continue on delivering Expected Outcomes identified in the previous GAC Annual Plan

- Cross-Community Collaboration:

  ○ Continue engagement with ccNSO and other Community Groups on UA and IDN

  ○ Appoint a GAC member to the Expert Working Group that will be established at the start of ICANN's 2026 fiscal year, to provide guidance for ICANN's work on UA adoption

  ○ Follow-up and engage (as appropriate) with the Expert Working Group (established in July 2025) to enable continued progress toward a UA-ready world.

Impact of New Technology on Unique Identifiers (S. Obj. #7)

GAC Leadership Caretakers: **Nico Caballero (GAC Chair)** and **Christine Arida (Egypt)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (unchanged)

The GAC will increase understanding and raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities of new technologies as they relate to the Internet's unique identifier systems. To that end, the GAC will leverage the expertise in the ICANN Community, governments and beyond, to share information and consider potential implications, for the benefit of GAC members and all stakeholders.

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Continue on delivering Expected Outcomes identified in the previous GAC Annual Plan

- Consider adding new technological developments such as DNS over QUIC, Quantum computing, etc.

Internet Governance **Awareness** (Strategic Objective #8)

GAC Leadership Caretakers: **Christine Arida (Egypt)** and **Jorge Cancio (Switzerland)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (unchanged)

The GAC will work to ensure that governments, the ICANN Board, ICANN org and ICANN community participants are kept regularly apprised of developments and challenges in the Internet Governance (IG) ecosystem that impact the Internet's unique identifier systems. [The GAC may coordinate efforts among Members to make contributions to global IG processes, within the framework of the multi-stakeholder model.]

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Last part of the GAC Strategic Objective may need to evolve based on ICANN82 discussions and taking into consideration, that after 2025, work will evolve into implementing the outcomes of the WSIS+20 Review process

- Otherwise, continue on delivering Expected Outcomes identified in the previous GAC Annual Plan as it relates to monitoring and information sharing.

- Ensure GAC awareness and involvement in IG activities of ICANN Government Engagement and Global Stakeholder Engagement teams

Internet Number Resources (Strategic Objective #9)

GAC Leadership Caretaker: **Marco Hogewoning (Netherlands)**

GAC Strategic Objective 2024-2028 (unchanged)

The GAC will work to ensure that its members receive regular updates on developments pertaining to RIRs Internet's unique identifiers allocation policies, including policy changes. The GAC may coordinate efforts among interested Members to make informed contributions to relevant processes.

Considerations for Expected Outcomes in the next 2025/2026 GAC Annual Plan:

- Continue on delivering Expected Outcomes identified in the previous GAC Annual Plan

- Considering the review of the RIR governance, ensure GAC members remain engaged with the process leading to a new governance document