

PDP 3.0 Improvement #6: Expectations for Working Group Leaders & Skills Checklist

As noted in PDP 3.0: The GNSO Working Group guidelines provide a general description of the role of a Working Group leader, but there is currently no requirement that the Working Group leader selection process factors this in or establishes specific criteria that need to be met in order for someone to be eligible to be considered for this role. Working Groups may benefit from a more detailed description of the role and responsibilities, including expected time commitment of a Working Group leader. This could then be coupled with a list of skills and expertise that would also be desirable or even required. This would be helpful for Working Group review and selection of, and potential candidates for, leadership positions. Working Group leaders would be expected to agree to the role and responsibilities as outlined, and would also serve as a means to hold the leaders accountable to the Working Group. Similarly, it could be indicated whether there are any incompatibilities that should be considered such as whether someone can be in a leadership role in multiple PDPs at the same time. In addition, the GNSO Council could consider following the process that was used for the EPDP Team selection: A Call for volunteers with clear list of expectations and skills, followed by assessment of each candidate against the skills identified which would result in a recommendation to the Council.

Accordingly, the following is a suggested standalone document that would complement the existing GNSO Working Group Guidelines by providing guidance on the skills, expertise, and time commitment required of the chairs, co-chairs, and vice-chairs. This guidance is compiled from the resource document [GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide](#).

Expectations for Working Group Leaders

1. Basic Responsibilities of Working Group Leaders

GNSO Working Group leaders have the following basic responsibilities:

- Calling Working Group meetings and, with the assistance of ICANN Staff, developing meeting agendas;
- Assessing, at the start of each meeting, whether a sufficient number of Working Group members are present to proceed (note that there is no standard in the GNSO Working Group Guidelines, so this determination is at the discretion of the Working Group leaders);
- Presiding over Working Group meetings and deliberations, which includes ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to contribute;
- Reporting on the Working Group's status to the GNSO Council via the liaison, when requested to do so (see [PDP 3.0 Improvement #5 GNSO Council Liaison Supplemental Guidance](#));
- Helping ensure that all Working Group activities follow the procedures and principles outlined in the [GNSO Working Group Guidelines](#);
- Managing the Working Group progress to ensure that milestones are achieved in accordance with the Working Group timeline and workplan.

For more project management related guidance and details, see the implementation of PDP 3.0 Improvements #11, #12, #16, and #17:

- GNSO Project Work Product Catalog
- Project Status and Condition Change Procedure & Flowchart
- Project Change Request Form
- Resource Reporting for PDP Working Group

2. Encouraging Representational Balance

A GNSO Working Group should generally mirror the diversity of the GNSO, by having representatives from all GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies, and consistent with section 3.2 of these Guidelines.

- The Working Group leaders, in cooperation with the Working Group Staff Secretariat and other ICANN Staff members, is responsible for continually assessing whether the Working Group has sufficiently broad representation;
- If the representation is found to be lacking, the Working Group leader should decide which group(s) need(s) to be solicited for additional Working Group members. Alternatively, if a Working Group leader finds that any one group is overrepresented to the point of “capturing” the WG, he/she should inform the GNSO Council liaison to the Working Group;
- A Working Group leader is also responsible for encouraging overall representational balance within any sub-team formed within the Working Group;
- To remedy an imbalance, the Working Group leader should reach out to the under-represented interest group(s) for more volunteers. If the imbalance persists, the Working Group leader should ensure that the situation is documented in the Working Group’s final report and that, if a public review is conducted of the sub-team’s work, any input received from the under-represented group(s) is reported.

3. Encouraging Adherence to ICANN’s Expected Standards of Behavior & Community Anti-Harassment Policy

A GNSO Working Group leader is responsible for ensuring adherence to the [ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior](#) and Terms of Participation and Complaint Procedure and, when necessary, enforcing or reporting non-compliance incidents.

4. Ensuring Working Group Documents Represent the Diversity of Working Group Views

A GNSO Working Group leader with the assistance of Staff, is responsible for ensuring that documents by the Working Group faithfully represent the diversity of views within the Working Group. This can be done by the leader in various ways, such as asking multiple Working Group members to contribute text or assigning a drafting subgroup to pay particular attention to the different views presented.

5. Making Consensus Designation on Working Group Recommendations

Working Group leaders are responsible for assigning to each of the Working Group’s officially reported positions or recommendations a designation indicating the level of agreement supporting it within the Working Group, consistent with Section 3.6 of the GNSO Working Group Guideline.

For additional details and guidance, see [PDP 3.0 Improvement #4 Consensus Playbook](#).

6. Participating in the Working Group complaint processes

GNSO Working Group leaders play a vital role in the complaint processes available to Working Group members. Working Group leaders shall carry out this role consistent with Section 3.7 of the WG Guidelines.

For additional details and guidance on the Working Group leaders' roles and responsibilities in handling the complaint process, see:

- [PDP 3.0 Improvement #9: Clarification to Complaint Process in GNSO Working Group](#)
- [GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide](#).

7. Leader Skills, Expertise, and Time Commitment

As noted in [GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide](#) the effectiveness of a Working Group greatly depends on the competency with which the WG's leaders carry out their responsibilities. These responsibilities include, among many others, facilitating goal-oriented Working Group meetings, encouraging collaboration and building consensus.

Furthermore, the GNSO Council has high expectations for the leaders of GNSO Working Groups. This has grown out of a recent history of successful Working Groups that have been successfully chaired in a reliable and professional manner.

In order for Working Group leaders to assume their roles and responsibilities as outlined above in section 2.2.1 they are expected to have the following minimum skills and expertise. See "Working Group Leader Skills Checklist" section in the document below.

8. GNSO Operating Procedures

Working Group leaders are expected to have read and be familiar with the [GNSO Operating Procedures](#), and in particular the GNSO Working Group Guidelines and PDP Manual. A leader can seek support from many others who are knowledgeable in the application of the GNSO Operating Procedures, including the GNSO Council's liaison to the Working Group, the GNSO Council Chair, ICANN Staff and other Working Group officers.

The Working Group's mission, scope and expected deliverables should be clearly explained in its Charter. The Working Group leader is expected to ensure that Working Group members understand these requirements and to keep the Working Group's actions, discussions and meetings focused on serving its ultimate goals and deliverables.

9. Neutrality of the Working Group Leaders

The Working Group leaders are expected to assume a neutral and impartial role regarding substantive matters discussed by the Working Group. This means refraining from promoting a specific agenda and ensuring fair, objective treatment of all opinions within the Working Group.

This does not, however, mean that a leader cannot express a substantive opinion. When doing so, he/she should indicate explicitly that a substantive personal opinion is being stated, rather than a “ruling of the Chair”, and should state the rationale/justification for such intervention from a personal perspective.

However, due to the expectation of the neutral and impartial role a Working Group leader acts, the leader should refrain from expressing substantive personal opinions as much as possible and only do it when he/she believes it is necessary in facilitating the deliberation of the Working Group. The Working Group leader should not become an advocate for any specific position under consideration by the Working Group.

10. Consensus Building

One of the most important functions of a GNSO Working Group leader is helping to build a consensus behind each of the Working Group’s formal decisions, positions or recommendations.

- The Working Group leader should have the ability to help Working Group members understand that a consensus is a decision that is collaboratively reached and that the majority of Working Group members can “live with”; accordingly, it may not be a perfect or unanimous decision.
- The Working Group leader should be able to facilitate consensus building by:
 - Creating agendas in which every item has a clearly defined outcome;
 - Fairly and neutrally keeping meetings on track toward the stated goal;
 - Listening carefully and asking for clarification wherever needed;
 - Helping the Working Group with its internal negotiations and conflict resolution.

For additional details and guidance, see PDP 3.0 Improvement #4 Consensus Playbook.

11. Balancing Working Group Openness with Effectiveness

The openness of GNSO Working Groups helps ensure broad participation and transparency. However, it is the Working Group leader’s responsibility to ensure that this inclusiveness does not compromise the WG’s effectiveness.

- Working Group leaders should be able to distinguish between Working Group participants offering genuine dissent and those raising irrelevant or already-closed issues merely to block the Working Group’s progress toward its goal;
- Working Group leaders should have the ability to halt disruption and, in extreme cases, can suspend a Working Group member from a discussion per section 3.5 of the GNSO Working Group Guidelines on Rules of Engagement;
- Working Group leaders are expected to ensure that closed Working Group decisions are not revisited, and to regularly apprise Working Group members of the status of open and closed items, unless there is a consensus to do so (usually in light of new information brought to the Working Group’s attention);
- Working Group leaders should ensure that anyone joining a Working Group after it starts has reviewed all relevant Working Group documents and e-mails to its mailing list.

12. Chairing a GNSO Working Group Meeting

It is useful for certain tasks to be handled as early as possible in the life of a GNSO Working Group, preferably during its first meeting. Of course, once the Working Group leader has been selected, it is his/her responsibility to facilitate the Working Group's completion of these tasks, which typically include (in no particular order):

- Confirmation that every Working Group member has submitted a Statement of Interest (SOI);
- Introduction of Working Group members;
- Review of the Working Group's transparency policy;
- Review of the Working Group's Charter and other relevant documents;
- Assignment of the Working Group's work plan;
- Develop meeting agendas and send them at least 48-hours in advance (with staff support);
- Ensure Working Group discussions adhere to the agenda and manage the timing of discussions;
- Help navigate topics in other policy efforts that may have relations to or dependencies with the topics in the PDP Working Group;
- Facilitate potentially contentious discussions;
- Schedule future Working Group's meetings.

13. Time Commitment

For a typical member on a Working Group, most of this time is usually spent doing the following:

- Communicating (by phone, e-mail, Skype, etc.) with other Working Group members, support staff, and the GNSO Council;
- Reading meeting materials;
- Reading and participating in the Working Group mailing list;
- Participating in Working Group meetings.

For a Working Group leader, the time commitment per week varies, depending on meeting-preparation time, post-meeting action items, and other factors. See 6.1.3 of the GNSO Operating Procedures.

14. Previous Leadership Review Outcome

If a person holds a leadership position in a GNSO working group and his/her performance has been evaluated through the regular leadership review cycle (see PDP 3.0 Improvement #13 Regular Review of Working Group Leadership), the outcome of such review, including the result of the WG member survey on the leadership performance, will be taken into consideration for assessing the person's candidacy for any future leadership position in GNSO working groups.

Working Group Leader Skills Checklist

The following is a list of minimum skills that a Working Group leader must possess. It may be used as a checklist to evaluate candidates for Working Group leaders, or as a resource for prospective leaders to develop their skills.

Responsibility	Skill Requirement	Resource
Meeting management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manage effective meetings: including facilitating goal-oriented Working Group meetings, agenda setting and adherence, time management, encouraging collaboration and building consensus ● Responsiveness and smooth communication with support staff and Working Group members ● Project management skills in driving the completion of action items and achieving milestones in accordance with the WG timeline and work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide ● PDP 3.0 Improvements #11, #12, #16, and #17: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GNSO Project Work Product Catalog ○ Project Status and Condition Change Procedure & Flowchart ○ Project Change Request Form ○ Resource Reporting for PDP Working Group ● ICANN Academy Leadership Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://community.icann.org/display/LTP/Leadership+Program ● ICANN Learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://learn.icann.org/: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 700.1 Holding Effective Meetings
Encouraging representational balance	<p>Ability to assess and encourage representational balance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ability to identify and address “capture”, and ● ability to determine when outreach is necessary and to undertake it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide ● ICANN Academy Leadership Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://community.icann.org/display/LTP/Leadership+Program ● ICANN Learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://learn.icann.org/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 703.1 Unconscious Bias
Ensuring adherence to ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior	<p>Ability to encourage and, when necessary, enforce adherence to the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior</p>	<p>ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior</p>

Responsibility	Skill Requirement	Resource
Ensuring Working Group documents represent the diversity of Working Group views	Ability to identify the diversity of views within the Working Group, if applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide ● ICANN Academy Leadership Program: https://community.icann.org/display/LTP/Leadership+Program ● ICANN Learn: https://learn.icann.org/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 703.1 Unconscious Bias
Making Consensus Designation on Working Group recommendations	Knowledge of and ability to designate consensus on Working Group recommendations based on the level of agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working Group Guidelines Section 3.6 ● Consensus Playbook (PDP 3.0 Improvement #4)
Participating in Working Group complaint process	Knowledge of and ability to participate in the Working Group complaint process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working Group Guidelines Section 3.7 ● Clarification to Complaint Process in GNSO Working Group (PDP 3.0 Improvement #9)
Applying the GNSO Operating Procedures	Ensure that Working Group members understand these requirements and to keep the Working Group's actions, discussions and meetings focused on serving its ultimate goals and deliverables	GNSO Operating Procedures
Being a neutral and impartial Leader	Ability to refrain from promoting a specific agenda and ensuring fair, objective treatment of all opinions within the Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide ● ICANN Academy Leadership Program: https://community.icann.org/display/LTP/Leadership+Program ● ICANN Learn: https://learn.icann.org/

Responsibility	Skill Requirement	Resource
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 703.1 Unconscious Bias
Building consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ability to help Working Group members understand that a consensus is a decision that is collaboratively reached and that the majority of Working Group members can “live with”; accordingly, it may not be a perfect or unanimous decision ● Ability to facilitate consensus building by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating agendas in which every item has a clearly defined outcome. ○ Fairly and neutrally keeping meetings on track toward the stated goal ○ Listening carefully and asking for clarification wherever needed, and acting on the input as appropriate ○ Helping the Working Group with its internal negotiations and conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair’s Guide ● ICANN Academy Leadership Program: https://community.icann.org/display/LTP/Leadership+Program ● ICANN Learn: https://learn.icann.org/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 703.1 Unconscious Bias ● PDP 3.0 Implementation #4 (Consensus Playbook)
Balancing Working Group openness with effectiveness	<p>Ability to ensure that this inclusiveness does not compromise the WG’s effectiveness, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ability to distinguish between Working Group participants offering genuine dissent and those raising irrelevant or already-closed issues merely to block the Working Group’s progress toward its goal ● Ability to halt disruption and, in extreme cases, exclude a Working Group member from a discussion per Section 3.5 of the GNSO Working Group Guidelines on Rules of Engagement ● Ability to ensure that closed Working Group decisions are not revisited, unless there is a consensus to do so (usually in light of new information brought to the Working Group’s attention) ● Ability to ensure that anyone joining a Working Group after it starts has reviewed all relevant Working Group documents and e-mails to its mailing list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair’s Guide ● ICANN Academy Leadership Program: https://community.icann.org/display/LTP/Leadership+Program ● ICANN Learn: https://learn.icann.org/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 703.1 Unconscious Bias

Responsibility	Skill Requirement	Resource
Time commitment	<p>Ability to commit to the time required to perform the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicating (by phone, e-mail, Skype, etc.) with other Working Group members, support staff, and the GNSO Council ● Reading meeting materials ● Reading and participating in the Working Group mailing list ● Participating in Working Group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GNSO Basics: Module 2c -- GNSO Working Groups: Chair's Guide ● ICANN Academy Leadership Program: https://community.icann.org/display/LTP/Leadership+Program ● GNSO Operating Procedures Section 6.1.3
Contribute ideas and knowledge to working group discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge of issue background and current work status ● Knowledge of topics in other policy efforts that have relations to or dependencies with the PDP working group topics ● Commitment in participating in working group meetings on a regular and ongoing basis ● Ability to create factual, relevant and easily understandable messages, and able to clearly deliver them to the Working Group ● Ability to deliver a point clearly, concisely, and in a friendly way ● Exhibit agility and confidence in evolving situations and is able to swiftly transition from topic to topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working group wiki, which includes meeting transcripts, recordings, actions, deliverables, and other reference links ● Draft and background documents
Develop and draft working group documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge of working group background documents and draft documents ● Knowledge of (preferably experience with) the document development process in GNSO working groups ● Highly effective oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills ● Excellent research skills with the ability to discern factual, factually relevant, and persuasive details and sources ● Commitment to manage a diverse workload, while collaborating with a Working Group of individuals with different background and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working group wiki, which includes meeting transcripts, recordings, actions, deliverables, and other reference links ● Draft and background documents ● Documents and deliverables of other related GNSO PDP working groups ● ICANN Learn: https://learn.icann.org/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 701.1 Writing for Policy and

Responsibility	Skill Requirement	Resource
	interests in driving objectives	Public Comment
Ensure that stakeholder group or constituency statements are developed in an informed and timely way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project management skills in driving the completion of SG/C statements in a timely manner• Able to effectively build a course of action, analyze trade-offs, and make recommendations even in ambiguous situations	