

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

What is the GAC?

Advisory Committee: advise the ICANN Board on issues relating to public policy development.

National governments and distinct economies (172 members and 36 observers)

Multinational governmental and treaty organizations

Role of the GAC

ICANN Bylaws, Art. XI, Section 2, § 1

“consider and provide advice on the activities of ICANN as they relate to concerns of governments, particularly matters where there may be an interaction between ICANN's policies and various laws and international agreements or where they may affect public policy issues.”

How does the GAC interact with ICANN?

- Board notifies the GAC of proposal raising public policy issues.
- GAC put issues to the Board directly by way of comment, advice, recommending action, new policy development, or revision to existing policies.
- ICANN Board determines to take an action that is not consistent with GAC advices Board informs the GAC and state its reasons.
- Seek a mutually acceptable solution.
- If no solution can be found, Board to state in its final decision the reasons why the GAC advice was not followed.

How does the GAC work?

- 3 meetings/year where it discusses issues with the ICANN Board and other ICANN SO/AC and other groups.
- Non-voting liaison to the ICANN Board and the ICANN Nominating Committee (liaison to other SO/ACs possible)
- Mailing lists and Conference calls
- Website: <https://gacweb.icann.org>
- 6 UN languages + Portuguese for meetings
- Travel support for up to 30 participants per meeting
- Independent GAC secretariat and ICANN Policy Staff

Inter-Sessional Work and Working Groups - GAC Participation in Working Groups

Internal GAC Working Groups

- Groups created to address GAC internal matters and coordinated by a GAC topic lead. GAC WG:
- Under-served Regions
- Public Safety
- Protection of Geographic Names
- GAC GNSO early engagement
- Human rights and international Law



Joint Working Groups

- Cross Constituency leaders and membership
- Examples of JWGs:
 - GNSO-GAC: GAC-GNSO Consultation Group on GAC Early Engagement in GNSO PDP



Coordination Working Groups

- Wide representation from all community stakeholders
- Examples of CGs:
 - IANA Stewardship Transition Coordination Group – ICG
 - IANA Stewardship Transition Cross Community Working Group – CCWG
 - ICANN Accountability & Governance Cross Community Group – CCG
 - ICANN Accountability & Governance Coordination Group – CG



What is a Communiqué?

First Communiqué in Singapore in 1999

GAC Operating Principle 51:

“After a private meeting has been held, the Chair may issue a communiqué to the Media, such Communiqué having been approved by the GAC beforehand.”

- “Communiqué” is a commonly understood term when governments meet
- An official announcement, especially one made to the media (Oxford English Dictionary definition)
- A useful purpose for both GAC and ICANN:
 - A clear statement, on the public record, of what GAC worked on and agreed to at its face-to-face meeting
 - It is the main vehicle – but not the only one – for GAC to provide advice to the ICANN Board on public policy aspects of ICANN’s activities

The Parts of a Communiqué

- **Details of meetings with other ICANN constituencies** – such as the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) and Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)
- **Internal GAC matters** – such as new Secretariat arrangements
- **GAC advice to the ICANN Board**

Identifying Issues For a Communiqué

- Through inter-sessional discussions in the lead-up to a face-to-face meeting
- Through a robust agenda-setting process
- In discussions at the meeting
- In response to new issues that emerge

GAC Agreement (GAC Principles)

- The key issue in reaching agreement is
 - **the GAC operates via consensus**
 - this is reflected in **GAC Operating Principle 47**

Consistent with UN practice, consensus is understood to mean the **practice of adopting decisions by general agreement in the absence of any formal objection**

- **Where consensus is not possible, the Chair shall convey the full range of views expressed by members to the ICANN Board**

GAC

- <https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/Governmental+Advisory+Committee>