GNSO Working Group Newcomer Open House session TRANSCRIPTION

Thursday 12th March 2015 at 12:00 UTC

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Nathalie Peregrine: Thank you. This is Nathalie. The call recording has been started.

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, everybody, and welcome all to the GNSO Working Group Newcomer Open House session on the 12th of March 2015.

On the call today we have (Katie McKnight) on the Audio Bridge, Heather Forrest, (Carlos Powell), (Klaus Mogikony), (Sarah Bocky) and (Tracy Haines). From staff we have Mary Wong, Glen DeSaintgery, Julia Charvolen, Lars Hoffman and myself, Nathalie Peregrine.

I'd like to remind you all to please state your names before speaking for purposes of the transcription. Thank you ever so much, and over to you Mary.

Mary Wong: Thank you, Nathalie. And on behalf of the rest of the GNSO Policy support team, several of whom as Nathalie has said are on the call

today, I want to welcome you all. And I would like to thank our speaker for today, Heather Forrest, who is a GNSO Council member, who will be taking us through the various steps of getting involved in the GNSO.

So my role here is really just to introduce Heather and the topic, but before I do that, we that it would be helpful to show you who's who on the GNSO Policy support team. Some of you may have already met or heard from or been in communication with David Olive, our vice president, who's located in Istanbul, one of the three hub offices of ICANN, the other two being in Los Angeles and Singapore.

I'm a senior policy director, as is Marika Konings, who is the team leader of our little team. She's in Brussels. And we have Glen who's with us today, and Glen is indispensible. If you have not already found that, you will. And she basically is the person to go to about everything secretariat and non-secretariat related.

That's me. And there's also Julia and Lars. And Lars I think you're on the call today as well. And you see that we are located in different parts of the world as well. I will say that Julia and myself are not attached to an ICANN office. We work remotely. And so we do have a fairly diverse team across different offices, including some home offices.

Steve is in Los Angels, Barry is in Arizona, and Nathalie, who you just heard from a few minutes ago, is in France, and she will be running these webinars. And so to the extent that you get involved with our working groups and our various efforts, you will be interacting with Nathalie and quite a few of us very, very often.

So we had asked quite a number of people, including folks who were new to ICANN, what were the sorts of topics that they were most interested in terms of how it would make it easier for you to get involved in our working groups, the policy development process, and the many initiatives that the GNSO is working on, and for those of you in the Adobe Connect, these are the topics that came. And Heather will take us through each of them, as well as Nathalie.

But before I hand over to Heather, Nathalie, I was wondering for those folks who are new and who may not be as familiar with using the Adobe Connect virtual meeting room, would you mind spending a couple of minutes taking us through how that works?

Nathalie Peregrine: Thank you very much, Mary. This is Nathalie from staff. So most of you have made it to the Adobe Connect room. Congratulations, that's a good first step to achieve. So those of you on the Audio Bridge, if you would like to refer back to the e-mail invitation you received with the connection details, you'll find an Adobe Connect URL there.

If you click on that, you'll be led to a login page. So please when you get to the login page, don't be confused by the host or the guest login options. The host logins are only for staff. So all you need to do is to log in as guest, using your first and your last name. This is important for attendance purposes and also for the Adobe Connect room mechanics once you're in the call.

So once you've done that, you get into an Adobe Connect room. Most of the working group Adobe Connect rooms are set up in exactly the same way as this one. And so they'll be fairly easy to indentify. What

you have in the center is what you call the share part. That's where you'll have presentations and also working documents.

As participants, you cannot modify the document at all, so you don't need to worry about your mouse hovering over this part. Where you can participate, however, is in the Adobe Connect room chat part, which here is at the bottom, where you see some participants have started a dialogue.

What you might not know is that the content of Adobe Connect chat posts during working group calls are kept. They are archived as part of the transparency procedure. The contents of this part with then be sent after the call to working group members.

So if you do have anything that you want to talk about, business technical issues on the call or maybe requiring a dial out and you'd rather your personal phone number not appear in this chat, it's a good idea to use the private chat. This is not archived in a way.

To do this, you hover your mouse over the name of the person you want to talk to. So let's say a member of staff, for instance. And you have a little drop-down menu that allows you to start a private chat. There you can correspond like in any other private chat and state your worries or your technical issues or ask for dial out if needed. So it's quite a good fit.

Another feature that you might not be aware of is as well being able to dial into the conference call via the telephone, you can also use voiceover IP. And if you look at the list of participants, you have microphone icons, some of which are muted. The ones that are muted

this means that these participants have activated their Adobe Connect room microphone.

Though to do this if you'd rather participate via your laptop rather than your phone, you'd go to the telephone icon at the top of the Adobe Connect room toolbar and follow the instructions there to connect via your computer. Now you'll know that activation has been successful when the telephone icon becomes a microphone icon.

However, exactly in the same way as with the telephone, you must keep your microphone muted at all times. So to do this, you would click on the white arrow to the right of your microphone icon and there you have the option to mute and unmute. Once your microphone is muted, as you can see again on the participant list, you'll have a red line from (unintelligible). To unmute, you would go to exactly the same spot. So it's quite important to do so.

One of the traditions in working groups is the hands raised. And in a working group, given often the high number of participants, you cannot just speak into the call. There's what we call a question queue. So to do this, you raise your hand by going to the raise hand icon. So that's the little man with his hand raised at the top of the Adobe Connect toolbar, and you click on that to raise your hand.

Much as Mary has done, if you look at the attendees list, Mary as host, had (unintelligible) icon with her hands raised. Hands raised does not give you automatic permission to speak into the call. This merely puts you into a question queue.

Going back to the importance of logging in with your first and last name, it's important you do so. If you do want to ask a question or comment, the chair can therefore call you out by your first and last name so you're immediately recognizable and tell you when it's your turn to comment.

Another important feature here is to remember to lower your hand. I think about once every working group call someone will forget to lower their hand. This therefore tells the chair that they still got a comment or another question to ask. I think you'll hear quite frequently the participant apologizing for this and saying that it's an old hand. This means nothing more than the participant has forgotten to lower their hand.

Another icon you can see in the dropdown menu, and if you all click on the little white hand arrow on the raise hand icon, is the green tick agree and the red cross disagree. These are quite convenient for example as a simplified polling system. If the chair for instance wants to ask the members on the call if they think there's a need for a next call the following week.

Rather than having the people write their agreement or disagreement in the chat, which will take too long to read, he'll ask them to agree or disagree with this green tick and red cross. And that means that in a simple view of the attendance list, he gets an idea what the room is feeling.

So just to make sure that you have been following, it's just the beginning of the webinar after all, I'd like to ask you all to please raise

your hands, going to the raise hand option on the top of the AC room toolbar. Perfect. Thank you ever so much.

Another thing, if you look at the attendance list, now the attendance list is normally in alphabetical order, by raising your hand this pushes your name to the top of the list. It also gives you a good idea of what position you're holding in the question queue.

Okay can you all please lower your hands. And by a show of green tick or red cross, let me know how you think this explanation has been going up till now. I see a few that it was overwhelming. Thank you ever so much, everyone.

Please don't hesitate if you have further questions about the AC room, there are no silly questions with these type of interfaces. So please don't hesitate to clearly write them in the chat, private message me in the chat, or else you can send a quick e-mail to the GNSO secretariat. I'll put the e-mail in the chat part now. And you can ask any conference call or Adobe Connect room questions.

With that, thank you ever so much and I'll hand it back to Heather.

Heather Forrest: Thank you very much, Nathalie and Mary. I think that was particularly useful so that folks can participate in today's call. And as I put down there in the chat just before we commenced, please do by all means if you have questions as we go, raise your hand on the spot and I will be very happy to have you raise your question at the moment that is arises as opposed to holding onto it and perhaps losing your train of thought.

Likewise if there's something that you're not sure about, if there's something that you have a question about that's been said, please, you know, raise that however you feel most comfortable in doing so.

And what we'll talk about today, as was indicated on the previous slide, we'll go through a number of fairly dense conceptual topics relating to GNSO policy development. We'll talk about the PDP process, we'll talk about the scope of that PDP process, what can be a subject of a PDP and what comes out of a PDP, and we'll talk about working groups and how working groups work and the mechanics of how they're formed and how you go about participating.

And as I understand it in being asked to chair this session, this is one of the key bits of information really that you folks are interested in which is how to better and more effectively get engaged in the GNSO process. And really the easiest and quickest and most direct way to do that is through participating in a working group. So we'll spend some time there.

We need to first begin by conceptualizing why we have working groups and what it is that working groups contribute to. And to understand that, we need to understand the PDP process. So if we can look at the next slide and specifically what we tend to call the snake.

When we look at this thing, what you're looking at here is a diagram of what we refer to under the ICANN bylaws as the PDP process. The reason why we repeat the word process in there -- PDP stands for policy development process -- we say PDP process because a P, capital P, capital D, capital P, the acronym there is really the term used by the ICANN bylaws. So this isn't just any policy development

process, it's a process that is specifically outlined in ICANN's corporate bylaws.

And managing the policy development process is a task specifically given to the council by the ICANN bylaws. We'll talk more about what is within the scope of council's policy development when we get to the motion of consensus policy and picket fence a bit later in the session, but to start things off, let's say I'm a lawyer and I like to know what the actual language is rather than hear someone's interpretation or summarization of it.

So for any of you who feel the same way, what the bylaws specifically say is this: "There shall be a policy development body known as the Generic Name Supporting Organization, or GNSO, which shall be responsible for developing and recommending to the ICANN board substantive policies relating to generic top level domains." You'll see that that specific language has an impact, a significant impact, on what it is that the GNSO is able to do under the bylaws.

Now if we look at this the Z or the Z or the snake here, the diagrammatic representation of the policy development process, you see that this commences with a request for an issue report. Now this is something that the GNSO Council is entitled under the bylaws to vote on. And in fact requesting an issue report requires an affirmative vote of more than one-fourth of each house or a majority of one house of the GNSO.

Now we'll say more about the actual structure of the GNSO closer to the end of today's discussion, but for now let's just say there are two houses. One of them is called the Contractual Parties House. That's

comprised of our contractual parties, the registries and registrars. And the other one is the Non-Contracted Parties House, which simply put, is everyone else enrolled in the GNSO.

So again, to request an issue report, the council will vote and it requires an affirmative vote of more than a quarter of each house or a majority of one house.

Now staff does the heavy lifting here in terms of the issue report. They identify the relevant data, put this together in a comprehensive document for review and discussion, not just by council or the GNSO but published for the entire community.

Another thing to remember here is that the GNSO Council is not the only part of the ICANN structure that can request an issue report. The board can do this and another advisory committee can do this as well.

Within 45 calendar days after a motion from council or if the issue report has been requested from another AC within ICANN or there's an instruction from the board, staff will develop and publish what's called the preliminary issue report.

And that process involves seeking input from the community through public comments and reply posts. And so staff puts together this initial report. That report then goes out to the community, comment on this, provide input on this and essentially give us an idea of your sense of where we are now.

Staff review the public comments, and it's an absolutely imperative part of the process. Revisions are made to the preliminary issue report

based on the public comments received. It's not until that process has taken place that a final issue report is published for consideration and a review by the GNSO Council.

But it falls on council to make a determination on the matters, the recommendations, the outcomes of the issue report - excuse me, of the issue report, yes. And in particular what council needs to do here is determine whether or not to initiate that policy development process.

Now initiating a policy development process for voting thresholds, how many members of council need to vote for, depends, well actually changes on whether or not something is within the scope of what the GNSO is required to do under the ICANN bylaws.

As you might imagine, the voting threshold is higher to the extent that what the issue report is proposing and the PDP relates to something that is not directly within scope of the GNSO.

So to the extent that council votes affirmatively and says that we adopt the issue report and wish to commence a PDP, a working group is formed. And this really is the heart of our discussion today is working groups, what they do and how they can contribute to this PDP process.

Essentially the working group is the substantive work team that takes up the platform of the data and the information provided by staff as developed through the public comments process and the reply process. And the working group develops a program, a plan for addressing the issues that are identified for solving any problems that have been identified, for rectifying any gaps that have been identified in the policy process.

A formal call goes out to the various stakeholder groups, constituencies within the GNSO and then other SOs and ACs within the ICANN environment for input into the working group and indeed for participants into the working group. Increasingly, cross-community working groups are being formed, and these are constituted not just of liaisons from other SOs and ACs but members of other SOs and ACs.

And what we need to do I suppose at this stage is to differentiate cross-community working groups from GNSO working groups. And the way to distinguish these things is based on their charter and essentially based on who charters the working group. If the GNSO charters a working group, then it is a GNSO working group and GNSO guidelines apply, and the outcome of the process comes into a PDP.

If we're dealing with a cross-constituency working group then we're dealing with a working group that is formed or chartered by more than one organization within ICANN, whether it's the GNSO, the ccNSO, ALAC, we're dealing with other groups being involved and formally commencing the process.

So that differentiates the two. For today's purposes, this is a GNSO-coordinated call, and in fact the procedures around how a cross-community working group are slightly different, so I'll leave them to one side. I encourage you if you do have questions around those to hang onto them and put them into the chat, and staff can make note of them and we can perhaps deal with them in another call or another environment.

I know that is, given that we have an increasing number of cross-community working groups, that's an area where we, the community, probably need to be better in informing ourselves on how those work. But for now we'll progress with the GNSO working group structure and how it operates and how it fits into the PDP process.

So if we go back and we're looking at the snake, at the Z here, and we're at the stage of the working group. And the working group must determine itself how it wants to go about doing its work, if you like, the methodology of what it does.

Most working groups established within the GNSO will meet I suppose there is a transit. We meet every two weeks. Some groups will meet every week by teleconference. I'm happy to see that I've got several colleagues from council on the call, and by all means if anything I say -- and I've said this to staff as well -- if your experience differs in any respect, please, please speak up either in the chat or raise your hand.

But in my experience most of the groups that I'm involved in we meet fortnightly, some of them weekly, by teleconference and we use the Adobe Connect just as Nathalie described in the beginning, and Nathalie will come back at the end of the call and offer some more tips around the mechanics of how to effectively participate in working group meetings.

One thing to bear in mind, and I offer this from a personal perspective, is that other entities within ICANN, other supporting organizations, the ccNSO, the GAC and the ALAC, they may have different working methods and timelines than the GNSO. I've discovered in the cross-community working group environment that the ccNSO general

methodology and meeting timeline tends to be monthly rather than the GNSO's fortnightly or weekly.

And it means that things progress more slowly in that space. On the other hand, folks from the ccNSO and ALAC when they join GNSO-led working groups may find the pace uncomfortably fast or a bit overwhelming, too much work. So it's something to bear in mind when working with other members of the community.

In addition to the mechanics of how the working group operates, the working group will also develop a plan as to how it approaches the substance of the issues that gave rise to it, if you like, a sort of work plan. This ordinarily often also sets a timeline and identifies deliverables. This is not to say that this is something that's fixed in stone, it's often something that a working group comes back to, provided it stays within the perimeters of its original charter to determine how it is that it needs to go about delivering on that charter.

Now the basic operational framework of how working groups work is set out in the GNSO working group guidelines, which we'll discuss shortly. And suffice to say at this point that the aim of those guidelines is really to try and achieve productivity and effectiveness, and that's increasing important as the workload of the GNSO and the community more generally increases.

I suppose it's a good opportunity for me to take a pause, and if anyone has any concerns or questions. I've seen some good comments and good questions in the chat from Amr and others. And thank you, Mary, for fielding them. That's super helpful.

And Mary makes an excellent point that the working groups work plan and charter are published and publicly available. They're all on the GNSO website, and meetings and calls are recorded. And let's talk about that, how meeting and calls are actually conducted.

The working group on progressing in its substantive work what it will do in the course of its meetings and as it develops and comes to deliver on the charter will publish an initial report. And that provides the community with an opportunity to become fully informed of the WG's progress, the working group's progress, to that stage and comment upon its preliminary findings and conclusions.

The public comments period and subsequent reply period are the formal means for this input to be received, but informally community members can communicate their views to working group members. There's almost always a list that's used, an e-mail list that's used, for the everyday working dialogue of a working group, and comments can be raised there. They can be raised in meetings and to the extent that you wish to make your views known to a working group in a - at a time period when the comment period is not open, then these channels are available to you.

It's increasingly the case as well that in addition to members, and very many working groups are open to anyone who wants to join. I guess some folks tend to be a bit reluctant to join a working group that's already been formed. Increasingly working groups have observers. That tends to happen where the number of participants is limited, and that tends to be cross-community working group environment.

But my advice to you in this is to the extent that the working group is already formed and you didn't know about it at the time and you wish to join an existing group, ones that's already started in its work, the best thing that you can do is ask. Simply ask is it too late to join, is it too late to participate, and you may be very pleasantly surprised by the answer.

(Carlos) in the comment notes that it's a good point, a good time to mention that some reports are open for comment. Indeed, the initial report of a working group is always open for public comment in the public comment period. That's in fact a critical process, sub-process, within the PDP is this notion of continuous feedback from the community.

After reviewing the public comments and revising the inial report to the extent this is called for by what's been received in the comments period and reply period, the working group produces a final report for review by the GNSO council. Bear in mind that the outcome of this process is what we call consensus policy and consensus true meaning of the word.

So public comments must be incorporated if the final report is to reflect your consensus. Now that's often challenging, right? Because it's often the case that public comments are received that may conflict with other comments that have been received. So this is an interesting process.

It's also interesting to note that once a PDP has been initiated and prior to the publication of a final report, the GNSO Council can, under the bylaws, terminate a PDP. They can only do that for a significant cause

and it has to pass council with a supermajority vote in favor of termination.

I had a quick around the houses chat with staff to see if we can think of any instances when this was done, and we know that termination has happened, whether it happened under this particular clause we're not sure. At any rate, in any event, it's good to know that that is possible, that the commencement of the PDP doesn't inevitably lead to the conclusion of a PDP.

So here we are now. We have an initial report that has turned into a final report from a working group and it will set up various recommendations. If the recommendations pass the voting requirements of the GNSO Council, the GNSO Council then communicates those recommendations to the ICANN board.

And, (Tracy), I see your fantastic comment about house, a question about house. We'll talk about what the various houses of the GNSO are a little bit later on. But for now let's say this that there are two houses within the GNSO: the Contracted Party House and the Non-Contracted Party House, contracted parties being registries and registrars, and non-contracted being other members of the GNSO.

And we have a question. "What criteria will be used to determine when an action should be addressed by a policy process and when it should be considered for implementation?" Ah, that's a brilliant question and I'll talk a little bit about policy versus implementation when we get to the end of this PDP process explanation.

So if the recommendation is passed, then council then makes them to the ICANN board. This kicks off another community consultation process, which runs its course before the board will put the matter to a vote. Under the bylaws, if PDP recommendations are approved by a supermajority of the GNSO, then it's required that they are adopted by the board except in a very limited circumstance.

So it has to be more than two-thirds of the members of the board vote to say that the policy is not in the best interest of the ICANN community or ICANN. It's an interesting point, let's say. We often refer the community to the strength and, if you like, effect of GAC advice and we don't often point this out that the bylaws do specifically say that to the extent that PDP recommendations are approved by the GNSO by a supermajority then it's required that they're adopted by the board unless more than two-thirds of the members vote against.

And if the GNSO Council recommendation was approved by less than a supermajority then a majority of the vote - a majority vote of the board is sufficient to determine or to reject the recommendation, if you like.

Once the recommendations have been accepted by the board, they then progress to the implementation phase, and this is the phase driven by ICANN staff. The new gTLD program provided some very interesting touch points for example around RPM requirements of which the community had to come to grips with this notion of what was policy and what was implementation.

I would say from my perspective as a community member, I don't think that that the answers to these questions are still entirely clear. I think

this something that we have more to do as a community to get a better understanding of what is policy versus what is implementation. It's hard to talk about this in a vacuum. You really do need a specific example to frame it with, and unfortunately the new gTLD program brought up a number of them. And I'm fairly confident that a few more with come up along the way.

So when these do arise and you hear this discussion around is this policy or is this implementation, what you need to do is understand the relevance of that discussion or why we ask that discussion is it's really one of responsibility. Policy, remember, is the role of the GNSO, policy development, and implementation is not the role of the GNSO, it's the role of staff. So that hence the importance of that discussion. I can't say we know which one is which but at least we know who does what.

Mary Wong: Heather, this is Mary. I think that one of our participants, (Katie McKnight) had her hand raised. I don't know, (Katie), if you had a question that you can type in the chat. I don't know if your audio is enabled so that you can ask the question.

Heather Forrest: Thank you (unintelligible). I'm not seeing that. And Amr is typing as well so perhaps we all take a break and we'll see where we are. Amr and (Katie)'s typing.

Mary Wong: Oh okay. (Katie) you are un-muted anyway but thanks for letting us know that Heather has answered your question. And Heather as I hand it back to you this is great, I think a lot of great information.

And so for everyone else on the call if you do have a question feel free to type it in the chat or raise your hand -- whichever works best for you.

And we will monitor who's got a question. Thank you. Heather back to you.

Heather Forrest: Thanks very much Mary and for keeping me on track too.

It now and final point and again not that one that comes up terribly frequently but it's good to know is that before a PDP recommendation goes to final approval by the ICANN board it can actually modified and amended by council.

So again there are a number of checks and balances within the system that ensure again with the view that what we're trying to achieve is consensus policy that we get the wording exactly right.

Now with that in mind let's have a look at the next slide and we'll see what else we need to say about policy development and process working groups.

What I would like to emphasize here I mean you'll see the requirements of how a working group operates.

And the key point to take from this is that the policy development process isn't it just something that's developed over time. It's not just some sort of organic thing.

It is itself prescribed by the bylaws in developing the initial report in developing the final report there are formal opportunities for members outside of the working group to provide input. And that is an important thing to bear in mind that this is really a community driven process.

Right, so let's have a bit of a discussion then around good, we've got some links to further reading. And everything that I have spoken about today can be found in one of these three documents.

The bylaw is particularly helpful. Again, I'm a lawyer and I like to go directly to the source. And I found in preparing for today's session it quite useful to go back and look at the specific language of the bylaws and what it sets out that the GNSO can and cannot do.

The PDP manual and the PDP overview are likewise very helpful. And you'll see graphics like the snake and other things.

So if we turn now to the consensus policy and the picket fence less start with consensus policy. Consensus policy is policy that's developed through the multi-stakeholder model through this sometimes chunky process that we have. And it is a applicable to all contracted parties.

Thus consensus policy has its origins in the contractual relationships between ICANN and registries and registrars.

To identify subjects that can be the base of consensus policy we really just need to ask a few questions.

First of all is it identified as a subject of consensus policy in the registry agreement between ICANN and registries or in the registrar agreement between ICANN and registrars?

And if it is identified in one of those agreements as the subject of consensus policy then it's consensus policy.

It's not a question to ask is it enforceable by ICANN against registries and registrars through some other contractual requirement. More likely it's something that allows us under the registry agreement or the RAA.

For example and just to give a good example of this so that you can identify a bit more clearly the Registry or Registrar Accreditation Agreement or RAA identifies the resolution of disputes in relation to the registration of domain names as a topic of consensus policy.

It's clear from that then an easily identifiable example of consensus policy is the UDRP which is the administrative procedure that underpins our dispute resolution process in relation to the naming allocation.

Now consensus policy is limited by the constraints that you see here on the slide right?

And in fact let's see, it's the next slide. So consensus policy and limited by these things that the policy does not unreasonably constrain competition, it ensures interoperability, reliability and stability of the Internet.

So these things come out of primarily out of the agreement between ICANN registries and registrars.

Now when we refer to the picket fence and I'm going to try to let's see Amr, in wrapping up it may be helpful to list the different points along the PDP where public comment exists. And I think that's a very helpful idea. Thank you very much Amr.

I'm going to try to tackle this picket fence thing. And I am going to start by saying this. Picket fence refers to all the matters that fall into this definition of consensus policy. In other words picket fence is a way of describing matters within the scope of GNSO policy development.

I want to tackle this business of why we use the phrase picket fence because I think the phrase picket fence is difficult if you're not an American.

Picket fence is an American metaphor. And it refers to the fence around a homeowner's yard. Everything inside the fence is the homeowner's domain, right? It's within the homeowners control.

We have this stereotypical image of a two-bedroom house that has this little white fence around it and a lovely green yard.

Everything inside the fence belongs to the home, everything outside the fence not part of the home, likewise with the GNSO.

Everything inside the picket fence is inside of the GNSO's authority under the bylaws and its agreements with contracted parties. And it's relevant to carrying out the obligations that ICANN has under those agreements with contracted parties. Things outside the fence are outside of that scope of authority.

This doesn't mean that the GNSO can't develop policy on these topics or talk about policy on these topics that are outside the fence, merely that outcomes of that process are not automatically binding on contracted parties as consensus policy.

I'll stop. I'll take a breath only because those two very difficult concepts we toss around these phrases all the time, consensus policy and picket fence. And if anyone has any concerns or questions then I'll be very happy to answer those.

And (Tom), I see your question. How much time might a working group member expect to participate in a typical PDP?

We've only just have this discussion in the context of the non-contracted parties intercessional. And we said roughly a PDP Mary, I'm going to ask you to jump in. What was the number we actually came to that we said how many months was a typical PDP?

Mary Wong: Well Heather, you know, there's really two parts to this right? There's the duration of the PDP and answer to that depends on how you measure it.

If you go back to the snake diagram for example, you know, the technical answers you really start from the time the issue report is requested.

But in terms of participant time spent that probably starts assuming that, you know, you may or may not have participated in the public comment to the issue report and so forth. But you join the working group, your timing really starts from when the working group is formed and chartered.

So in terms of sort of looking ahead if you go from the start of the working group to the submission of your report to the GNSO council

and as Heather noted with the snake diagram there's steps to be taken by the council and staff and the board after that.

But just look at the strict working group timeline that could be something like a year or more or less depending on whether there's an expedited PDP or not.

But within that timeframe it's up to each working group to determine its milestones. And part of that includes determining how often and how frequently it wants to meet.

Typically most working groups will do a call that lasts maybe an hour or 90 minutes for every week. It's much more common to have weekly rather than meetings that go every two weeks simply just to maintain the momentum.

So you're really looking at a minimum of a couple of hours a week. And I say a minimum because on top of the call there are obviously email discussions that go on between the calls. There may be documents and drafts for you to look at.

But one of the things that we are not able to highlight today is that for folks that are time pressed but interested in an issue or for folks who for various reasons can't, you know, participate fully there is an observer status to a working group where you can still track the discussions but you're not obligated to participate in the call.

So that's a rough minimum I would say. And of course some people do more. And there are also times when some people in the course of the

year or year and a half as Amr's pointed on the chat might have to step back because of work or personal commitments.

And most groups and the working group chairs I want to say really good about accommodating people's demands and schedules. Because we all understand that this is all volunteer work.

So Heather, (Tom) I hope that's helpful.

Heather Forrest: That's wonderful. Thank you Mary. I appreciate your input there.

I'm mindful of time and I want to say bit about the GNSO Working Group guidelines because again this goes to some of the questions that we're asking here.

And I also want to leave some time for (Nathalie) to describe the mechanics, the hints and tips about how to effectively participate.

So I'll push forward bearing in mind that if you do have questions Mary I appreciate you poking me too if the question is one that you think we ought to address in the call.

Working Group guidelines, these put more specifics into the process of forming and operating a working group.

And they're best practice guidelines that are geared towards really to optimizing transparency, efficiency productivity -- all things geared towards that aim let's say.

And they are important things given the overload of activity we're experiencing in the ICANN ecosystem.

For example working group guidelines they outline the process by which volunteers are called for when a working group was created.

So this might be something that you are wondering about. And specifically when a working group is created by the GNSO the GNSO secretariat identifies or, you know, then a call for volunteers.

Volunteers will then respond to whoever made that call. And the call goes out as widely as possible again bearing in mind of what we're trying to create here is consensus policy. So we seek input from all members of the community that are willing.

And the secretariat will first of all identify that the volunteer's a real person and secondly request that that person complete a statement of interest. What you'll see abbreviated as SOI.

Statements of Interest are a cornerstone of a bottom-up multi-stakeholder model. And it's clear that few if any of us participate in ICANN just for fun just because we have nothing better to do.

Many participants represent commercial entities or particular interests. And so the SOI is an opportunity to disclose those interests and affiliations. And it's a living document. It's able to be consulted by a community at any time and it should be kept up to date by each individual that participates in the environment.

The working group guidelines they also address basics like the election of a chair or co-chairs of the working group essentially saying it's up to the working group to determine how many of these or whether co-chairs or sub-chairs are needed.

If the GNSO didn't already identify a particular individual to fill these roles then one of the first tasks of the working group is to elect these people and the guidelines provide some structure around how those elections can take place.

There is also a call for volunteers for chairing. And I would say this. Don't be afraid to volunteer for these roles, these leadership roles. You're extremely well supported by staff. I currently co-chair a cross constituency working group and have a number of GNSO policy staff in support.

And I found the process of chairing far more rewarding than simply being a part of the working group simply because of the relationship that I've developed with staff and the knowledge I've gained from them from their experience and their guidance.

The GNSO is extraordinarily well resourced with really lovely people who are extraordinarily good at what they do. And more importantly they're extremely patient and willing to teach the community.

And I think that alone is an excellent reason to get involved in a working group to get to further your own knowledge learning by others who do this day in, day out.

One important thing to say about joining a working group is that you need to be willing to participate. When you first (within) this experience you might find that it takes some time to find your feet, to understand particular acronyms that are relevant to the workings groups word to get to know the personalities of others in the working group.

By all means take some time to observe. But when you feel you're able to do so contribute. Don't be afraid to take on drafting tasks or data gathering tasks. Don't be frightened by the experience levels for the high or low of others.

It's amazing what a motivated person can contribute and also from a newcomer's perspective it's just what a group needs to break out of a well-established thinking web.

Another important point to say about working groups and how they operate is that minority views can be captured in a working group report. They don't feel from the outset that the outcomes demand anonymity. And don't let that hamper your participation and hamper your, let's say your unbiased and genuine input.

The GNSO brings together a great diversity of interests and perspectives. It's often complained that we take forever to do things in the PDP process.

And what amazes me is that we can actually achieve anything at all given the great diversity of views that we bring together in the GNSO. It's a real testament to the robustness of the PDP process.

I think on the - you know, we often hear the complaints and the PDP process is broken. And on the contrary I think to the extent that we achieve outcomes it's clearly not broken at all.

Bottom line don't be afraid to participate. My recommendation to you is read through the working group guidelines. Just familiarize yourself with how it's supposed to work.

And do so knowing that many of the old-timers don't actually know how it's supposed to work. They think they do. They may look like they do but it's also not the case.

So go in knowing the process and then do whatever it is that you do best and participate in that way. And with that I would like to turn it over to Nathalie.

Nathalie Peregrine: Thank you ever so much Heather. And yes this is Nathalie from staff. So Heather's entirely right with what she's saying regarding the working group.

The best thing is to read up a little bit beforehand to make sure it doesn't seem as daunting. So as she says you have the working group guidelines. Equally what you have is the GNSO Web site.

So rather than show you the slides of many screenshots of different areas of the worksite I've put in the URL in the Web link pod you have under the attendance pod and so feel free to keep those.

And in any case they're also on the slides at the end so you will have them on the slides that were circulated. So the main area to find

information and between, you know, a cry from one Web site to another from the wiki pages and we finally managed to have most of the information centralized. And that's on the GNSO Web site.

So on the GNSO Web site homepage you have a box on the left hand side that's called a Quick Info box. And from there you can basically navigate to everything you need whether it's simple curiosity as to what the GNSO Working Group is about or whether you're interested in on institute in particular or if you're already a member of a working group and need to pick up on the rest of these documents.

So from that link what you'll get to is your immediate working group worksite page on the GNSO Web site. So the GNSO Web site basically deals with a finalize document, the finalized works of a working group.

If you want to go to a place which is more of a workspace so where you have the ongoing work you're better to go to the ICANN wiki. Now the ICANN wiki used to be a jungle of information. It's actually now quite pleasingly structured.

So what you'll do by navigating from the GNSO Web site to your working group Web page and then on to the respective wiki spaces is you head towards what's called the dashboard.

So the dashboard is simply clicking on a main GNSO tab at the top of the wiki space. And from there you have access to everything you need regarding ongoing activity being it council activity and working group, and joint working group activities.

So ease of navigation they're all structured in exactly the same place, sorry, exactly the same way. You'll have the reference documents. You'll have a list of the members of the chairs of the observers. You'll have also the attendance sheets there. So that's crucial and it's becomes fairly easy to look around.

Equally it's open to everyone. There's no need for logins. So that's one obstacle removed. And if ever you've missed meetings or you're interested in a working group and you'd like to find out really what goes on during that working group call, during that hour of activity the space for that is the GNSO master calendar.

So in the same way as today's MP3 recording the transcripts and the slide deck all these will be posted on the GNSO master calendar. We'll also have the link in the URL box in the C room.

And you have also the time in dates of the working group calls and of the Webinars. And it's incredibly important to refer to that calendar at all times. And because you will have different time changes and cancellations, et cetera, so it's very important to have that as a quick link.

So that's basically where you find all the main information. I wouldn't bother spreading myself out a lot more if I'm just interested in finding out what GNSO working groups are about.

If you do need to push further however you have this reference - these reference documents here. This is fairly heavy reading. However it is ideal as a backdrop to any working group activity.

Other than flying ground the Web site under which you're looking for information one of the main places to go for me would be if you're already on a working group would be the working group mailing list.

You will often see on a mailing list how one member will ask what they seem to think is a very silly question or with a very obvious answer and will in fact will spark a debate on the mailing list.

So as Heather was saying you must not be put off by the perceived experience of some members. Any input is helpful. Equally if you're not yet part of a GNSO working group and are intrigued or curious or motivated you must please not hesitate to contact any member of staff.

And if you're not sure how to contact us our email addresses are always built in the same way. It's our first name dot our last name@icann.org. And so that's that might make it a little bit easier. And please don't hesitate to contact those.

So once you have become part of a working group and you will - well you still need a statement of interest as Heather was saying earlier you will be asked what mailing list status you would like.

Now this is a bit confusing especially because it's fairly recent. But it was done for two reasons. One reason was to alleviate via the in box load for certain members but more importantly to provide accurate reflection of member - of member's activity in a working group.

So by this, this means if you are simply curious about working group activity it would make sense for you to ask to be an observer.

This means that you have access to the content of the public mailing list of the working group and are not subscribed to the closed mailing list of the working group on which conference call details are circulated.

If you are ready and you have the time and the motivation to be fully involved in a working group then you would ask to be a member which means that you are able to post on both the public and the closed mailing list and therefore have access to the conference call.

It's important to note however that as an observer you still have access to the same information because you still have access to the GNSO master calendar where all the recordings of these conference calls are posted.

So again in the interest of transparency as an observer you can still - you still have all the information available to provide input. If you are a subscriber and observer and you see the working group taking an angle that interests you that you would like to be more active in a simple email - obviously on this slide, a simple email for the GNSO secretariat providing no justification whatsoever, just a simple request saying that you would like to become a member and we will change your subscription on the mailing list immediately.

This can be done of course several times during your participation in a working group. Once you are a member of the working group -- and we covered a few of these steps with the Adobe Connect room earlier -- it is always the same procedure to take part in working group conference calls.

As a member so subscribed to two of the closed end public mailing list you will a week before the working group is the working group meeting is scheduled receive an email invitation pretty much the same content as the one we had today for this session therefore with the Adobe Connect room URL and the dial-in numbers.

If for some reason you cannot make the conference call it's very important to reply to this email invitation just saying that you are - you will be unable to make it. We do not need to have a reason. You are under no obligation to provide justification. Simply this counts as an apology.

The reason why this is important is because as we said earlier attendance is taken for these working group calls. And in the attendance apologies are taken into account. So you have those present, those who have sent an apology and those who are absent. And the apologies are also part of the official roll call beginning the working group meeting. So it's quite important.

Equally if for some reason you're traveling and you don't have the bandwidth to connect your Adobe Connect room or do via voice over IP you do not want to incur an international telephone charges you're very welcome to require a dial out.

Dial outs means that a few minutes, generally five or six minutes before the scheduled start time of the call the operator or a telecom provider will dial out to you. And so this it's a great idea if you can provide not one but two contact phone numbers just in case for network reasons we can't get through to you.

And this also means that if you are dialed out by the operator should your call drop during the call there's no need to panic the operator will dial back out to you for the remainder of the call. So you have that guarantee too.

Once it's time to join the conference call and it's always good to dial in a few minutes early if you are using the phone bridge. This is because providers experience a lot of heavy traffic, participation traffic at the top of the hour. So it's good to join in two or three minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

The operator will ask you to provide your first and last name. And this is not intrusive in any way. It's only for again attendance reasons. And if you can only join the Adobe - the audio bridge, so the phone bridge rather than the Adobe Connect room clearly you will not be able to as we mentioned at the beginning of the call raise your hand or express agreement or disagreement because you won't be in the Adobe Connect room.

In that case it's completely understood that you are entitled to interrupt over the audio because you have no other way of making your comment or question heard.

And for the rest of the items on this slide this is pretty much what we covered earlier. Again if some people - some participants run late or if there is some things that are still unclear please don't hesitate to ask me.

And with that I'll hand it back over to Heather and Mary. Thank you ever so much.

Heather Forrest: Thank you very much Nathalie. We're at the top of the hour I noticed. And with what remains I suppose Mary maybe you and I simply field questions.

What you see here is a diagram showing the GNSOs structure. And this represents the two houses. We've had some questions in the chat about houses. Mary is there anything specifically that you think we ought to mention beyond that about instruction?

Mary Wong: No. I think the diagram pretty much shows it. And it's one of those things where it's probably easier to understand once you are an active participant.

I think one thing I did want to note was what Amr said in the chat earlier that while these groups are the structures by which, you know, you feed that information to the council and so forth in terms of participating in a working group you don't have to be a member of one of the constituencies or stakeholder groups or houses to participate. You can but you don't have to.

Heather Forrest: That's a good point Mary. Thank you very much. Let's see and maybe we look at those questions very briefly. I'm just conscious of time. I'm not running over too far.

How can I get that observer status to represent the company I work for within a working group? So I think that's Nathalie you very helpfully described let's say how observer status comes about that that's an option that you have when joining and are given some information

about how to join let's say and responding to a call for volunteers and what you would then need to do.

If you have further questions about that what I would recommend is Mary and Nathalie are both experts on the how. And I would encourage you to reach out to them.

What is my ICANN affiliation? I wonder if that question goes to houses and members of stakeholder groups and constituencies. And Mary has just picked up on that point.

And suggestion on working groups for newer members to get involved in. That's a brilliant question. And I wonder Amr, Mary what's - I don't know that there's any - if there's particular group. There's no group that's easier than another perhaps.

Mary Wong: Heather this is Mary.

((Crosstalk))

Heather Forrest: Yes?

Mary Wong: Again like you I'm not sure that there is one answer for everybody. What I'm going to do is I'm putting a page in the chat that has all the active working groups within the GNSO right now.

You can click on each one of them to see which stage they are. And this goes back to the snake diagram again.

And so as we said earlier you can join a working group at any time. Of course it gets a little harder if the group is already advanced in its work but harder only in the sense that you've got more to catch up on.

So our suggestion would be to look at that page and as Heather says contact any of us on the staff or her or Amr or anyone else who is always very open to questions.

And just find one topic that you think is interesting you are a group that you may represent. And if you're going to join just let us know and we will walk you through it.

Heather Forrest: I think that is a helpful point. And in terms of joining a working group to the extent that there's a topic that you have an interest in or have a baseline of knowledge in or perhaps your organization is involved in or has an interest in then that might be an easier way, a softer landing I suppose into joining.

And Mary's email there with a list of working groups I think is very helpful one. And bear in mind again as Nathalie said it's possible to join a group initially as an observer. That might give you an opportunity just to see how the process works and get your head around things.

And (Tracy) asked a question about secretariat. Can secretariat join a working group? And I haven't any idea what the answer to that question is. Mary, Nathalie can you bail me out?

Mary Wong: I don't know (Tracy) if you're asking about, you know, secretariat staff from another organization for example.

In terms of the internal ICANN secretariat we're considered or they're considered support staff. And so to the extent that you are, you know, working with a ICANN group whether that's the GNSO or some other group then you would probably be support staff as well.

And in that capacity it would be slightly different from a working group participant who may be representing what I can call an external interest if that helps.

Heather Forrest: Marvelous. Thank you Mary, very much for that answer. And I think we've reached the end of our slides. I would say given the time if you have further questions I'm very happy to do my best to answer them.

Again I rely very heavily on Mary, and Nathalie, and Glen, and (Lars). I think they're absolutely amazing staff. And they haven't paid me to say this. It's Midnight my time so I can assure you I wouldn't do this if I didn't have the utmost respect and admiration for what staff do.

So with that in mind I will close this off. I'll turn to Mary and Nathalie for any last minute housekeeping and that will be the end for me.

Mary Wong: Well I don't think there's anything from me except to echo Heather's thanks except now I'd like to thank her and think you guys and gals for joining us.

As always please feel free to reach out to us. You see here an email for the secretariat. We very much look forward to welcoming all of you to the GNSO whether that be on one of or working groups, as an observer, or as a participant or as an attendee at an ICANN meeting.

Remember that you don't have to be at a ICANN meeting to participate in the GNSO. So on that note unless anyone has any last minute questions (Kristin) we noticed your question and this is something that our secretariat will try and take up on the calendar but on that note thank you all again, thank you Heather. Thank you Amr for helping us out and we will talk to you all very soon we hope. Thank you.

Heather Forrest: Marvelous, take care. Bye now.

Thank you very much all. You may now stop the recordings. Bye-bye.

END