

**GNSO Working Group Newcomer Open House session
TRANSCRIPTION
Thursday 6th November 2014 at 20:00 UTC**

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Coordinator: Welcome. Thank you for standing by. Throughout today's conference all participants have open and interactive lines into the call. Today's call is being recorded. If you have objections, you may disconnect at this time. Thank you. You may begin.

Nathalie Peregrine: Thank you so much (Terry). And good morning, good afternoon, good evening everybody and welcome to the GNSO Working Group Newcomer Open House Session on the 6th of November 2014.

On the call today we have our host Thomas Rickert. We also have (Noreen Satchian) and (Sarah Bakey). And from staff we have Mary Wong and myself Nathalie Peregrine. I would like to remind you to please state your names before speaking for transcription purposes. Thank you ever so much and over to you Mary.

Mary Wong: Thank you Nathalie. And a very warm welcome as Nathalie said to (Noreen) and to (Sarah) and to anyone else who may be joining us shortly. Before we jump into the slides and Thomas' presentation, I would just want to let you all know that having a small group is something that Thomas and I and Nathalie welcome because even though we do have some slides to get through, what

we found has been the most useful both for ourselves as well as for participants is if everyone has a chance to ask questions.

So as we go along, please feel free to type your question into the Adobe Connect chat room, which should be on the bottom right of you screen. And if we don't get to it right away, we promise that we certainly will get to it towards the end of the presentation. So don't be shy. And please make use of this time.

As Nathalie said, my name is Mary Wong. I'm a member of the ICANN Policy Staff and I would like to thank Thomas Rickert who is a community member and a very active participant in the GNSO for taking the time today to do this Webinar with our newer participants in the GNSO.

Thomas, I'll leave it to you to tell our participants a little more about your involvement and yourself when I hand it over to you. But like I said, thank you very much especially if anyone was listening in earlier, you have noticed that Thomas is very active and has taken a leading role in some of the more recent policy efforts of the GNSO. So thank you on both counts Thomas.

As I mentioned earlier, we have other colleagues on the Policy Support Team and you may have either met some of them or heard from some of us by emails or on calls such as this.

David Olive is our overall Vice President. He's in Turkey. Marika Konings, the next photo down, is the Team Leader for the GNSO and I was joking a little earlier about people confusing Marika and myself because our names are very similar and we both support the GNSO.

The other person that you would need to get to know if you don't already is Glen who is very experienced being one of the longstanding members of ICANN Staff and who runs the Secretariat along with Nathalie who you've already met and a number of other folks.

That's me on the left side. And my other colleagues who with other Policy Staff support you and the GNSO include Julie Hedlund and Lars Hoffman. And hopefully, like I said, you have the chance to meet all of us in person soon or certainly it'd be lovely to talk to you on the phone and communicate by email.

I mentioned Nathalie down there and she does a great job with these Webinars and with everything else. And Berry Cobb provides us with excellent support as a Consultant and he too is at many of our events and meetings.

As I noted earlier, even though we do have slides to get through and there's a number of different GNSO procedures that we hope you would get familiar with.

The goal really is to be informal today and so we can be very flexible with the agenda. We can spend as much or as little time as you're interested in on any particular topic. And as I mentioned, please, please feel free to ask any questions you may have at any time including during the presentation and after.

So some of the standard questions that we sometimes get are what we folded into this Webinar, as some of the topics that we thought should be covered by every Webinar that we do.

And since the GNSO is the main body at ICANN responsible for developing policies on generic top-level domains, it makes sense to talk about what goes into a GNSO policy development process; what we mean when we say a policy development process has resulted in consensus policy; how the policies are developed through working groups and what guidelines govern those as well as some of the tools and tips and tricks that many of our

communities find helpful and that we as staff obviously are always ready to help you out with.

Before I hand off to Thomas though, Nathalie, would you like to walk us through some of those tools that may be most relevant including today such as Adobe Connect?

Nathalie Peregrine: Of course. Thank you Mary. So this is Nathalie for the transcript. So first of all, welcome everyone to the Adobe Connect room. You've made it this far. So I figured that you are familiar with a few of the features here. My aim here is just to go over some of them you might not yet be comfortable with or that you might have questions.

First, the login page you've clearly mastered that because you're all here. However, don't be put off by the fact that the login page requires you for a password. This is only for staff members. So you're very welcome to enter as guests only. And this will give you the same rights as everyone else and then you'll hear the audio stream and be able to write things in the chat, et cetera.

Again, the hosting is only for ICANN staff. It is important however when you do sign in to use your first and your last name. This is because attendance is taken in these - in the GNSO Working Group calls and for other members to be able to identify you if you comment in the chat or if you raise your hand and only use your first name. It's important that people have an idea who is participating in the call.

Once you've made it into the Adobe Connect room (unintelligible). The most important thing to know how to do in my opinion is to enable the Adobe Connect room audio.

You're free as for any working group call to join via the telephone. Telephone information is included in the email invitation. However, sometimes it's a lot more practical to use your laptop or your computer.

All working group calls have got Adobe Connect room audio enabled. All you need to do every time is enable your own (unintelligible) to microphone. So to do that you would click on the telephone icon at the top of the Adobe Connect 2 tool bar and follow instructions from there.

If you have followed the instructions successfully as in by agreeing to everything that's been asked - it only takes a few seconds. You know you've been successful when the telephone icon becomes a microphone icon.

Once you've done that, you will be able to use your laptop microphone to speak into the call. Exactly the same as with you telephone once you take part in a working group call. It's essential to remember to mute yourself when not taking part.

So to do that you would click on the white hand - white arrow on the right hand side of the microphone icon. And this gives you the option to mute and un-mute.

If you do see for instance that your microphone has been muted, as you can see in the chat - in the attendance now we have Rudi's microphone muted. And it could be there for instance, I have muted a microphone because you haven't realized that you're providing (a little background noise) into the call.

If you want to speak then, it's very easy. You would just go back into the little white arrow on the right hand side of the microphone icon and un-mute yourself and you'll be free to speak. So no one is being forced muted in Adobe Connect room.

Next you have a chat so that everyone can see on the right hand bottom corner of the Adobe Connect room. It's important again here to have your first name and last name listed because we keep the chat. All the contents of the

public chat is archived and will be sent around to the list after the working group call exactly the same as the mp3 recording and the transcript will be.

And so it - however, if you do want to have private chats with either member of staff or another participant, all you need to do is to highlight a participant in the attendance list. And then you have a dropdown menu that asks you to start the private chat.

Those are not archived. Those chats remain completely private. So if for instance you want to provide a telephone number or you need to leave a call early and don't want to share your excuses with chair or the members of any of the member staff, you can do this individually. It's quite (an interesting trick).

Another way of communicating in the Adobe Connect room other than speaking or writing in the chat is to use the hand raise option. If you look at the top of the tool bar, you have a little white man with an arm raised. This is the hand raise option. This is standard procedure in a working group call as Mary is doing now. She's used the hand raise option. We can see in the attendance list the little icon next to her name.

Now raising a hand is standard procedure if you want to ask a question or say a comment into the call. This however does not give you immediate right to speak up. This simply puts you in a queue, so in a comment queue and signals to the chair of the call that you would like to express yourself. It is only once the chair calls you out by name that you're free to start speaking or ask a question.

Quite a normal important also is to remember to lower your hand. So you do the same thing. Go up to the icon on the top of the tool bar and lower your hand once you've finished your question or entered your comment because it signals to the chair that you are done and you don't wish to take part anymore for that - as in the item for instance.

And in the same dropdown menu with the raised hand, you - if you have a look now, you have several options to speak loud or speak softer, speed up, slow down. These aren't used frequently in the calls. You find it often just writing something in the chat is a lot easier to understand.

The ones which are used however are the green tick to agree and the red cross disagree. These can be used at any moment during the working group calls. That's no problem at all. They are also used quite conveniently by a chair as a simple polling tool.

For instance, to find out if anyone is available the following week like such as a working group call and if anyone agrees with the modifications made to a text. Any method of discussion can be cleared quickly with these icons.

So just check that everyone else but Rudi is following, could you please use the agree or disagree icon right now to signal if you think you're (handling) the (unintelligible) knowledge. Thank you (Sarah). Thank you Rudi. We're just missing (Noreen) and (Karen) to use the dropdown menu from the hand raise. It's terrible being a very small (class) like this; you get (two persons) called out by name. Okay. Thank you very much.

Please don't hesitate also if this was a little quick or if during another conference call you find you have difficulties or questions, you can always once again private chat us by highlighting our name in the chat or equally emailing us.

I'm going to in a few seconds put the GNSO Secretariat email address in the chat and you can email us with any question you have and we can also provide one to one training if you're still a little worried. Are there any questions about that right now? No. Perfect. In that case, thank you ever so much and I'll hand this back to Mary. Thank you.

Mary Wong: Thank you Nathalie for walking us through a very important tool that we use, as you mentioned, for every GNSO Working Group and other meetings too. Actually without further ado, I'm going to hand it over to Thomas who will take us through these various standard questions and topics. And Thomas, I think you have control of the slides. So it's all yours.

Thomas Rickert: Thanks so much Mary. And welcome everybody. Let me briefly introduce myself. My name is Thomas Rickert. I'm based in Germany and I'm a lawyer by profession, one of the many, many lawyers in the ICANN community I have to say.

Also I'm working with ECO, which is an Internet industry association in Germany with more than 800 members from more than 60 countries. So it's quite international. And I'm chairing a subgroup of industry associations where registries and registrars gather. So basically I'm taking care of the interests of the domain industry.

And having worked in the industry for 15 years or so now, a couple years back I thought I should take a more active role with ICANN, which is why I applied with the Nominating Committee for a position in the GNSO Council, which is the committee or the group that is the moderator or steward of the GNSO policymaking process.

And I'm now serving in my second term as a NonCom appointee. I'm allocated to the contracted party house and I have almost one more year to go. Now during that time I had the pleasure to work in a couple of ICANN working groups. That's where the policy's being made. And that was thought - was thought by at least a couple of folks would qualify me to guide you through these newcomers I've been asked.

As you would have seen when you accepted the invitation for this meeting, we're talking about the GNSO policy development process now. The GNSO

is the acronym for Generic Name Supporting Organization. So entering to the ICANN world is entering into a world of acronyms.

So don't be shy in case you do not know this or that acronym, I can tell you that people who have been working in the ICANN environment for many, many years don't know all the acronyms that ICANN has.

Luckily on the ICANN Web site there's now a mouse over functionality where you have an acronym helper and you should be using that. But during this call, please don't be shy and ask all the questions you might have.

The GNSO policy development process is dealing with policy development process for generic top-level domains. As you well know, we have two categories of domain names being the generic top-level domains and the country code top-level domains. And that's where - that would be the ccNSO, the Country Code Name Supporting Organization, which has its own procedures. So we're just focusing on generic names today.

You've seen in the overview of the questions that we're going to touch upon today that some issues have been highlighted that are usually subject of questions by people that are entering into this ICANN world. But should you have any other questions, please give me a signal in the chat or raise your hand as you've just learned from Nathalie or at the end of the session we will also find time for discussing these.

Now on the - in the Adobe Connect room, you find a visual characterization of the policy development process. And this looks actually quite nice and easy. But this process - this (vet) that I'm going to walk you through in the next couple of minutes usually takes at least a year.

The - let me start at the upper left of this graph. So what you see there is the request for an issue report. And that is needed before the former PDP, i.e., the policy development process is started.

So basically the task is to find out whether a certain question that has been raised or a certain problem that has been identified is actually within the (remit) of what ICANN can take care of. And even more so what the GNSO can take care of.

So let's say somebody had a question or a concern surrounding country code top-level domains, then we would easily be able to say that this is out of scope for the GNSO to make policy on.

Also, I should let you know that an issue report can be requested quite easily. It can be requested for example by the ICANN Board but it can also be requested by individual groups in the GNSO. And I think also by the Government Advisory Committee if I'm not mistaken.

So that's basically a report that helps to find out whether there's smoke or whether there's fire. And then - and this report is published and adopted by the GNSO Council, which is the manager of the policy development process as I mentioned earlier.

And then the working group actually picks up its work after the initial report is published for public comment. And you will see that gathering public comments is sort of a very fundamental theme of this policy development process because you see public comment periods and in a couple of instances on this graph.

And that's important because the whole community must have a say in ICANN's policy development. So the community is an important factor. Who is the community? That's maybe a question that you might have.

You don't have to be member of a specific group. You can be. You can be a representative of a company. You can be representative of a civil society group. But you can also comment as an individual.

So these public comments will be gathered and analyzed. Actually there is a - there's a thing which is called the public comment review tool where each and every public comment that is received during a public comment period, which usually takes 21 days plus a 21 day reply period is analyzed.

And a determination is made whether this comment covers something that's already been taken care of in the report or the paper or the work that is in - that is published for public comment or whether there's a new idea in there or whether an idea that's in the report needs to be altered to accurately reflect the wish of the community.

So that's a very important tool that we have for the policy development process. And it helps those that are engaged in the policy development process not to lose connection with the community and actually acting in the best interest of the global Internet community.

And having said that, public comments can only be as strong as the community taking care of it actually participates actively. So if you want to participate in the policy development process, one thing is to actively engage in the working group but also submitting comments, i.e., make yourself heard is an important measure to engage in the policy development process.

And I can tell you that this is actually a worthwhile exercise. There have been years in the early phase of ICANN where people said that file public comments they sort of disappear and never resurface. The opposite is the case at last today.

All public comments are being analyzed and they do have an impact. And I've seen reports that have been changed because an individual had a good idea and that actually went into the next version of the report.

So it is worthwhile participating in public comment period. Public comment periods can easily be found on the ICANN Web site because you find a section there where ICANN lists all the currently open public comment periods but also those that have recently closed.

For example, if you want to look at what has been submitted by the community on other policy areas where you don't find an open public comment period.

So please make use of that opportunity. The more people participate there the more accurately ICANN policy can reflect the wish of the global Internet community.

So after public comment have been received and analyzed, a final issues report is published. And after that, the GNSO Council will take a vote on the initiation of a policy development process and subsequently a working group is formed.

Actually the GNSO Council then sends out notifications to all stakeholder groups and constituencies and asks them for their input meaning for their initial view on the subject matter involved.

I think at this stage I should at least give you a very brief overview of what the stakeholder groups and constituencies are, abbreviate them as SOs and ACs and we have quite a few of them.

So in terms of the stakeholder groups, you should bear in mind that in the GNSO we have a bicameral structure. So there's a Contracted Parties House and the Non-Contracted Parties House. And you will remember that I mentioned earlier that as a NonCom appointee I'm allocated to the Contracted Parties House.

So I'm together with the registries, i.e., the registry operators for a couple of the domains and the registrars, i.e., those that offer domain registrations to registrants.

So that makes the Contracted Parties House. And then you have in there the Registries Stakeholder Group as they call them and the Registrars Stakeholder Group.

And in the Non-Contracted Parties House you find the Commercial Stakeholder Group and the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group and within those you find the Business Constituency, the Intellectual Property Constituency and the Internet Service Provider and Connectivity Provider Constituency, which make the Commercial Stakeholder Group.

And the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group consists of the NCUC, which is the Non-Commercial user Constituency and the NPOC, which is the Not for Profit Operational Concerns Constituency.

While I don't expect you to remember all that but actually if you go to the gnso.icann.org, you'll find the section about and that's where you find not only a graphical overview of the structure of the GNSO but also you'll find the respective groups representatives and the GNSO Council by name in case you wanted to contact them.

So all these groups are being reached out to in the GNSO but also beyond the GNSO. So ALAC, the At Large community is being reached out to. The Government Advisory Committee is reached out to. The Security and Stability Advisory Committee is being reach out to and the ASO is being reached out to.

So basically the whole ICANN community as we see it in the multi stakeholder model is asked for input. So the working group starts conducting

its work. It actually elects a chair. It holds regular meetings. They give themselves a work plan that they work along.

And they're trying to find solutions to the questions that they have been chartered with. And that actually can be found in the charter for the working group.

And after the working group has engaged in deliberations, they would usually file or draft an initial report with their preliminary findings and publish that for public comment.

So again, you see a public comment period where the community can make itself heard. And that sort of serves as a sanity check whether the working group has reflected all the arguments there might be in favor of or against certain policy recommendations. And the public comments are then being analyzed and incorporated into the working group's final report, which is then submitted to the GNSO Council.

But before it is submitted to the GNSO Council something happens, which we call a consensus call. So that's a very important factor of ICANN's community work that decisions at the community level are not made based on voting.

So - and the working group knows this won't be counted. But actually the working group chair regularly asks the working group members their view on certain policy recommendations. He also asks or she asks whether there are objections to certain recommendations. So the working group chair will sort of test the waters to see how well policy recommendations are supported within the working group.

And then the working group chair makes an assessment whether there is full consensus, rough consensus or a consensus that's used anonymously, whether there's strong support, significant opposition or whether there's divergence, i.e., the absence of consensus meaning that individual groups or

individuals in the working group have opposite views but they can't really come to a consensus position.

So it's important for the working group to have consensus. And if it has consensus, then actually this report is passed on to the GNSO Council and the GNSO Council discusses the report.

So the GNSO Council does not have the road to make its on policy but it's actually the steward or the manager of the policy development process. So they would make a determination as to whether proper process has been followed, whether all the arguments that should have been discussed have been adequately discussed.

And in case the Council comes to the conclusion that everything was properly taken care of, then most likely it will be adopted. And at the Council level actually a vote takes place. And if the vote in the GNSO Council has the required majority then the policy recommendation has been adopted by the GNSO Council and they're being passed on to the ICANN Board.

And yet there's another opportunity for the community to comment because the ICANN Board also publishes these recommendations for public comment. Then the ICANN Board takes a vote and actually the ICANN Board usually should accept policy recommendations that are coming out of the GNSO.

And they can only vote those down if the interest of the global ICANN community or of the global user community does not allow to do that meaning that if things actually contravene the interest of the user community, then the ICANN Board can vote down GNSO policy recommendations.

And after that the recommendations are being passed on to ICANN staff for implementation. And there's an optional implementation review team, which in my view is an opportunity that is to rarely used and which is not - I think which is not seen enough as a valuable tool. Because sometimes when you

have complex questions, the policy recommendations can't cover each and every detail of how a policy shall be implemented.

And the policy recommendation should not have that detail. So what does that mean? It means that ICANN staff when they have to actually operationalize certain requirements, they have to write papers or do technical implementations to reflect those policy recommendations.

And at times there are questions as to what the working group originally meant when they came up with policy recommendations when there's uncertainty as to how policy recommendations should be implemented.

And for those cases it's very valuable to have an implementation review team that would follow and if need be advise the implementation process on what the views of the policymaking procedure actually were.

I'd like to give you an example on that. We're now in the phase of introducing new generic top-level domains, as you well all know. And the policy recommendations that were made at the time have been adopted in 2008.

And who would have expected at the time when the policy recommendations were made that these would be transformed into an applicant guidebook, which is a couple of hundred pages long?

So certainly the policy recommendations have been much more concise and briefer. They have to be filled with life by staff who - that has been writing the applicant guidebook. And no doubt there came situations where the community then frowned upon ICANN staff determinations and said well, this was not actually what the policy development intended to do.

And this is why there are debates at times as to what is implementation, i.e., what can ICANN staff do at its own discretion and at what point in time does

ICANN staff need to go back to the community to ask for clarification or even for more policy development work when it comes to areas of doubt.

I could go into some specific details if you want me to. I think you should give me a time and but for the sake of saving time, I think I should move to the next slide.

But your takeaway message from this slide should be that public comment is one of the very, very valuable tools that we have in the policymaking; that you should try and participate in an ICANN PDP working group.

You don't have to be the chair for the first working group that you're engaging in. But you can participate and absorb the atmosphere and I think that could be a very nice experience for you because usually these debates are very thorough and very interesting; certainly conditional to you being interested in the subject matter that's being worked on.

So this basically sums up what I've showed you through - during the last slide. So during the policy development process the constituencies and stakeholder groups are being asked for their views. The advisory committees and supporting organizations are asked for their views very early in the process.

We have both an initial report as well as a final report all of which are or both of which are subject to public comment. And also, if you've missed the public comment period for a PDP or for a document in the PDP, you shouldn't worry too much. As I mentioned, there is a public comment period usually of 21 days and then there's a reply period.

Now usually the - or this reply period is intended to give the opportunity to reply to other people's comments. But in fact this is used by many to make the first comment and so can you. So if you've missed the first 21-day period, you can still submit your comments during the reply period if you want to.

Now here you find some links to look at the ICANN bylaws. Actually the Annex A of the ICANN bylaws speaks to the issue of policy development in the GNSO. There's also a PDP manual. And then the PDP overview is sort of the easy reader version of the documents that are linked to in the first two links.

I think it's an interest read if you want to engage in this. If you have great weather outside, you should go outside and enjoy yourself. So this is more something for cloudy and rainy days I guess because it's not so overwhelmingly entertaining that you should spend nice or spend an excellent day behind the computer and read those documents.

Now let's talk a little bit about the - about consensus policies and the picket fence. And to be quite honest, this is something that I feel strongly with a quite a bit and it took me a while to get my head around this.

At the time when I started getting an interest in ICANN, there were no such newcomer seminars. And therefore, I think you have a good opportunity to learn something much quicker than we did because we had to ask other individuals each and every time we didn't know something.

Now consensus policies are a very interesting and unique legal tool. What does that mean? Consensus policy is basically something that you can impose on all contracted parties in one go.

Usually if you want to change a contract - let's say you rent an apartment and your landlord wants to change the parameters of the lease contract, he would need to or she would need to talk to you and change the contract. Now let's assume this landlord has a couple of hundred flats. Then he or she would need to talk to all of the tenants and renegotiate the contract.

Now let's transfer this to the domain industry. What's being done in the ICANN world is - or more specifically in the GNSO world is that rules are being developed that should be applicable for the whole industry.

So the Generic Name Supporting Organization has established rules on domain names can be transferred, how you can dispute an illegal transfer of the domain name.

The Whois data remind that policy where you're asked to check whether your contact details that are publicized in the Whois are still accurate. Go back to GNSO consensus policy. And now imagine that ICANN will shortly have hundreds of registries that have contracts with ICANN and they have hundreds of registrars that have contracts with ICANN.

It would be an administrative nightmare to go to all these targets and ask them to renegotiate their contracts. And even worse some of them would say well, I have a contract that's going to last for another four years let's say so I'm not going to renegotiate now. We can talk about amendments to the contract when my contract is up for renewal.

And consensus policies are a tool that facilitate this process and make it so much easier for ICANN and to the benefit of the global Internet community to bring about changes because once a consensus policy is adopted, they have to be followed by all contracted parties without the requirement to change individual contracts. Because all the contracted parties have provisions in their contracts whereby they have to follow whatever consensus policy is coming out of the ICANN policy development process.

And I think that's unique and that's a great tool for ICANN to have. It's saving cost and also it ensures that certain standards that are primarily in place to protect registrants and to provide for universal applicability of certain procedures, i.e., creation, transfer or deletion of domain names that they're

followed by all companies where you can purchase domain names. So I think that's a nice thing.

So let's try to remember that ICANN accredited registrars and registries they are bound by ICANN contracts and you find them at the link you see on the screen. And a consensus policy is something that all the registries and registrars have to follow without the need to change their contract.

So let's talk a little bit about the picket fence. But first of all I think I should also share the content of this slide with you because consensus policies have to be within a certain spectrum.

And that is that the policy should not reasonably restrain competition and the policies need to be related to the three points that you find on the screen. And I'm not going to read them out for you.

But it's basically parameters to ensure that, as I said, the technical handling of domain names is the same all around the world and that domain disputes for example are being dealt with according to the same standards. And these consensus policies then have to be followed by all contracted parties.

The picket fence. Now you see a picture of the picket fence on the screen. And actually I was wondering quite some time what this picket fence had to do with domain names because it's not even, you know, domain names are not tangible. So what does a picket fence have to do with that?

So the idea is basically that the contract parties say, and they have to agree to that in their contract, that they will accept those consensus policies as long as they are within the picket fence.

So whenever something is required as an industry standard so to speak in the domain industry, that can be within the picket fence but things like the term of the contract, the commercial parameters, i.e., the fees that registries

and registrars have to pay to - have to pay to ICANN that's something where the registries and registrars rightfully say that that's up to the contracting parties to negotiate with ICANN. Therefore they don't want the community to get involved with that.

So when it comes to policymaking often the question is discussed is this a subject that's within the picket fence or is it without the picket fence or outside the picket fence. And if it is inside the picket fence, then it's a subject that can be dealt with by means of GNSO policymaking resulting in the consensus policy, resulting in contractually binding obligations for the contracted parties.

And if it's outside the picket fence, then the ICANN GNSO community can't develop policy on that that would end up in consensus - in the consensus policy.

So if you want to read about consensus policies, this is the link that you should follow. And let's talk a little bit about GNSO working group guidelines.

You will remember that when I took quite some time to show you through the (vet) that we saw earlier on the screen, I did that intentionally because now you will already have a learning in fact because many of the things that we're going to discuss now you will already remember because you've heard them a few minutes back.

So we have working group guidelines that's basically established the rules for working groups. I think that's an important factor to provide for openness and transparency of the working groups' work.

And the main elements of that are that during the first meeting the working group has to elect a chair. They have to talk about the members' roles and responsibilities. They can create sub teams. They can do briefings. They can reach out to subject matter experts. They can even reach out to, and they

should do so, to ICANN legal to check whether the recommendations that they're working on are actually compliant.

The working group guidelines speak to the issue of process integrity but behavior so there are some rules on how people should work together in working groups in order to ensure that everybody is treated with the required respect. And there's a standard for those used for decision-making.

I mentioned that to you earlier that working groups are based on the principle of consensus finding, which results in a determination by the working group chair whether consensus is there or what level of consensus is there or if there's absence of consensus.

And it may well be that individual working group members or multiple working group members come to the conclusion that the working group chair has failed to adequately assess the consensus level inside the working group. And then there's actions or possibility to appeal against that.

There is information about communication collaboration tools. Primarily that would be telephone, email or calls and remote participation tools such as the Adobe Connect room that you see here. And also production output that would primarily be reports and recommendations.

So as I mentioned earlier, the decision making process inside the working groups is also enshrined in the appropriate documentation. The chair is responsible for determining the level of support. And that's actually a hard part because voting would be easier. Consensus policy - consensus determination is not always that easy and it's an iterative process.

So it's the responsibility of the chair to reach out to the working group members every now and then and see whether they are in support or against certain recommendations that the group is working on.

And by asking for the consensus level as the work is going on, the working group chair can then try to navigate the group towards a consensus position. So that's usually an iterative process because the - it very rarely happens that all working group members are of the same opinion and support of the same proposals.

Quite the opposite is the case because you have commercial interests potentially conflicting with non-commercial interests. You have diverging views between those that have contracts with ICANN and those that are independent of ICANN particularly when it comes to commercial parameters.

So it - consensus is the aim. It's not always easy to achieve. But this model is designed to get people to work together and find consensus positions. So if you have everybody agreeing to certain policy recommendations that would be full consensus. So that's the highest level of consensus.

But then you would have consensus or rough consensus. You have strong support but significant opposition, i.e., you know, good chunk of the working group members and the groups that they represent being in favor of certain recommendations but still quite a few people that are against it and divergence would be the absence of consensus.

And then you have minority view, which is an opportunity for those that have been against the consensus position to make themselves heard, i.e., they can submit statements where they explain why they think that certain policy recommendations that have reached consensus in a working group are not a good idea. And they can then have that added and implemented into the working group's final report.

And so their view will also be heard at the Council level and even at the Board level. And this is very well possible that other community members find the argument convincing and that maybe something is changed as a consequence of the minority view.

These links will actually lead you to the documents where all of this is laid down in greater detail. And let's close with a couple of tips and tricks. So this is a collection of some links for you.

I mentioned earlier in the call that at gns0.icann.org you find all relevant materials for the GNSO's work. So on the front page of that section of the ICANN Web site you usually find some latest news. You find the master calendar with all the meetings of the various working groups and the GNSO Council.

So if you want to listen in or participate you can find out what's going on in the GNSO community there. And if you click on a - on the link there, you can even go to the master calendar where all the meetings of the GNSO community are being listed.

So you can even go back in history and find out what working group or the working groups or the GNSO Council have discussed a couple of years back. And you would find direct links to mp3s and transcripts of the respective meetings.

Also what I think is interesting there is that you find a list of currently ongoing projects and their completion status. So you can exactly see in what status of the (vet) that we've seen earlier - the PDP effort is.

There is a GNSO one on one, which is sort of an - which is introductory material for those who want to acquaint themselves with ICANN or with the GNSO.

Yes. I applauded ICANN for establishing the acronym helper at the very beginning of this call. So you find that on the GNSO Web site as well. There are a couple of Wikis, which are very handy because they provide all the

documents, all the background material, all the presentations, all the transcripts and mp3s in one place.

So if you want to get aggregated information about individual working groups, go to the Wiki section of the GNSO site and you find everything very, very handy in one place.

ICANN Learn is an interactive learning platform with different chapters where you can teach yourself about how ICANN works. And last but not least, talk to other community members or talk to ICANN's excellent Policy Staff.

You know, I've never seen anybody who refused to answer my question. So I think you are lucky to be interested in a very welcoming environment. And I think you will be received with open arms wherever you go. And the people are happy to share their information with you.

And you would be surprised that even experience community members don't know everything. So it may well be that you ask them a question and they need to refer you on to somebody else.

So I guess that's pretty much it. Again, ICANN Policy Staff is always well informed and willing to help so reach out to them. You've seen the pictures earlier on. So there's no way for them to hide at an ICANN meeting. So that's pretty much it. And I'd like to hand back over to Mary.

Mary Wong: Thank you Thomas. That was extremely clear with a lot of detail that, you know, certainly from my perspective is going to be very, very helpful. We can open it up in the last few minutes for questions, comments or suggestions. I see that there's folks typing all sorts of compliments to you Thomas in the chat room. Thank you on Thomas' behalf.

Does anybody have any specific questions either about what Thomas spoke on or generally about the GNSO? Rudi, I see your hand is up. Go ahead.

Rudi Vansnick: Thank you Mary. Rudi Vansnick for the transcript. Maybe Thomas, yes, thanks. Great work. It's the second time that I'm joining this. I'm already a long time in ICANN and working on third year in GNSO.

But maybe it would be good if you could give some specific ideas - domains in which people could start working if they're interested in working in working group giving them some guidelines of topics that would allow them to step in in an easy way.

And I have not an immediate view on a working group that I would highlight but maybe it's a good idea to give them some ideas about working group they could join in the early stage now and lean how it goes.

Thomas Rickert: Thanks Rudi and thanks for your kind words. I think that pretty much depends on the area of interest for the respective community member. For those that are interested in Internet governance topics in general, I think this is a very, very interesting time given the announcement by the U.S. Government that they are considering to transfer the IANA stewardship.

And that context ICANN has started or is in the process of starting to cross community working groups. That's not only GNSO activity but that's, as the word says, cross community. So it's covering various communities. But there's one dealing with the technical aspect of the IANA stewardship transition. And then there is one dealing with accountability issues.

And while not everybody can become a member of that working group, the working group is open for participants that wish to join. So if you were interested in that, I think this is a historical chance for the global community to make the multi stakeholder model more sustainable and more robust and provide more independence for ICANN. So I think that's an utmost interesting subject.

There will be several - I guess several PDPs coming our way with respect to Whois. You know, Whois is the central - or not always center but in general the central database where all the registrants' data and the other data for administrative context and technical context are stored.

And Whois has been an issue for many, many years because Whois data is not always accurate and new ways are being looked at on how data on registrants and the technical information, i.e., the name service can be aggregated and made available.

So if you are interested in that, if you're interested in data protection, I think you should watch out for Whois related policy development that's going to start. Mary, maybe you can - maybe you can help with some other interesting subjects that we could recommend.

At the moment there's one policy development process that deals with opening up curative rights protection mechanisms, i.e., giving opportunities for IGOs meaning international governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross for example to tackle illegitimate domain registrations and abusive usage of domain registrations because they can't always use the existing policies, which are the UDRP and the URS.

So these are a couple of examples on what I would find interesting but Mary, please speak up if you have other ideas where people could or should join.

Mary Wong: Thanks Thomas. I guess, you know, you've covered a lot of the ground that I would have covered if asked the question. I think the main point there is what you said at the beginning, which is it really depends on your interest as an individual or as part of the organization that you represent.

What I've put in the chat are links to first of all the GNSO working groups and secondly to the two cross community working groups on broader Internet governance questions that Thomas mentioned.

And Thomas also mentioned that we keep all the records; so every transcript of every working group meeting. So one of the things that I think is also important to emphasize here is that if you're interested in a subject but the working group has already begun work, don't worry. You can join at any time. This is part of the transparency here at ICANN that you can join a working group at any point in time in its process.

The only thing that everyone asks of new joiners, not newcomers, but new joiners to the working group is that they make full use of the Wiki and the background documentation to catch up.

And as Thomas said, any time anyone has a question and this could be a question. You could email me or any of my colleagues and say, you know, I thought this particular working group that I found at GNSO Web page is interesting. What do you think? And we would be very happy to guide you in the right direction.

So start by thinking about what you're interested in. Don't be afraid to join at any time. And the last thing I will say Thomas is that before every ICANN meeting and on a regular basis, we also produce briefing materials, which are short one or two page documents on each of the ongoing projects.

And I can find the link and post it in the chat as well. And that may be a good way on top of looking at the Web page to familiarize yourself with some of the issues that we're dealing with at the moment. So hopefully this is helpful.

Thomas Rickert: Are there any more questions? I see none. And please do reach out to us should you have some more questions after the call. But I think with that we're more or less done, aren't we Mary.

Mary Wong: I think so. And I think you've covered all that ground. And thank you for the applause Rudi. Thomas, I think that's for you. And Rudi I note that you said in the chat not to be shy. We've all been newcomers at one time. And certainly I can identify with that.

As I mentioned early on in the chat, I started as a community member several years before I joined ICANN staff and I did not have the benefit of any of these Webinars or background materials. So as a staff member now, I very much hope that you will find them useful, you will reach out to us and we will try and help you in any way we can because we really want you to feel welcome as part of the ICANN and GNSO community.

So Thomas, I think it remains for me to thank you again and to thank everyone for taking the hour to join us today. And to I guess end this session until the next open house and Webinar.

Thomas Rickert: Thanks so much Mary. Thanks everybody. Have a great day. Bye-bye.

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