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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALAC Feedback on the Invitation to Provide Input for PDP 3.0 Implementation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed implementation documents for PDP 3.0.

The ALAC appreciates proposed reforms to the PDP process that may make the process more effective and efficient in achieving outcomes. However, concern was expressed that the "reforms" suggested by the PDP 3.0 could be used to actually limit the participation by the ALAC / At-Large Community. In striving for timely, inclusive, productive and broad-based participation in PDP 3.0, the ALAC wish to share some feedback with the GNSO Council.

Selection of WG Model

The proposed Improvement #2 suggests 3 models from which the GNSO Council (or the PDP Team Charter drafting team) would select, subject to rationale and arguments for their selection and presumably based on a pre-determined set of elements. The ALAC believes that membership and participation in a WG should be limited only in VERY specific situations. The current Open Model clearly was problematic in the Registration Directory Service (RDS) Review and perhaps would be in the EPDP on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data, but it has served us well in many other PDPs, so any decision to depart from it under regular circumstances will lead us back to the Task Force model that was abandoned for good reasons after the first GNSO Organizational Review over ten years ago. Therefore we propose the default should be the Open Model and that the GNSO Council (or the PDP Team Charter drafting team) should always be called upon to explicitly address why their selection should not be the Open Model.

In the case of the Open Model and the Representative & Open Model where participation is open to anyone, we suggest that a process be put in place for a periodic reminder (or invitation) be issued to persons who had volunteered to be WG members but do not appear to be actively turning up for calls or contributing on mailing lists to renew their Statement of Participation (see: proposed Improvement #1) failing which, they could opt to become observers instead. We think this would assist in ensuring active engagement by WG participants.

Encouraging Compromise and Cooperation

Regardless of the WG Model selected, we do need better ways to ensure compromise and cooperation among WG participants. This aspect does not appear to have been considered within the proposed implementation documents and we hope to see some developments on this in the near future.

WG Leadership Selection

We are concerned about a lack of considered improvements to the selection of WG Leadership as such selection is critical to the success of a PDP. WG leader(s) MUST be able to do the job, and must be able to do it without bias or vested interest in the outcomes. That has been a major issue in previous successes and failures.

Better Support to Facilitate Broad-Based Participation

The GNSO Review of 2014 recognised the need for the GNSO WGs to more broadly reflect the ICANN community and made several recommendations to achieve those ends. Specifically, its first three recommendations - grouped together under the heading “participation and representation” - recommended that the GNSO develop outreach strategies for new WG membership, a drive to recruit volunteers for new WGs and remove any cost barriers to participation in GNSO WGs.

While there are no specific cost barriers to direct participation in GNSO WG, indirectly, there are costs. Almost all ALAC and At-Large Community members are volunteers, and their participation in WG is generally not related to their employment. Therefore participation in WGs does represent a loss - either of time with family and friends or loss of holiday time since many such “volunteers” use their holiday leave to attend ICANN meetings and/or WG meetings.

We also ask that the GNSO recognise and take into account the barriers others, including ALAC and At-Large Community members face in participation in WGs. Those barriers include lack of technical knowledge on the issue, language barriers, geographical barriers (making the time of WG calls very difficult for “the other half” of the globe), and the fact that ALAC and At-Large Community members are volunteers; time taken to understand and participate in WGs is time away from paid employment and/or family.

Thus, the GNSO could help ensure more participation by members of the At-Large Community through steps such as:

- Providing webinars (to accommodate different time zones) to explain the issues to be considered
- Providing webinars in different languages
- In the webinars, either have a technical expert to explain in simple terms the issues to be addressed, or have a separate webinar specifically to provide background information on the issue to be considered.

Request for Data Gathering

We are supportive of the proposed Improvement #14 in its aims to not only clarify the criteria for data gathering at the charter drafting phase or during the working phase of a PDP, but also to optimise flexibility for the same as we recognise the value of possessing relevant data to aid the drawing of conclusions in a PDP.

In conclusion, the ALAC would welcome the opportunity to work with the GNSO for reforms to the PDP that encourage and support broad-based participation which upholds ICANN's mission as a truly multistakeholder organisation.