

Candidate Statement – GNSO Council Chair

October 3, 2026

Candidate: Vivek Goyal (Business Constituency, Non-Contracted Parties House)
Citizenship / Country of Residence: India

Dear fellow Councillors,

Thank you to the Non-Contracted Parties House for this nomination. I accept it with gratitude, and I confirm that my Statement of Interest is accurate and up to date - [SOI](#).

The GNSO does not suffer from a shortage of important work. Our challenge is turning that work into timely, credible outcomes. The next Chair will lead a Council managing complex policy questions, finite community and org resources, competing priorities, and growing expectations from across ICANN. There is very little room for drift. We need to become better at deciding what matters most, moving difficult work towards conclusion, and doing so without sacrificing the open, transparent and bottom-up process that gives GNSO policy its legitimacy. Council is the steward of the GNSO's policy development process. Our role is not to predetermine policy outcomes, but to make sure the right questions are asked, the right process is used, different perspectives have a fair opportunity to be heard, and difficult work reaches a conclusion.

What I bring

I have been actively involved in the ICANN community since 2018 and have served on the GNSO Council for the past two years. Before joining Council, I served for two years as the Business Constituency's delegate to the ICANN Nominating Committee. I currently serve on the Business Constituency Executive Committee and as Vice-Chair of the GNSO Standing Selection Committee. I am also a member of DNS Abuse PDP1 and part of the team drafting the charter for PDP2, and within the BC I have authored or supported numerous policy positions, public comments and other policy work. Together, these roles have exposed me to different sides of the multistakeholder model: constituency leadership, representing stakeholder interests while working across groups, exercising independent judgement, contributing directly to policy development, evaluating competing perspectives, and helping people who may begin from very different positions find a way forward.

My professional experience gives me a broad view of the domain name ecosystem. I built my business from the ground up to a team of 50 people, primarily working in brand protection while also operating as a small domain reseller for corporate clients. I have experienced the DNS as a registrant, within the registrar channel, working with registries on new gTLDs, and through engagement with the ccTLD community. I was also involved in the 2012 and the 2026 New gTLD round as an applicant & consultant and saw first-hand how ICANN policy and implementation decisions are experienced by those seeking to enter the registry ecosystem.

I have a strong background in technology, that helps me appreciate that the consequences policy does not end when eventually the board adopts a recommendation. Policies eventually have to be translated into systems, processes and operational requirements, often by registries and registrars. Understanding the implementation-level impact on CPH members is important when assessing whether a policy is clear, proportionate and capable of working as intended. Building and running a company has similarly taught me to create processes people trust, manage competing priorities, make decisions when information is imperfect and, importantly, finish what we start.

I have also lived and worked in different parts of the world, from the United States to Southeast Asia. That has taught me to listen not only to a position, but also for what may sit behind it. *Silence does not always mean agreement, disagreement is not expressed the same way in every culture, and the same words or processes can be understood differently.* In a global Council, appreciating those nuances is part of effective consensus-building. Running my own business also gives me considerable autonomy over my time and the flexibility to make the commitment the Chair's role requires. None of us comes to Council without affiliations, interests or views. For me, impartial chairing does not mean pretending otherwise. It means ensuring those affiliations never determine who is heard, how our processes are applied, or how Council's decisions are facilitated.

How I would lead

I do not believe speed and inclusion are in conflict. Both come from clarity. When people understand the question before them, the process being followed and the decision that ultimately needs to be made, discussions become more productive and participation becomes easier. As Chair, I would focus on three disciplines.

- First, **clarity**: before Council spends time debating an issue, we should know what decision is before us, which processes apply, who owns the next step and what lies outside our remit.
- Second, **intervention**: when work becomes stuck, we should identify the obstacle and the appropriate escalation path early rather than allow delay to become normal.
- Third, **accountability**: work delegated to small teams, liaisons and representatives should return to Council with clear reporting and next steps, and we should maintain better visibility of matters awaiting action from Council, the Board or ICANN org.

The same discipline should apply to our relationships across ICANN. The GNSO and the GAC will not always approach an issue from the same perspective, nor should they be expected to, but earlier engagement and clearer understanding of our respective roles can help prevent disagreement from becoming surprise late in a policy process. I would work closely with the GAC liaison, the Vice-Chairs, the Board and ICANN org to identify emerging issues earlier and create space for constructive engagement while respecting the responsibilities of each part of the multistakeholder model. A Chair does not need to

be the expert on every issue, nor should the Chair be the loudest voice in the room. The Chair needs to bring the right expertise into the discussion, surface disagreements fairly, ensure quieter voices have space to contribute, and give Council what it needs to reach a conclusion.

The work ahead

I was the champion of the prioritisation exercise that was done in the council, and it has reaped great benefits. We now know the priorities of the whole community and how will include them in the work before the council.

DNS Abuse will require sustained attention. Though progress has been made on PDP1 and the PDP2, there are other identified gaps which will need attention. Good policy must work not only in principle, but also in its real-world application. We should ask what recourse exists when a policy produces an unintended adverse outcome for a registrant, and whether safeguards adequately distinguish deliberate abuse from a legitimate registrant whose domain has been compromised. Council should not predetermine those answers. Its responsibility is to ensure that the policy process asks the questions, considers the evidence, and gives the community the opportunity to resolve them.

There are other significant responsibilities ahead. The 2026 New gTLD Program will test Council's ability to exercise its oversight responsibilities efficiently, including through SPIRT when issues arise that require Council attention. I am again working with businesses seeking to apply for new gTLDs in this round, and having now seen the Program from the applicant side in both 2012 and 2026, I understand how important predictability and timely resolution are to organisations seeking to become part of the registry ecosystem. SPIRT therefore matters not simply as a Council process, but as a mechanism whose effectiveness can directly affect applicants, contracted parties and the wider community.

Access to non-public registration data also remains important, including the work following the Board's decision on the SSAD recommendations and the experience gained from the Registration Data Request Service. Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation needs a credible path forward after years in the pipeline, while Transfer Policy work needs to move effectively from policy decisions towards implementation. There will inevitably be new issues as well, but starting new work is often easier than finishing existing work. Council needs to be disciplined about priorities, realistic about capacity and willing to put limited community and org resources where they can have the greatest impact.

Making our work visible

I often hear that "nothing happens in the GNSO." I do not believe that is true. Successive Councils, including the current leadership team, have delivered a great deal, often under difficult circumstances. But perception matters because it affects trust, participation and ultimately confidence in the multistakeholder model. The community should not

need to follow every Council call to understand where an issue stands, why Council made a decision or what happens next. Better communication is not a substitute for good policy work; it is part of demonstrating that the process works.

If elected, I will work with the Vice-Chairs as one leadership team and with every Councillor, irrespective of House, Stakeholder Group or Constituency. My aim is straightforward: a Council that listens carefully, applies its processes consistently, uses its time and resources wisely, intervenes when work is drifting, makes decisions when decisions are needed, and earns the community's confidence through the quality and transparency of its work.

I respectfully ask for your support.

Vivek Goyal

Councillor, Business Constituency