
Agenda Item 32: GAC Operational Matters

Note: This brief has been prepared by ICANN GAC Support Staff.

Issue A – GAC Operating Principles

Background

The evolution of the ICANN community to a more “empowered” role after the IANA Transition has prompted individual ICANN Supporting organizations and advisory committees (including the GAC) to examine their operating principles and other processes to assess whether they are “fit for purpose” within this new empowered community structure.

The GAC has made targeted efforts to update its 54 operating principles on an as-needed basis over the last several years, but the current principles are not aligned within a comprehensive organizational structure – they reflect a general list of principles.

Recent changes to the GAC operating principles have tended to be tactical - appropriately focused on short term needs. But as community workloads increase, the pace of work at ICANN quickens and responsibilities grow on community participants, the absence of an overall structure is revealing process and procedural gaps in the GAC Operating Principles as currently structured. The current format of the GAC Operating principles makes it difficult to track certain processes or for some committee members to even reference the appropriate processes for their work.

A new structure for the GAC Operating Principle was studied in 2017 and the GAC is approaching the next phase of this work.

Upon completion, an evolved operating principle structure that “fills-in-the-gaps” will provide more organizational continuity, clarity for new participants, a means to help the committee meet new organizational accountabilities and responsibilities. With these changes the GAC will be enabled to function even more effectively as a fully empowered community structure in the new ICANN environment.

GAC Action Needed

A new structure for the GAC Operating Principles was proposed one year ago. Pursuant to the GAC discussion at ICANN60 in Abu Dhabi, further GAC discussion are necessary to define a clear approach for addressing the proposed new structure and to make the time to assess and evaluate new operating processes in an ordered manner. AT ICANN 61 the committee explored further options for taking this work forward.

Current Status of This Topic

During the ICANN 61 meeting in San Juan, GAC members heard a summary of the latest potential recommendations for how to approach the evolution of the GAC Operating Principles in a comprehensive and ordered manner – helping the committee to focus on those issues of highest priority first and moving forward in the work from that point.

Given the priority of supporting committee working group efforts throughout the ICANN organization, it was determined that the best potential area for initial focus would be on principles impacting working group efforts. The GAC leadership has taken on that task, focusing further efforts in that area. At ICANN63 the leadership will launch a new working group effort that will begin to address the various sections of the Operating Principles in an orderly fashion – starting with the working group topic.

The GAC leadership has also recently noted expanded interactions with other ICANN supporting organizations and advisory committees and the substantial value that could potentially be realized by identifying specific accountable liaison or point of contact functions between the GAC and other groups. Currently the GAC hosts liaisons TO the committee from the ALAC and the GNSO. As part of the review of the Operating Principles, the leadership is interested in considering the ability of the GAC to formalize contacts FROM the GAC to other key ICANN communities. This is a topic that could be visited in parallel or immediately after the consideration of working group processes.

Further Background Information/Details:

- The GAC sets its own Operating Principles
- The first GAC Operating Principles were created in 2004
- The current Operating Principles date back to 2011
- Since 2011, there have been several apparent different iterations of operating principles work efforts
- Over the last three years there have been three targeted amendment efforts:
 - Buenos Aires in 2015 to allow for 5 Vice Chairs
 - Johannesburg in June 2017 to allow for electronic voting
 - New Structure Proposed – March 2017
- Preliminary assessment of a new structure and mapping conducted – July 2017
- Detailed GAC Discussion – Abu Dhabi – November 2017
- Detailed GAC Discussion – San Juan – March 2018

Issue B - GAC Onboarding

Background

Over the last two years, members of the GAC Underserved Regions Working Group, the ICANN Government Engagement Team, the ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement Team and GAC Support staff have been working to develop new ways to improve information sharing for GAC participants (both newcomers and experienced member representatives) about the GAC's work and the committee's role in the ICANN Community.

Due to the high rotation of GAC participants, it is essential that all newcomers get a proper onboarding, learn about the topics and issues of importance to the GAC and get advice on how they can most effectively contribute to the GAC and its critical advisory role within the ICANN community.

In order to assist and support new GAC Members, Observers and representatives, a number of pilot initiatives have been initiated.

Onboarding Efforts

At the ICANN62 meeting in Panama City, GAC members agreed that more efforts should be made to welcome new GAC participants - particularly those who are attending their first GAC meeting.

Under the guidance of the GAC Leadership team, the GAC Support Staff have developed an informal introductory welcome session for GAC participants experiencing their first ICANN meeting. The pilot session of this endeavor is scheduled for Saturday morning, October 20 in Barcelona. The informal session agenda for this effort will include:

1. Welcome and Goal Setting
2. Overview of Expectations For GAC Public Meetings
3. Review of GAC Leadership, Support and Secretariat Roles
4. Public Meeting logistics
 - a. What to know about an ICANN Meeting
 - i. GAC Pre-Meeting preparation (agenda prep and schedule overview)
 - ii. GAC's role at ICANN Public Meetings
 - iii. GAC Membership Participation in GAC Meeting
 - Seating
 - Contributions/Participation
 - b. Communique drafting sessions and purpose
5. HLGGM special meeting at ICANN63
6. Questions and Answers

The GAC Support Staff will report on the implementation of this first pilot session during Session 32 of the GAC meeting.

GAC introductory webinar series pilot program.

<https://gac.icann.org/activity/gac-introductory-webinar-series-pilot-edition>

This pilot project was initiated after the ICANN61 Meeting following joint community discussions in Puerto Rico with the GAC members in attendance. During the subsequent intersessional public meeting period the staff conducted three introductory webinars:

- An Overview of the ICANN Information Transparency Initiative - see <https://gac.icann.org/sessions/gac-introductory-webinar-series-information-transparency-initiative-iti>;
- Basics About the GNSO and the Policy Development Process - see <https://gac.icann.org/sessions/gac-introductory-webinar-series-about-the-gnso-and-policy-development-process-pdp>; and
- An Introduction to the ICANN Complaints Officer - see <https://gac.icann.org/sessions/gac-introductory-webinar-series-icann-s-complaint-office>

Attendee feedback and comments collected after each webinar allowed support staff to shape the format, content and array of future webinar topics that are of interest to GAC participants.

Due to committee member and leadership focus on several time critical substantive and operational topics, no webinars were scheduled during this recent intersessional period. A preliminary schedule of future webinars during the next intersessional meeting period has been created including:

- Introduction to ICANN Compliance (November 2018);
- Introduction to the ICANN Board (December 2018); and
- The ICANN Picket Fence (January 2019)

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