

BOARD READINESS

During the 2023 GNSO Council Strategic Planning Session, the GNSO Council agreed that it should seek to limit the likelihood of the Council approving PDP recommendations that the ICANN Board is ultimately unable to adopt. To that end, the Council discussed the desire to ensure it submits “board-ready policy recommendations” to the Board, to the extent possible.

What does it mean for policy recommendations to be board ready?

A policy recommendation is considered board ready when:

- The recommendation is likely to achieve board adoption, i.e., the recommendation has been approved by a GNSO Supermajority Vote and will most likely be considered by the Board to be in the best interests of ICANN Community and ICANN org.

Which elements of the PDP continuum help contribute to board readiness?

- The GNSO Council has confirmed the relevant steps of the Policy Development Process, which are specifically designed to ensure **ICANN Board awareness**, have been followed, e.g., pre-Issue Report Board outreach, initial ICANN community input, public comment periods, assignment of Board liaisons, ICANN org liaisons, GAC quick look mechanism, letter to GAC re: affect on public policy, et al.
- In addition to the PDP-mandated steps, the GNSO Council, where appropriate, uses both informal and formal meetings with the ICANN Board to assist in familiarizing the Board with draft policy recommendations, particularly potential recommendations which could benefit from early feedback from the Board.
- Further to the above, the GNSO Council ensures the Board, or a subset of the Board, possesses a general awareness of the meaning and intention of the policy recommendation(s), i.e., the policy recommendation(s) will not cause surprise.

Given recent occasions where the ICANN Board did not adopt GNSO-approved policy recommendations, what efforts have Working Groups and/or the GNSO Council made to mitigate the likelihood of non-adoption in the future?

- The addition of **board liaisons** to PDP Working Groups is a relatively new practice and is designed to increase designated board members’ familiarity with and comprehension of

the proposed policy recommendations. Additionally, during the course of PDP deliberations, the board liaisons are encouraged to flag specific concerns the board may have. Ideally, the board liaisons are requested to flag objectionable recommendations in the Initial Report, in advance of the Working Group's publication of its Final Report, or prior to the GNSO Council's consideration of the policy recommendations. Recent PDP and EPDP Working Groups have requested board liaisons in an effort to enhance board familiarity with GNSO policy recommendations.

- The more fulsome integration of **ICANN org liaisons** into PDP Working Groups is also a relatively new practice. While there have been ICANN org liaisons for many years, it has been made abundantly clear that the liaisons should feel welcomed to identify any issues that might impact the implementation and operation of any recommendations. Furthermore, some recent PDP/EPDPs have established checkpoints where ICANN org feedback is specifically sought, which has generally taken place when the preliminary recommendations are considered stable (e.g., just prior to or during the publication of the Initial Report). This sort of feasibility analysis can be an important factor during the ICANN Board's assessment of the recommendations.
- The addition and increased frequency of **informal meetings between the ICANN Board and GNSO Council** has created a channel under which a subset of board members and GNSO Council members are able to discuss potential issues with policy recommendations (et al.) prior to the Council's consideration of the recommendations. This enhancement has proved beneficial to the Board and Council in working through difficult policy issues in a constructive and expedient manner with the ultimate goal of eliminating the potential for surprises, i.e., a subset of the ICANN Board should be familiar with the policy recommendations prior to the Council's consideration of them. These informal meetings have helped create a culture shift between the ICANN Board and Council, that avoiding surprises is mutually beneficial for developing policy and working through issues that may arise.
- The **overall effectiveness and efficiency of a PDP Working Group** may also impact the quality of recommendations and the likelihood of achieving "board ready" recommendations. In this respect, the work to identify challenges and issues from previous PDP Working Groups and the ensuing enhancements, from **PDP 3.0** and from action items found on the **GNSO PDP Improvements Tracker** [wiki page](#), can all play some collective role in improving how recommendations are developed.