

Section 6 and ANNEX to GNSO Operating Procedures

Recommended by Work Prioritization Model Drafting Team (WPM-DT)

6 GNSO Work Prioritization

6.1 Purpose

6.1.1 The GNSO Council performs the following two major functions as part of its managerial role over the Policy Development Process:

- a. Work Prioritization: The Council prioritizes certain Eligible Projects (see 6.2-Scope) based primarily on overall Value as defined in the Methodology (see 6.3.1) and related to ICANN/GNSO's overall mission. Prioritizations will be recalibrated periodically as described in 6.3.3 to reflect an inherently changing environment.
- b. Project Management¹: Once the Eligible Projects are prioritized, the Council manages the workload considering such factors as deadlines, personnel and budget resource availability, urgency, and consequences. It commissions and de-commissions teams as necessary to effectively utilize the aggregate resource pool to achieve the GNSO's goals and objectives.

6.1.2 A fundamental premise underlying the Council's Work Prioritization function is that resources available to the GNSO are not unlimited or unconstrained. In order to ensure that Volunteer and Staff personnel are utilized and managed in the most efficacious and efficient manner, the GNSO Council, has determined that certain project work shall be prioritized periodically according to these procedures. The goals of Work Prioritization are:

- a. Education and Transparency: to establish organizational awareness and understanding of the Council's priorities.
- b. Resource Allocation: to assist the Council in managing limited resources among the organization's prioritized projects.
- c. Strategic Management: to inform Councilors so that the GNSO's prioritization is considered when discussing issues and voting on related motions.

To achieve the above purposes, this Section describes a methodology (see 6.3) for reaching Council agreement on project priorities.

The remainder of this Section describes the procedures that apply to the prioritization task including methodology, frequency and resulting products/outcomes.

6.2 Scope

The Work Prioritization program applies to a subset of the GNSO's work that shall be categorized as its **Eligible Projects**. To determine the work activities that shall be prioritized according to these procedures, the ICANN Policy Staff, at the request of the GNSO Council

¹ Procedures relating to the Council's Project Management role will be discussed subsequently.

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Chair, will recommend that each GNSO project be categorized into one of two major groupings, as follows:

6.2.1 An **Eligible Project** is initiated by a GNSO Council decision to commit community and Staff resources with the expectation that such efforts will impact the GNSO's overall work capacity sufficient to warrant its relative placement among all other prioritized projects. A Prioritized Project begins when chartered or otherwise commissioned by the GNSO Council and ends when the Working Group or team's final output(s)/ recommendation(s) have been approved by the Council. Examples of **Eligible Projects** include, but are not limited to: policy development initiatives and requests made by the Board (e.g. GNSO Improvements), policy activities initiated by the GNSO Council, and/or those requested by an Advisory Committee.

6.2.2 For the purposes of GNSO Work Prioritization, **Non-Eligible Projects** are those whose status has been determined to be in one of the four classifications outlined below:

- a. Community Pending ("Pending"): the work effort has been put on hold and is waiting on or pending another action (e.g. Staff report) or decision (e.g. Council motion) and is not currently consuming community resources.
- b. Monitor Only ("Monitor"): the work effort is not prioritized by the Council, but the Council maintains an interest from an informational perspective (Note: also includes liaison activities).
- c. Not a GNSO Project ("Inactive"): the work effort is not or not yet a GNSO initiative and cannot be properly evaluated (ranked/rated) and prioritized by the Council.
- d. Implementation ("Implem"): the work effort has completed the recommendation phase, has been approved, is ready to begin or has already started implementation, and is not directly consuming large amounts of community or Policy Staff resources.

A project's status classification may change as circumstances dictate resulting in it moving from the Eligible category to Non-Eligible or *vice versa*. Section 6.3.3 outlines a procedure for reevaluating project categorizations prior to initiating a formal Work Prioritization.

6.2.3 After submission of the Staff's recommendations to the Chair, the GNSO Council will determine whether any classifications should be amended and approve the final Eligible and Non-Eligible Project Lists prior to beginning a Work Prioritization effort as described in 6.3.

6.2.4 The GNSO Secretariat will publish and maintain current Eligible and Non-Eligible Project Lists on the [GNSO website](#). Linked to these listings will be short descriptions of all projects along with designated abbreviations.

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6.3 Methodology

This Section outlines the approach to prioritize a list of GNSO Eligible Projects as defined in 6.2.1. Detailed instructions, including templates and tools, are covered in ANNEX *N*.

6.3.1 Rating Factor

Projects will be rated on a single factor, **Value**, as defined below:

Value ... this factor relates to perceptions of overall value, benefit, importance, and criticality primarily for the GNSO, but also considering ICANN's stakeholders and the global Internet community. Components of this dimension may include, but are not limited to: new opportunities for Internet growth/expansion, enhanced competitiveness, resolution/improvement of serious performance or infrastructure problems, increased security/stability, and improved user experience.

6.3.2 Frequency

A formal Work Prioritization rating session of all Eligible Projects will be conducted at least once per fiscal year timed to be approved at the ICANN Annual General Meeting (AGM). A prioritization session may be conducted more frequently if recommended by the Chair and approved by the Council.

6.3.3 General Procedure

The Work Prioritization process involves four major steps:

- Step 1: Confirm the Prioritized Project List
- Step 2: Individual Council Member Ratings
- Step 3: Group Discussion to Reach Agreement on Final Ratings
- Step 4: Publication of Project Ratings and Rankings

ANNEX *N* contains a detailed set of instructions for completing each of the above steps.

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ANNEX N

This Annex contains a set of detailed instructions, procedures, templates, and guidelines for completing a Work Prioritization according to the provisions in Section 6.

Step 1: Update Project Listings

The first step in the process is to ensure that the published Project listings are up-to-date including their categorizations, descriptions and abbreviations.

1.1 Changes to Existing Projects

Due to the inherently dynamic environment within the GNSO, published information about a project, including its status, may change. Prior to initiating a Work Prioritization, the GNSO Chair shall request the ICANN Policy Staff to evaluate each of the GNSO's existing projects and recommend any changes that should be made to its category (Eligible or Non-Eligible), classification (see 6.2.2), description, or abbreviation. After receiving the Staff's recommendations, the Chair will review the results with the Council. The Council may make any amendments it deems necessary; thereafter, it will approve the Eligible and Non-Eligible Project lists.

1.2 New Project Additions:

The GNSO Council periodically evaluates new initiatives for approval to become committed projects. The following steps shall determine whether and how a new initiative is assessed and handled with respect to Work Prioritization:

- a. The following questions should be addressed by the Council for each new initiative that is under evaluation for approval as a potential GNSO Project:
 - What resource types, skills, and quantities are needed to adequately staff this project?
 - Are there sufficient resources (Staff and Community) available without causing adverse impacts to other project work in progress? If not, should any other project work be stopped or postponed?
 - Should this new project have a deadline imposed, thus establishing urgency? If it is determined to be urgent, can any real consequences be identified that will cause the date to be perceived and treated as critical?
 - Should this new initiative be undertaken, that is, have resources assigned to accomplish a particular objective?
- b. Depending upon the outcome of the above analysis, if a project is approved, the Chair will ask for a recommendation from Staff as to whether the project should be categorized as Eligible or Non-Eligible and, if the latter, which classification (see 6.2.2) should be assigned. The Chair will announce Staff's recommendation and ask for Council

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approval. If an objection is raised, Councilors will be polled to determine support. If the project is categorized as:

- i. Non-Eligible, no further action is required.
- ii. Eligible, it will be prioritized at the next scheduled Work Prioritization session.

When the Chair has ascertained that all existing Project changes have been updated and any new projects have been properly incorporated, the Chair will instruct Staff to proceed with Step 2.

Step 2: Individual Council Member Ratings

2.1 The second step in the process involves each Council member rating all **Eligible** projects individually using the following 7-point scale.

Scale:	Interpretation:
1	Far Below
2	Moderately Below
3	Slightly Below
4	Average
5	Slightly Above
6	Moderately Above
7	Far Above

2.2 A special purpose Excel worksheet (GNSO Project Prioritization Rating Template) will be utilized by each Councilor to rate all applicable projects as to Value as defined in Section 6.3.1. Directions are contained within the worksheet.

The following guidance may be helpful in working with the above scale:

Thinking about all Eligible Projects taken together, which one (or more) represents your best perception of AVERAGE in terms of Value as defined in Section 6.3.1. For example, suppose that you happen to think that Project “X” is an AVERAGE project in terms of Value compared to all the others. Once you have “anchored” your perceptual scale in this way, then it is a matter of deciding whether the other projects are Far Below, Moderately Below, Slightly Below, Slightly Above, Moderately Above, or Far Above that “average” project in terms of this factor.

If you find it challenging to decide on an AVERAGE project, consider anchoring at either of the scale extremes, that is, determine which project you think is FAR ABOVE or FAR BELOW all of the others in terms of Value.

In this rating process, there are no absolute or independent scale referents -- you are being asked to assess projects RELATIVE to each other.

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- 2.3 A period of ten (10) calendar days will be announced by the Chair during which the Eligible Projects will be rated individually by each Councilor. Once the deadline has been reached and Staff has received all of the completed spreadsheets, Staff will analyze the submissions for commonality to determine if any project's rating can be ascertained without further processing.
- 2.3.1 The criterion for assessing agreement is a statistic called the Range. Simply stated, the Range is calculated to be the Highest minus the Lowest Rating. For example, for a given project, if the highest rating achieved is a 6 and the lowest a 3, then the Range would be 6-3 or 3. The particular formula used to determine agreement, after the individual ratings are processed, is as follows:
- a. If the Range for any project is ≤ 2 , the median score will be computed to be the Council's rating.
 - b. If a project's Range is > 2 , then that project will be included in Step 3 of the process discussed below.
- 2.3.2 If a Councilor misses the 10 day window for submitting individual project ratings, the first Staff analysis will be prepared without that input and there will be no opportunity to revisit that step once it is completed. During any subsequent group sessions (see Step 3 below), all attending Councilors will be permitted to participate in the discussions and vote during the polling rounds even if they did not submit individual ratings.

Step 3: Group Discussion and Agreement

Once Step 2 is completed and a subset of projects has been identified whose Range is > 2 , the Council as a whole will attempt to achieve agreement on ratings through group discussion applying the methodology explained in the following paragraphs.

3.1 Convene Special Work Prioritization Meeting

- 3.1.1 A date/time will be scheduled by the Chair for a special Work Prioritization meeting when all Council Members can participate in a session. A GNSO Council quorum must be satisfied to conduct this session. The meeting should be scheduled for a duration sufficient to complete the task without having to arrange subsequent sessions².
- 3.1.2 Staff will set up an Adobe Connect session that will be used to facilitate the meeting and permit Councilor voting to occur using the site's polling feature. It is important that each Councilor attending the session have access to the Internet and the Adobe Connect site.

² Initial sessions may require as much as two hours depending upon the total number of Eligible Projects to be rated and the amount of discussion that takes place. As the Council gains experience and familiarity with the process, future sessions may be shortened as appropriate.

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3.2 Procedure

- 3.2.1 Staff will upload to the Adobe Connect site the Eligible Project list with each one marked as to whether a consensus rating was achieved as a result of Step 2. For all remaining projects, they will be taken up one at a time in the order presented.
- 3.2.2 For each project to be discussed, Staff will display the Range and will indicate which Councilors rated the project at the most extreme scale values. Initially, those Councilors will be invited to provide a rationale for their ratings. Each Councilor is asked to honor a 1-2 minute time limit in providing an explanation. To minimize the total time for this step, Councilors are encouraged not to repeat rationale that has already been offered. Other Councilors are permitted to ask questions for clarification and answers should be constrained to 1-2 minutes or less. Once the extreme values have been discussed, any Councilor may provide rationale for other rating values that have not been aired following the same general guidelines. Each project should be targeted to be completed within 10 minutes.
- 3.2.3 At the end of the first discussion round, Staff will engage the Adobe Connect polling feature and ask each attendee to re-rate the project (Scale: 1 to 7) after having listened to the discussion. Staff will indicate when all votes have been registered at which time the voting results will be revealed and a new Range calculated.
 - a. If the Range is ≤ 2 , the median score will be determined to be the Council's rating. Staff will post that result to the Adobe Connect page and move to the next project in sequence, returning to 3.2.2.
 - b. If the Range is > 2 , the discussion will proceed to a second round.
- 3.2.4 Staff will inquire as to which Councilors rated the project at the most extreme values so that they may provide their rationale, initially, followed by questions and answers and an additional open discussion period similar to the first round except that each speaker should honor a 1 minute time limit and each project should be targeted to be completed within 5 minutes. These abbreviated time limits will also apply to a third round of discussion, if warranted.
- 3.2.5 At the conclusion of the second round of discussion, Staff will initiate a new poll except that this time:
 - a. If the Range is ≤ 3 , the median result will be accepted as the Council's rating.
 - b. If the Range is > 3 , one final round of discussion will take place and a third poll taken at which point the median will be computed as the Council's rating.

Step 4: Results

At the conclusion of the Step 3 for all Eligible Projects, Staff will publish the final Council ratings and a ranking will be produced with ties listed in alphabetical order by name³.

³ Sequence Numbers, used only for the initial prioritization, will be replaced by Council ratings in the published Eligible Project List.