GAC-GNSO Consultation Group on GAC Early Engagement in GNSO Policy Development Processes

What is this about?
The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) jointly established a consultation group to explore ways for the GAC to engage early in the GNSO Policy Development Process (PDP) and to improve overall cooperation between the two bodies (for example, by exploring the option of a liaison). The consultation group commenced its work in December 2013.

Why is this important?
The launch of this GAC-GNSO Consultation Group on Early Engagement is the result of discussions between the two entities at the ICANN meeting in Buenos Aires as well as previous ICANN meetings, reflecting a joint desire to explore and enhance ways of early engagement in relation to GNSO policy development activities. The issue was also specifically called-out by both Accountability and Transparency Review Teams (ATRT).

ICANN receives input from governments through the GAC. The GAC's key role is to provide advice to ICANN on issues of public policy, and especially where there may be an interaction between ICANN's activities or policies and national laws or international agreements. The GAC usually meets three times a year in conjunction with ICANN Public Meetings, where it discusses issues with the ICANN Board and other ICANN Supporting Organizations, Advisory Committees and other groups. The GAC may also discuss issues between times with the Board either through face-to-face meetings or by teleconference.

The GNSO is responsible for developing policies for generic Top-Level Domains (e.g., .com, .org, .biz). The GNSO strives to keep gTLDs operating in a fair, orderly fashion across one global Internet, while promoting innovation and competition. The GNSO uses the GNSO Policy Development Process (PDP) to develop policy recommendations which, following approval, are submitted to the ICANN Board for its consideration.

What is the current status of this project?
The Consultation Group comprises approximately equal numbers of representatives from each of the GAC and the GNSO to a total number of approximately 12 active members. The work is divided into two work streams, the first concentrating on Mechanisms for day to day co-operation and the second on the detail options for GAC engagement in the GNSO policy development process (PDP). Due to workload and other priorities, the Consultation Group reduced its meetings after Singapore but is expected to restart its work following the ICANN meeting in Buenos Aires. In the meantime, it has been agreed to continue the GNSO Liaison to the GAC pilot project for FY16. Furthermore, the GNSO Council and GAC, on the recommendation of the CG, adopted a set of recommendations in relation to issue scoping, which includes amongst others, the formation of a GAC Quick Look Committee to provide an early indication of whether or not an issue subject to GNSO policy development is expected to raise public policy concerns.

Expected next steps
The GNSO Council and GAC will meet in Buenos Aires to discuss the current status and next steps. The CG is expected to continue its deliberations on early engagement opportunities for the other stages of the PDP as well as day-to-day co-operation following the BA meeting.

How can I get involved?
You can follow review the conversations on the mailing list (see http://mm.icann.org/pipermail/gac-gnso-cg/) or review the materials on the wiki (see https://community.icann.org/x/phPRAg).

Where can I find more information?
- Consultation Group Wiki: https://community.icann.org/x/phPRAg
- Mailing List Archives: http://mm.icann.org/pipermail/gac-gnso-cg/)
- Consultation Group Charter: https://community.icann.org/x/PyLRAg
- Joint GNSO - GAC meeting during the ICANN meeting in Singapore on Sunday 21 June from 15.30 – 17.00 - http://buenosaires53.icann.org/en/schedule/sun-gac-afternoon

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