Board Readiness

For Council Meeting

18 Sep 2025

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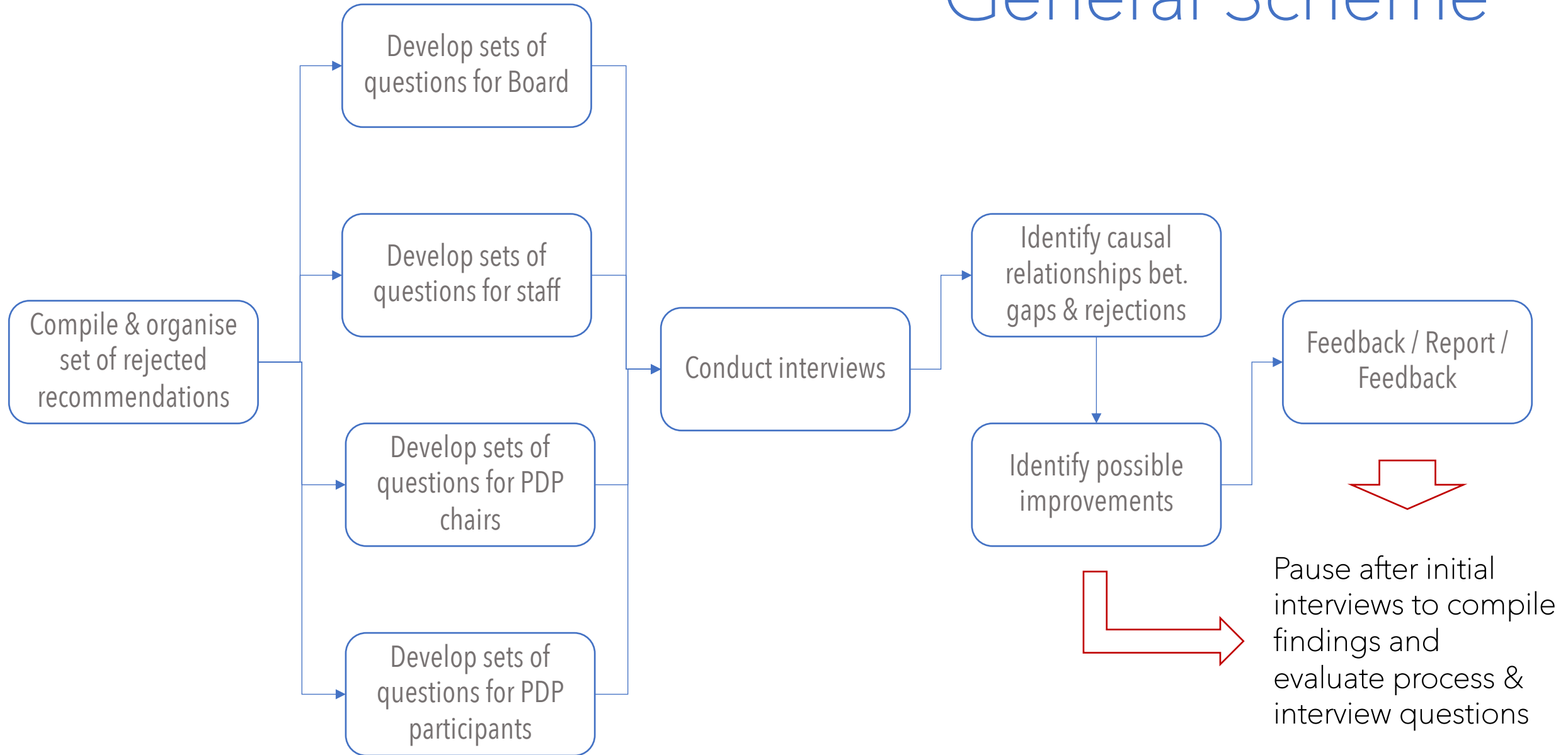- Kurt Pritz   UTC +10

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Mission / Scope

Perform a study that will inform the improvement or creation of policy development practices that will improve the Board readiness of GNSO policy recommendations,

where

Board readiness is measured by the likelihood that GNSO policy recommendations will be readily adopted by the ICANN Board.

General Scheme

Compile & organise set of rejected recommendations

- Develop sets of questions for Board
- Develop sets of questions for staff
- Develop sets of questions for PDP chairs
- Develop sets of questions for PDP participants

Conduct interviews

Identify causal relationships bet. gaps & rejections

Identify possible improvements

Feedback / Report / Feedback

Pause after initial interviews to compile findings and evaluate process & interview questions

Some Program Notes

- Everyone volunteering became a member of our team

- Each of the 22 interviewees received an information packet providing:

  o   An introduction to the program

  o   A brief, historical summary of the PDP

  o   A summary of the Board's reasoning for rejecting recommendations

  o   A list of question to be asked (and were explored in depth in the interviews)

- There were several controls (i.e., feedback loops) incorporated into the program:

  o   Interviewees reviewed notes

  o   There were trial interviews to test the questions

  o   Questions were tailored to each PDP

  o   The Team critically reviewed (interview-by-interview) the Findings of the study

How to Read the Report

- *Management Summary* is just that.

- *Introduction* describes the methodology and provides some user notes.

- *Findings* are the facts and opinions of the interviewees, grouped by topic. Generally, one or more interview questions are dedicated to each topic.

- *Recommendations* are derived from the Findings and grouped in approximately the same fashion. Many recommendations are inter-relater or overlap.

- Recommendations are worded succinctly to aid in implementation.
The *Rationale* describes the link to the Findings and the reasoning supporting the Recommendation.

Two Major findings

1   Rejections occur because the PDP team objectives
differ from the Board objectives
(e.g., reaching consensus vs compliance with the Bylaws and fiduciary duties)

2   The PDP teams and the Board often base their decisions
on different sets of information

- *operational & cost details*
- *staff reports*
- *GAC & ALAC inputs*
- *legal advice*

While there are many other Findings, nearly all the recommendations go to solving these two issues.

Another Finding of Note

Board rejection and the subsequent, constructive back and forth discussion with the community is a sign of a healthy organization, however

Rejection of hard-fought consensus can come across as antithetical and ultimately harmful to the well-being of the multistakeholder model, especially in areas where the community is not convinced the Board was correct in its positions.

While we have gotten better at post-rejection processes,
we might be creating a disaffected portion of our targeted community

Other Findings have to do with:

- The Board Liaison role

- How the Board receives information (and how it differs from information the PDP team receives)

- Expertise – what the PDP teams have and lack

- Implementability as a factor for consideration

- Representative vs Open models

- Charters

- Handling GAC and ALAC Advice

Recommendations

Includes duties for the PDP Teams and the Board, for example

The PDP team and the Board should have the same set objectives, or "walk in each other's shoes":

a. The PDPs must take on the Board's duties to ensure compliance with the Bylaws, implementability, and its fiduciary duty to the organization, and

b. The Board must pay due deference to the hard-won results of the multi-stakeholder deliberations and consensus-based decisions.

Recommendations cover:

- Ensuring the PDP Team has
    - the same legal and operational advice as the Board (think ODPs & Bylaws)
    - timely Board determinations
    - access to identical sets of information as the Board

- The role of the Board & Board Liaison to deliver information and feedback

- Handling GAC and ALAC Advice

- Charters

- Team composition, training for Chairs

Next Steps

Deeper dive and Q&A in Dublin

Discussion of implementation planning / strategy

Thank You