**Background**

Early engagement of the ICANN GAC in GNSO policy work stems, at least in part, from the recommendations of the first ATRT. Of the six recommendations of the ATRT 1 relating to GAC Engagement and Interaction with the Board, “early GAC engagement in the policy development process” is a key area in which the GNSO may be able to assist through working with GAC. This is recognised by both the GAC and the GNSO and there has been a good faith attempt address this for a good part of 2013. However, progress has been limited by a number of factors, the overarching reason being the overwhelming volume of work and the attention focused on the new gTLD programme. A secondary factor may have been a lack of clarity about who exactly should be working together to make the concrete practical steps forward.

**Progress to Date**

Face-to-face meetings between the GAC and the GNSO as well as intercessional contact and meetings within the two organisations have made some progress which can be summarised as follows.

1. *Liaison*. A liaison from the GAC to the GNSO Council remains an open option. This approach is currently used by both the ccNSO and the ALAC. However, the possibility of a “reverse liaison” has appeared to receive some good traction in discussions between the GAC and the GNSO.   
     
   Further discussion of the “reverse liaison” concept within the GNSO Council (in its capacity as manager of policy development within the GNSO) has developed the idea a little further. It has been proposed, though not agreed, that such a position would need to be comprised of an individual or individuals both experienced in the work of the GNSO Council, attendant at ICANN meetings and able to attend GAC meetings. Therefore, such a “reverse liaison” would seem to be suited to being a GNSO Councillor who had just stepped off the Council and who could potentially be funded by ICANN to attend the three in-person ICANN meetings. The discussions went further to consider the possibility of agreeing the scope of the role and then to the possibility of the GAC & GNSO jointly applying to ICANN to motivate for funding the attendance of the “reverse liaison” at the 2014 meetings (i.e. for a 1 year period in the first instance). However, the mutual expectations of the GAC & the GNSO of the “reverse liaison” will need to be clearly scoped and specified.
2. *Engagement*. The GAC has shared with the GNSO a document which indicates a number of potential engagement points with the GNSO whereby Early Engagement may be improved. In turn, the GNSO Council, with the assistance of ICANN policy staff, has prepared and shared with the GAC a document tabulating existing points of engagement available to the GAC throughout the lifecycle of the GNSO Policy Development Process. Most recent work has taken this GNSO document and overlaid the suggestions made in the GAC document and, in addition, raised a set of detail questions which seek to flush out the practical issues arising.

Notwithstanding any of the above, the GNSO Council has been actively seeking out potential methods to improve and streamline its workings as well as that of the GNSO policy development process. These improvements were discussed within the GNSO in Durban and have been worked on and refined a little in the interim. In a most recent version of the document, which summarises the potential improvements, an addition has been created to include output contained within the draft report from the ATRT2.

**Buenos Aires**

The Buenos Aires meeting seems to be an ideal opportunity to recognise that, whilst progress has not been as good as it might have been, there has been some forward movement and the stage is set to continue. Therefore, we can jointly report on and discuss where we are now and how we might take this forward.

The format to do so could be as follows:

1. Brief update on current efforts within the GNSO to improve and develop policy work.
2. Specific possibilities with respect to more effective working with the GAC
   1. Review of existing interaction points, proposed improvements and issues/questions arising.
   2. Progress on / possibility of a reverse liaison and discussion of some of the specific questions / issues arising
   3. The possibility of trying out what does and doesn’t work with one or more current PDPs e.g. the PDP on Policy & Implementation
3. A way forward?
   1. An invitation to attend (observe) any of the existing GNSO PDP Working Group meetings taking place in Buenos Aires and on the telephone thereafter
   2. A small group to pick up and work with the key issues and questions arising out of 2a & 2 b above

**Beyond Buenos Aires**

Take the issues and way forward described in 2 and 3 above and aim, through a series of intercessional telephone meetings, to make concrete progress between the Buenos Aires meeting and Singapore. Report and discuss progress with respective groups (GAC & GNSO) in the interim where possible and to come together again in Singapore.