

**GNSO Working Group Newcomer Open House session
TRANSCRIPTION
Thursday 23 October 2014 at 12:00 UTC**

Note: The following is the output of transcribing from an audio. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors. It is posted as an aid to understanding the proceedings at the meeting, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

Coordinator: This conference call is now being recorded.

Nathalie Peregrine: Thank you ever so much, (Tim). Good morning, good afternoon, good evening everybody and welcome to the GNSO Working Group Newcomer Open House session on the 23rd of October, 2014.

On the call today we have Thomas Rickert, Annabeth Lange, Grigory Saghian, Heather Forrest, (Lee Acker) and Olivier Crépin-LeBlond. From staff we have Marika Konings and myself, Nathalie Peregrine.

I'd like to remind you all to please state your names before speaking for transcription purposes. Thank you very much and over to you, Marika.

Marika Konings: Hi, Nathalie. This is Marika Konings from ICANN staff. I'm a Senior Policy Director and Team Leader for the GNSO based in the ICANN office in Brussels. And already apologizing for any background noise you may hear because they just started a big demonstration next to our office as the European Summit is about to start and I think some people have taken it on themselves to demonstrate and start fireworks so apologies for that in advance.

So I'm giving you a very brief introduction into the team and then I'm going to hand over to Thomas Rickert who's the host for this meeting and will talk to you a little bit more about, you know, the objective of this call and the items we'll be covering today.

So I think several of you I've already met and may know me; you see a picture here as well so you can recognize me at the next ICANN meeting if you haven't met me yet.

Our Vice President for Policy Development is David Olive. He's based in the ICANN office in Istanbul Turkey. Then we have Glen de Saint G ry, who's the GNSO Secretariat based in the sunny south of France. Mary Wong who's based in New Hampshire. Julie Hedlund based in Washington DC. We have Lars who's also based in the ICANN office in Brussels. Berry Cobb who's a consultant to the Policy Team and then we have Nathalie Peregrine who just introduced this call who's also based in the south of France.

And I don't know, Nathalie, if you first maybe want to say a few words about Adobe Connect. I think some people are probably already quite experienced with that but it may be worth just giving a short introduction on how people can use it for this meeting and then we can hand it over to Thomas.

And I'll go on mute now since the fireworks are increasing.

Nathalie Peregrine: Thank you very much, Marika. Hello everybody. This is Nathalie Peregrine for the transcript. I'd just like to run you through a few tips regarding the Adobe Connect room. I figure most of you have made it into the Adobe Connect room so you're doing pretty well already.

Just before you actually log into the Adobe Connect room you will see on the screen you have the option of logging in as guest or as host. It's always good to log in as guest, that you will not have hosting rights for the Adobe Connect

room; those are for staff members only so don't go searching through your emails for those, you don't need them.

However, it is important to log in with your first and last name as you've all done today so very well done. That's good for the chair and for other members. It just makes sense to identify you. But equally attendance is taken for - during all GNSO working groups so it's important just for our archives that you do sign in with your full name.

Next I see a few of you have done this, you've activated your Adobe Connect room microphone, so well done. For those of you who don't know this, we've got the voiceover IP option actioned in the Adobe Connect room so this means that whereas you can hear streaming through your laptop on your speakers, you can also participate over the audio via the Adobe Connect room without having to dial in via the telephone.

So in order to do this when you arrive on the call simply you would need to click on the telephone icon at the top of the Adobe Connect room toolbar, you have a little white telephone icon, and follow the instructions from there on.

Once you've finished following the instructions, this takes you about 5-6 seconds, the microphone - the telephone icon at the top will turn into a microphone icon. This means you've been successful and you can take part in the conference via voiceover IP.

What you will need to do, and some participants have been successful already, is to mute your microphone same as you do on the phone. So to do this you would go to the little white arrow to the right hand side of the microphone icon which allows you to mute and unmute. And if you look at the attendees, at Annabeth and Olivier, they've got a red line through their microphone, this means they have correctly muted their Adobe Connect room microphone so well done.

Otherwise other ways of communicating if you'd rather not or cannot, depending on your environment, take part over the audio of the call, just use the Adobe Connect room chat pod that you can see at the bottom here.

Anything that is written in the Adobe chat, so the one you see in front of you with my welcome message, is archived; same as we keep attendance, same as all our calls are recorded, we keep the contents of the Adobe Connect room chat.

Now if you do have any information or any questions you would rather not be made public please be aware that you can private chat so the chair maybe, and other participants, all members of staff. To do that you highlight their names in the participant list and right click and you have the option to start a private chat.

This can be handy, for instance, for technical questions if you want to have a dial-out to your telephone and would rather not communicate your personal phone number over the public chat or any other issue and comments you might wish to keep private. Of course the content of these private chats are not kept and not accessible by everyone.

Last but not least, a different way of communicating also, and this is quite - this is very ICANN-specific is the hand raise option. You have at the top of the toolbar, next to the other icons, you have a little white man with a hand raised; that's your hand raise option.

What happens within ICANN and within the GNSO during every single working group session is that you have to raise your hand before making a comment or before asking a question hence the utility of logging in with your first and last name so you can be immediately identified.

Raising your hands via this icon puts you in a question or comment queue. This does not give you the right to talk into the call, for that you must wait for

the chair to call you out by name as he will have made a list of who's in the queue before you. And once you have your name called out you can then ask your question or make your comment.

Equally important is to remember to lower your hand after you've asked your question or made your comment as otherwise the chair will think you have a new question. You'll hear it a lot in the working group sessions where people apologize saying that their hand is an old hand, this means that their question or comment was made and they no longer need to participate in the call for that moment.

If you click on the dropdown menu just to the right of the little hand raised icon you have just lowered the agree green tick and the disagree red cross. These are quite handy if you - it's basically the equivalence of the plus one that you find in Adobe Connect chat.

If you wish to just express your agreement or disagreement you can use these icons. Most chairs are aware of what they mean, they're fairly self explanatory. Also they can be used as a very quick handy polling tool. If the chair wants to find out how many members are available to part in a working group next week, for instance, they'll ask you to say so. It's way quicker to use an icon like this than to write it in the chat and it makes counting very easy. So please be aware that you can use these at all moments.

So just to check who's keeping up with me, just the beginning of the webinar, could you please use the green tick or the red cross to express how we're doing for the moment regarding content, feeds, understanding, etcetera?

And so to express that you'd go to the hand raised icon at the top toolbar and choose the red cross or the green tick. Mostly the green tick, we encourage that. All right, thank you. Not doing so badly.

If you do have any questions regarding these AC tips - I know I went a bit quickly - please don't hesitate to type a question into the chat or to private chat me or to email us at the GNSO Secretariat email address (unintelligible) right away.

And I see a question in the chat. Annabeth cannot get to the green tick. Annabeth, you've muted your mic, if you'd like to unmute your mic and if you're able to speak into the call that would be fantastic. Can you see - do you get the dropdown menu from the hand raised white icon man next to the - if you click on the little arrow to the right. Do you get the dropdown menu at all? Okay, Annabeth has a green tick. Thank you ever so much.

Okay my job here is done, I'll hand it over to you, Thomas. Thank you ever so much.

Thomas Rickert: Thank you very much, Nathalie. That's been great. I think that now that you know how to work with the Adobe Connect room you're already halfway through. Let me briefly introduce myself to you. I'm Thomas Rickert based in Germany. I'm a lawyer by profession working in the domain industry for more than 15 years now. And next to my working in private practice I'm also working with an industry association called ECO - ECO.

ECO, not to be mixed up with the dotECO applications for new gTLDs and that is an association that works with registrars, registries but also ISPs and other companies. So I'm working quite a bit with companies from the industry in order to sort of absorb and understand what their needs and what the challenges for them are.

And I try to take that knowledge and experience to my work with ICANN where I'm currently serving on the GNSO Council which is the body managing the policy development process for generic top level domains.

And as you will have recognized by now the ICANN world is full of acronyms. We're now talking about the GNSO and PDP, WGs, PDP working group. This is all very confusing and I can tell you that even those that have been working in the space for many, many years still don't know all the acronyms.

And so please do ask questions if you don't know a certain acronym that I might be using. The ICANN Website has improved a lot in that regard. We now have an acronym finder on there but particularly a couple years back this was a real challenge to find out what we were actually talking about. So you come up with funny acronyms such as IGO INGO PDP WG and then you stand in front of that and you go, oh my God, what does that mean and what is this all about.

So don't be shy. Do ask questions. There are no stupid questions. Don't use the private channel for asking these questions but go public with it. I'm sure that your fellow participants of this call might have the same question. So I think we can keep this quite interactive. We have six or seven participants on the call. Please do raise your hand in case you have a question and I think we should discuss that instantly.

Now the agenda for this session is flexible. The purpose is to acquaint yourself a little bit with the niceties of GNSO working group work. And it's informal. Please do ask questions. And we hope to be able to provide you with some insight, although there is so much that you can read and maybe you get an appetite for diving deeper into the depths of what this policy development work is all about and then you can - you find links in these - in the slide deck as well that help you to find documents with more details.

Now we want to hear your questions but I think before we get to your questions we might want to go through some of the standard questions which you find on this slide. So we're going to talk about the Generic Name Supporting Organization's policy development process, we're talking about

consensus policy. I'm sure that not everybody understands what the concept of a consensus policy is.

We're going to talk about the picket fence. And I have to be quite honest, I was traveling for quite along time to get my head around that because everybody was talking about the picket fence and I failed to understand why we're now in the midst of doing some exercises with respect to farming.

But actually it's a legal concept that's quite nice and we'll get to that in a moment. We're going to talk about how working group - how the working group works. Actually there are guidelines for working group work which are quite handy.

We're going to talk a little bit about the tools that ICANN is offering, the wikis, you already heard about Adobe Connect so I think we can tick that off the list. And then we will try to help you navigate through the wealth of information that can be found on the ICANN Website.

Now the GNSO policy development process, you see this visualized in this - that form and let's start at the upper left because usually the policy development that's undertaken by the GNSO community doesn't start by itself. So usually there is somebody who says, okay, I see an issue with this. And I would like this issue to be addressed. And that can be individual councilors that bring forward such an idea to the GNSO Council, but that can also be the ICANN Board and some others who might request a so-called issue report.

And the issue report is basically to determine whether the issue that we're having in front of us, the question that is being asked whether that has a real problem behind it. So is there smoke or is there fire?

So some research is done usually by ICANN staff on this subject and also we want to find out with the issue report whether the question that's being asked

is actually in the remit of what ICANN's mandate is or more specifically what the GNSO's remit is.

So if somebody comes up and says, okay, I have an issue with my local country code top level domain then there might be an issue but this is nothing for ICANN or the GNSO to take action on because it's out of scope.

So this issues report is then published and public comments are being asked for. Usually that's 21 plus 21 days comment period. That's a comment period and then a reply period. But I should say that in many cases those that have failed or missed the opportunity to provide comments in the initial phase, in the public comment phase, do so during the second phase. So don't be - don't feel too bad if you've missed the first 21 day period, usually you get the opportunity to provide your comments during the second period.

And you will see that this public comments period are - can be found in multiple instances during this whole process as we move on. And it's, in my view, the most important part of the policy development process because everybody can make him or self heard. It's not only companies, it's not only government representatives, it's not only people representing big organizations or associations. It's each and every individual that can speak up.

And also I should say that these public comments actually have a value and they're being looked at. A couple of years back there were allegations that, you know, you can provide public comment, take the trouble to draft and submit them but that sort of they disappear somewhere and they will never see the day of light again.

This is not true. Actually, there is public comment review tool that's being deployed by working groups and with that tool each and every public comment is reviewed. It's being looked at whether it's relevant; it's being

looked at whether the proposal that's been made has already been covered by the work of the working group or the report, whether that's a fresh idea.

And then actually I've seen multiple instances where public comment received from the community has led to changes of the work result of the working group.

So it's not a moot exercise to participate in public comments. And also that's a good opportunity for those who are not working within one of the ICANN groups inside the GNSO to make themselves heard because usually the constituents of the GNSO are encouraged more frequently to join these working groups through the GNSO Council that sends out notifications to all groups and solicits for feedback and for participation. So that's important. And we'll get back to that concept of public comments again in a moment.

So after public comment is solicited for and after the public comments are being analyzed and if need be incorporated into the preliminary issue report a final issue report is then published and with that the policy development process is formally started once the GNSO Council adopts this issue report and kicks off the PDP, which stands for policy development process.

And then a working group is formed. You will see if you subscribe to ICANN's email newsletters that working group participants are being asked for so ICANN is very inclusive with that and encourages participation. And the fact that you're on this call today clearly shows that one way or the other you got to know about ICANN GNSO working groups and that you're interested in them and that's a great thing in itself.

So you can then join a working group and then actually all the stakeholder groups, the acronym would be SGs, all the constituencies, and all the supporting organizations, which are SOs, or the advisory committees, that's ACs, are asked for input on this - on this topic that the working group is dealing with.

I should maybe pause for a second and ask you for feedback in the Adobe Connect whether you would like us to say a little bit about the structure of the GNSO because we're talking about SOs and SGs and stuff, is that - do you know about the bicameral structure, the Contracted Parties House and the Non Contracted Parties House?

So I see the first question coming up in the chat, "What's the relationship between SGs and Cs?" So then maybe let's go through them very quickly. And I'm not virtually looking at Marika whether she can bring up the splendid graph on the GNSO.icann.org site where the structure of the GNSO is shown? Maybe we can do that after we...

Marika Konings: Yeah, I can probably dig out the links so people can go there but to pull it up - the graphic I would have to take down the other presentation so...

((Crosstalk))

Thomas Rickert: Okay so I think that - it's worthwhile looking at that so you can look at that site once Marika has sent the link. But the idea since the restructuring of the GNSO a couple years back is that you have two houses. It's the Contracted Parties House and the Non Contracted Parties House.

And the Contracted Parties House is the home of those that have contracts with ICANN and that's registries and registrars. So you have the Registry Stakeholder Group and Registrar Stakeholder Group in that house.

And then there's the Non Contracted Parties House, i.e. all those that don't have contracts with ICANN. And within that house you have the Commercial Stakeholder Group and the Non Commercial Stakeholder Group. And these stakeholder groups, itself, they are the home of a couple of constituencies.

So for the Commercial Stakeholder Group that would be the Intellectual Property Constituency, the Business Constituency and the Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers Constituency. And for the Non Commercial Stakeholder Group that would be the - would be the NCUC and NPOC. Have I forgotten somebody? Rudi is there so - Rudi is already spelling it out in the chat. So these are the groups that can be found in the Non Commercial Stakeholder Group.

So - and in these groups you find the respective stakeholders so it's quite a big, big group reflecting all sorts of interests in this sphere, so to say. So they're all asked to provide feedback. And after having obtained feedback from them, and after having done some initial work on the task in front of the working group the working group publishes an initial report.

So that's basically a report saying, okay, these are the preliminary conclusions that we found. We suggest to resolve the issue put in front of us as follows. And there's also some research results in there. And then this initial report is being published.

Again, public comment is gathered. And the public comments are analyzed and incorporated into the final report which is published again. And then the final report, once it's been adopted, and in that phase something takes place which we call the consensus call, i.e. that is the phase where the working group decides whether they're all on the same page with respect to the recommendations they've been working on or whether they have all sorts of different views.

We'll talk about consensus calls and the consensus levels in a moment which is why I'm not going to dwell on that for longer at this stage.

But then when the working group comes up with its recommendations then it's being passed on to the GNSO Council, which is sort of the manager of the policy development process in the GNSO, and they discuss the final report

and if they adopt the policy recommendations that are included in the final report then actually the GNSO Council takes a vote, so there's no consensus call in the Council but a vote.

And if the recommendations are adopted they're being passed on to the ICANN Board for consideration. And the Board then takes more public comments so that's again an opportunity to make yourself heard. And then the Board takes a vote on that and if the policy recommendations are adopted then the policy is being implemented.

And we've seen many of those PDPs. And just to give you one example of those the Whois data reminder policy, maybe you've registered a name Com, Net, Org, Biz, Info or whatever other generic extension that might be, and you will have noticed that for the last couple of years you're getting emails from your registrar asking you to check whether the Whois data that you provided is still accurate and to rectify if need be.

And that goes back to a working group work which ended in a consensus policy which had to be followed by all registrars. So an issue was identified a couple years back that Whois data, at times, is not accurate enough and then the suggestion was made and worked on by a working group that these reminders should be sent out.

Another example would be how domain names are being transferred and how disputes surrounding domain name transfers shall be resolved. That's been a series of PDPs called the IRTP PDPs so we had a few of them. And actually with this policy work the parameters of how domain names can be registered, how they can be transferred, how Whois should look like, all these parameters that need a unique response from the whole industry are being addressed.

And that is to ensure that users can rely on minimum standards, so to speak, and minimum shall not sound derogatory, but standards that all players have

to abide by are being crafted through this policy development. So it has quite a lot of impact on how this industry works, how this industry gets better and better and how consumers can actually rely on a trustworthy and resilient environment to operate their domain names in.

So I think I should pause here for a second and see whether you have questions. I know that this might be confusing but that's, you know, this - what I outlined in a few minutes for you is actually a process that can easily take one to two years.

So I see no hands at the moment which is why I will proceed to the next slide. But again, I'm encouraging you to speak up or give me a visual hint by raising your hand if you want to speak or ask a question.

So, again, to sum this up we have a few very important requirements for working group work; that's the constituency or stakeholder group statements so everybody in this GNSO community is asked to provide input on the subject matter that the working group is working on.

Then advisory committees, such as the Governmental Advisory Committee, or the Security and Stability Advisory Committee, or ALAC, the At Large Advisory Committee, are being asked to provide feedback as well as the supporting organizations very early in the process.

And this is something that we are particularly working with, with the GAC on because at times the Governmental Advisory Committee has an issue to weigh in at a very early stage and we're encouraging them over and over again to make themselves heard in order to avoid that they step in at a very late stage of the work and say that they want to see things being dealt with differently.

Again, we have initial - an initial report, we have public comments, we have the review of comments which I've commented on in length, and then there is

a final report. So there are several steps. You can join the working group also at a later stage if you've missed the beginning. And, again, there are ample opportunities to participate not only as a working group member but also as a community member that makes him or herself heard during public comment periods.

I see a hand is raised. Congratulations, (Carlos) and the word is yours.

(Carlos): Thank you, Thomas. Just in since I don't see a lot of newcomers, I was very surprised to hear that at some point there is a question that has to be asked to the general counsel if the work is in scope or not. I was wondering if - if that's a technical question and if is it the right time to ask it please. Thank you.

Thomas Rickert: So let me make sure I have understood the question. The question is whether for every PDP general counsel is being asked or why that is?

(Carlos): I understood it should be asked and the question is at what point, if it's asked at this stage or later down the road.

Thomas Rickert: Well I think I should defer to Marika with ICANN staff. I've seen cases where general counsel has been involved at a later stage as well. I think that the initial assessment whether something is in scope or not is primarily done by staff and not necessarily by general counsel all the time, is that correct?

Marika Konings: This is Marika. There is actually a requirement to solicit the opinion of ICANN's general counsel in relation to the issue report and that specifically goes to the fact whether the issue proposed for consideration is properly within the scope of ICANN's mission, policy process and more specifically the role of the GNSO.

And in that regard they're asked to provide input on a number of questions such as, you know, is the issue within scope of ICANN's mission statements

and more specifically the role of the GNSO? Is it broadly applicable? Is it likely to have lasting value or applicability albeit with the need for occasional updates. Is it likely to enable ICANN to carry out its commitment under the Affirmation of Commitments? Will it establish a guide or framework for future decision making? And will it implicate or affect an existing ICANN policy?

So as said, that's part of the issue report and the idea is that it provide some insights to the Council as well a PDP working group when it carries out its work.

And just to note as well that should there be a determination that the issue is deemed outside of the scope for the GNSO to deal with that has an impact on the vote that is required for the GNSO Council to initiate a policy development process.

The idea being that the GNSO Council should really focus on issues that are within its scope and within its mandate and anything beyond that, you know, requires a (high) voting threshold as it's not deemed, you know, the role or responsibility of the Council to deal with such a specific issue. But as far as I remember I'm not really sure whether we have any of those situations today.

Thomas Rickert: Thanks, Marika. So I think unless (Carlos) has more questions we can move on to the next slide. So this is a slide for those who want to know more about the details. Actually ICANN has bylaws and Annex A of the ICANN Bylaws talks about the policy development process.

And additionally there's a PDP manual and an overview which I think contains the graphics or a small summary of the work of the PDP working groups. So that's for further reading and I recommend going through that because I think it's quite helpful to understand how these groups operate.

Now consensus policy and the picket fence. I mentioned earlier that I've been struggling with the concept of the picket fence quite a bit. But I think that - or I hope to be able to explain it in relatively easy words.

Now, first of all consensus policy, I mentioned earlier that registries and registrars are those that have contracts with ICANN. Also, these contracts have a starting date that is differing quite a bit. So we have TLDs that have gone live many years back; we have registrars that started their operations many years back. And all these contracts have a certain lifetime.

And how do you then make sure that if something is agreed upon that should be followed by all actors, by all contracted parties, how can you ensure that they all follow these standards?

Because usually when they have a contract they have the expectation that they can live this contract, fulfill it with all its rights and responsibilities, with all the rights and duties in there until the lifetime of the contract comes to an end.

But this is not desirable because let's say we want to change something as an industry standard if you wish next year but if the contract of certain players runs for another eight years then we shouldn't be forced to wait until the last contract expires before we have all players abiding by the new rules.

And therefore, what you find in the contracts for both registries as well as registrars is that they all undertake to follow and abide by ICANN consensus policies. And the beauty is that if you have a consensus policy you don't need to change all the existing contracts but once a consensus policy is adopted by the ICANN Board of Directors it has to be followed by the contracted parties.

I mean, isn't that a great concept? You create something and it has to be followed by the whole industry instantly. Instantly meaning that they don't

have to change their technical systems overnight, usually there are implementation periods that are being granted, but, you know, the nice thing is that ICANN doesn't have to renegotiate contracts with the contracted parties when we have consensus policies.

So that's binding both registries and registrars and that's a nice thing. But in order to do that it's not good enough to have some sort of policy advice or some sort of decision made by the ICANN Board, it needs to be a consensus policy and consensus policies have to go through this PDP in order to be such.

So I think the concept or the thing that's very nice about the consensus policies I hope that I've conveyed that to you, but there are certain boundaries for that.

And it can only be policies that do not unreasonably restrain competition and the policies need to be related to issues for which uniform or coordinated resolution is reasonably necessary to facilitate interoperability, technical reliability and/or stable operation of the Internet or Domain Name System to registry registrar policies reasonably necessary to implement consensus policies relating to registries or registrars and registries; and thirdly, the resolution of disputes regarding the registration of domain names as opposed to the use of such domain names.

Now usually I hate when people are reading out slides to me but I think these principles are so important that I was courageous enough to do so. And under the third point, for example, that's the UDRP which has to be followed by all registries and registrars.

UDRP stands for Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy and that is an administrative dispute resolution policy for generic names that has to be followed by all players and that provides an easy way for people to fight against obvious clear cut cases of trademark infringement.

So picket fence, the picket fence we see a graphical visualization of the picket fence but actually what it says is that those items are up to - that - those items can be worked on by consensus policies that are within the picket fence. And everything that's without the picket fence cannot be tackled by consensus policies.

The general idea is that you will remember the three points that I read out for you. The registries and registrars are okay with accepting community driven policy development leading to consensus policies where a standard approach is required for the whole industry. So let's say dispute resolution transfers of domain names, you know, all the examples that I gave you earlier.

But what's out of scope, for example, is how long a contract should be, what the price of the - for domain name registrations or transactions as they put it, would be that the registries and registrars have to pay to ICANN. Because the registries and registrars say we have a contract with ICANN and so as contractors we do need to have the flexibility to negotiate certain terms as contracting parties and we don't want the community to have a say in commercial parameters of the contract or duration or other things.

So that's to make clear that the involvement of the community should only go as far as those points that are actually needed to provide for the secure, stable, resilient DNS and for dispute resolution and all the other points. Does that make sense to you? I don't expect that you all hit the checkmarks but if you have questions please do speak up or make yourself heard.

So that's the idea of the picket fence. So whenever we talk about the picket fence we usually do the sanity check of whether the work that we're conducting is something that is - that can be appropriately dealt with by the community or whether that's something only to be discussed between the registries and registrars.

So you find out more about that at the link on the screen. And I'm sure that these slides will be made available to all of you.

Then let's talk briefly about the Working Group Guidelines. So the Working Group Guidelines basically are the rules to the game of working groups. So only the important factors of working group work are in there. So they have some stipulations on how meetings shall be run, what has to be done in the first working group meeting, that the group needs to determine who's going to be the chair of the working group or co chairs or chair and vice chairs.

They can form sub groups if they wanted to. So they can see who has what roles so they can allocate work tasks and workload to individual members. It's - it also contains rules about participation. It says something about process integrity. So there are rules of behavior. So we want to make sure that the atmosphere in which the work is conducted is a nice one that everybody's being treated with due respect.

Then there is standard methodology for decision making and we'll get back to that again so that's the second deferral that I make when it comes to the consensus levels but there's a dedicated slide for that and I'll get back to that in a moment.

Then there is an appeal process in there. I think that's quite an interesting subject particularly in this day and age when we talk so much about ICANN accountability. So we even have an accountability mechanism built into the working group process whereby working group members who think that the chair has done something wrong can follow certain process to get this revisited.

And there are rules about communication, collaboration, about product and output. We've learned earlier about the various work products that are being produced by the working groups.

So the standard methodology for decision making is actually thriving for consensus. As a community we should make sure that we have the buy-in of everybody so that everybody supports the recommendations that are being made. These working groups don't make decisions by counting noses. And I think that's a very important thing to bear in mind; this is consensus-driven.

So the working group chair will, every now and then, reach out to the working group members and say, okay, is this something that you like? Is the result that we're looking at is that something that everybody can support or do we have concerns? And if so, which are these concerns.

So the - so it's a iterative process whereby the working group chair, I should rather say the working group chair's responsibility and duty is to test the waters every now and then to make sure that the group is led to consensus positions. Because I think it's - it would be unfortunate if a working group works for a year or more to then find out that nobody agrees on what the work result is.

So you need to check constantly whether you take everybody with you, whether all concerns are being addressed. And then ultimately a so-called consensus call is being made and you now find a few terms there on the slide which I'm going to explain to you.

Full consensus means that unanimously all the working group members say that certain recommendations are a good thing. Then we have consensus and consensus actually means that the group primarily is of the view that the recommendations should be supported and there might only be a minority or a small proportion of the working group members that are not in agreement with that.

Then the next level is I think quite obvious, strong support but significant opposition which would still sort of count as something that can be accepted as consensus by the Council once the recommendations go to the Council.

And divergence means that the positions are all over the place, i.e. that would be the absence of consensus.

And then there is minority view so every working group member that is not in support of the recommendations can publish or can submit a minority view which is included in the final report. So even if they didn't get their will then they get a forum and a place to make themselves heard with their concerns.

And then it's very well possible that other community members say okay, I share your concern and I'm also - I also think that the working group has done something wrong and that actually can lead to the working group reopening its deliberations and making changes to the policy recommendations.

So we're striving for consensus. And I think it's important to say that full consensus is at the upper scale but what we most - what we get most of the time is consensus. In most cases it's not possible to please everyone so we've had discussions quite recently whether it would be more appropriate to talk about consensus as the desired outcome and not at full consensus because this expectation might be a little bit unrealistic every now and then.

So if you find this interesting, if you want to dive into this in more detail, here you'll find the links where you can actually find the documents spelling all this out in greater detail.

Tips and tricks, you can find out more about the GNSO in particular at GNSO.icann.org. There you find a chart of how the GNSO is set up, you find the names of all the councilors and which groups they represent on the GNSO Council, you find the list of projects, you get access to the wiki where all the working materials are being placed. So I think that's a very helpful resource.

The GNSO 101 materials are basic information materials that you can use to find your way into this whole subject matter. And the GNSO projects list I think is also quite interesting because you can see which projects are currently being worked on by the GNSO and the status of the project as well.

The acronym helper I already referred to, that's a very helpful resource. Mostly it's a mouseover functionality so that you just go with your mouse over an acronym and then the full version of the term is displayed. We have the various wikis which usually have all the essential documents for the community's work in there.

ICANN Learn is a learning platform where you can self-teach yourself which I think is a very interesting thing and it's only been set up quite recently and I very much applaud this initiative.

And I think what's the most appropriate and easiest way is find somebody in the community who's been around for a while, ask them, try to tap on the expertise of - and the knowledge of those that have been around. I have to say I've made extensive use of that.

Nobody has turned me down with the questions that I had. I learned an awful lot because most of the time people that you ask not only provide you with the facts or the paragraph in the Operating Principles that you should go to and read to find an answer but usually they would give you a little bit of history and real life examples where the information that you are seeking becomes relevant. And I think that makes it much easier to understand. Also GNSO policy staff is always most helpful when it comes to answering questions.

So I think that's - I think we're done with the slides so I'd like to open the floor for you to ask questions. Okay, I see some thank yous in the chat which are most appreciated. Thank you so much.

And actually I think, you know, you should really try to fill some of these things with life. If you're interested in this picket fence discussion go back to the RAA negotiations where the contract between the registrars and ICANN was debated.

You find the term picket fence over and over in these discussions because ICANN got some pressure from the Governmental Advisory Committee which itself got some pressure from law enforcement authorities that registrars should be doing certain things and then there was a vivid debate about what needed a PDP, what could be asked for by ICANN so what's inside, outside the picket fence so that's been most interesting and entertaining.

I shouldn't say entertaining in the positive way, so there was a lot of tension at the time. But you can see from this that everything that we're discussing here in a theoretic fashion is actually something that becomes hands on relevant and can have huge impact on user experience as well as the whole industry.

So unless there are more questions I'd like to hand it back over to Marika or - I'm not sure whether Nathalie is going to take this.

Marika Konings: This is Marika. Not really much more to add just to, you know, thank you again for participating and, Thomas, for a brilliant overview as always. As I already noted in the chat, you know, of course if you have any further questions, you know, after looking again at the slides or as you start participating in some of, you know, the GNSO working groups do always feel free to reach out to us, you know, provided you with the general email address but I think many of you also have our individual contact details. And, you know, we'll do our best to answer any questions you may have.

We are running these webinars on a monthly basis so if you want to come back at some other point in time with further questions do feel free to join again. There's no limit on how many times you can participate.

I think many of you know, as well, that we have different - other sources of information, you know, we do have a monthly policy update in which we provide regular updates on the latest developments. There's a GNSO Twitter feed that provides information.

We also run a policy update webinar just prior to every ICANN meeting to give you an overview of what issues you can expect to be considered and addressed during an ICANN meeting. So I think there are many ways in which you can, you know, find information. And if you have any difficulty in finding an answer to your questions do always feel free to reach out to us.

And with that, you know, thank you again for joining and looking forward to seeing many of you in future or current GNSO efforts. Thanks.

Thomas Rickert: Thanks everybody and bye-bye.

Nathalie Peregrine: Thank you very much, (Tim). You may now stop the recordings. Have a good day, everybody.

END