
ICANN81 | AGM – How it Works: ICANN Policy
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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: This session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior and ICANN community anti-harassment policy. During this session, questions and comments will only be read aloud in the proper form which I have noted in the chat. Interpretation for this session will include languages English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Turkish. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English. And please speak at a reasonable pace to allow proper interpretation.

And our tech support, please upload the slides for this session. And before the slides are on the screen, I would like to introduce our guests and my colleagues from policy team, Carlos Reyes and Ozan Sahin. They know everything how policy works, absolutely. But they are here to help us to understand how policy works. So please ask questions. Let's make this session interactive and let's find out this important pillar of ICANN or how it works and how important it is and how you all can be engaged. And without further ado, Carlos, the floor is yours.

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CARLOS REYES:

Thank you, Siranush. And hello, everyone. My name is Carlos Reyes, as Siranush mentioned. I'll be speaking with you today along with my colleague Ozan about policy development at ICANN.

Usually what I like to do when we have the session is just get a sense of what you already know. And I know some of you have maybe had some exposure to ICANN and others are newer. That's totally fine. But that level setting will help us better direct our comments and answer your questions.

As Siranush mentioned, we really want this to be interactive. We have some slides that will provide some information. Thank you. But we do prefer the interaction with you from your questions.

So I guess to start off with, can anyone share what they already understand about ICANN's policy mission or how it transpires or anything that you know about policy and ICANN? So whatever you feel comfortable sharing.

DANA CRAMER:

Policy is supposed to be bottom-up multi-stakeholder and it will involve all different communities and constituencies within ICANN to ensure a lot of eyes are on it before it is implemented.

CARLOS REYES:

That is a very tight, high-level description. So thank you. Yes, that's accurate. Any other comments about what ICANN policy is and isn't?

OLUBUSAYO MARY BALOGUN: Just to add to what she said, the policies are usually approved by the ICANN board, and if there is no consensus, then it's sent back to the various constituencies so that they can look into it, maybe with the issue, and then it's sent back. Thank you.

CARLOS REYES: Yes, that's also true. The board approves policies developed by the ICANN community, and if there's no consensus, the board typically doesn't approve them. Any other comments? Yes.

ABDULRAHMAN ABOTALEB: Well, I think it's simply get the policy or the issue from the community of ICANN through the sub-organizations, and go put them up to the board of directors, and they get, like, advices and advisory from the advisory committees, and if it's accepted, they were reflected to the organization to implement it. Thank you.

CARLOS REYES: I'm glad you mentioned advice, because that's a separate, I mean, it's part of the ICANN community, but you're right. Advice is separate from policy recommendations, but it's also treated by the board as a community developed, and they do consider it. So, we will talk about advice. Thank you for flagging that. Any other comments? Okay, over here, and then we'll go back over here.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: So, everyone, I think, I believe, has a chance to contribute in a policy. However, a supporting, the supporting organization is responsible to draft the policies, and then the advisory committee will raise it to the ICANN board, which will give its final inputs and recommendations.

CARLOS REYES: So, we're getting into some of the nuance in terms of the SOs, the supporting organizations develop the policies, and then the advisory committees can provide input on those policies. So, very good. We will talk about the differences there. Yes.

OLUBUSAYO MARY BALOGUN: Again, for the record, and just to say, once the policies are approved, it has been implemented by ICANN org, which is a staff, and then, yeah, thank you.

CARLOS REYES: And yes, so, we've gone through a little bit of the policy and advice lifecycle. Ultimately, they're implemented by the ICANN organization.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: And we have one of the fellows who is participating, who participates virtually. Saba Tiku, you have your turn. Please unmute yourself.

SABAH TIKU BEYENE: Thank you very much, Siranush. Hello, everyone. I'm Saba Tiku, ICANN 81 fellow. So, for me, what really stands out to me about the ICANN's

policy approach is really the focus on the multi-stakeholder model, meaning that anyone with a stake in the internet from the government to technical experts and to everyday users can have a say. So, it's like a powerful model because it's reflected the fact that the internet impacts every one of us and everyone. So, no single group can have all the answers. So, it really involves a range of voices ICANN tackles these issues that matter deeply, like, you know, for example, data privacy, security of our online interactions, and even something as practical as how domain names are managed. Yeah. So, these are my comments. Thank you.

CARLOS REYES:

Thank you, Sabah. So, that's a good point in terms of looking at the scope of ICANN's mission and where it can develop policy. So, we'll talk a little bit about the scope as well. I don't know why Ozan and I are here, since it sounds like you all know a lot, but we'll answer some of your questions. And Ozan's also going to speak a little bit about, I think there was a comment earlier about everyone being invited to participate in policy development. Ozan will talk about one of our mechanisms for that in public comment. So, thank you all for those introductory comments and questions. And I think it's helpful for us to get a sense of where your knowledge base stands right now, and it'll help us move through our time together.

All right. So, as I mentioned, we'll talk about policy development in the supporting organizations. We'll talk about advice development in the advisory committees. Then, we'll highlight some current policy development processes. This is the work that is happening now, today,

either in the community or in the organization. And then, if we have time, we'll talk a little bit about our team and how we support that work. And then, we'll talk about resources. We have a specific session for question and answers, but please feel free to ask while we're speaking. I think that that allows us a little bit more interaction.

Moving on. So, I imagine most of you are familiar with the three components of ICANN, right? So, we have the ICANN tripartite model. It includes a community. You're part of the community now as fellows, and you see the community this week working through the various supporting organization, advisory committees, and other working groups. So, the community really is the core of the multi-stakeholder model at ICANN and how it handles the policy work as prescribed in the bylaws.

The other piece is the board. Some of you mentioned this in your comments already. The board provides the strategic oversight of the organization, sets a strategic plan for ICANN, and also approves the policies and advice that the community develops. It's important to note that the board does not get involved directly in the policy development or the advice development. Sometimes there are board liaisons that inform the advisory committees and supporting organizations to ensure that their recommendations can be implemented and that the board answers early questions by the board. But the board is not active in actually proposing policies and debating those policies. That is very much up to the community. And then the third piece, a few of you also alluded to this, is the organization. That's Siranush, Ozan, myself, Deborah in the back, and our technical teams. Everyone you see that

helps support the community and its work. We have several teams like any other organization, internally facing teams that focus on human resources, finance, et cetera, anything you would expect from an international organization. But we also have functions that are very unique to our mission. Obviously, policy development is one of those areas. We have a global stakeholder engagement team, and we have a public responsibility team as well. So there are areas of commonality between ICANN and other organizations, and there are areas that are unique to us. All of these pieces together comprise ICANN.

So let's talk a little bit about the three supporting organizations. The first one, we'll spend a little bit of time today. Ozan and I work closely with this particular group, and this is the address supporting organization. How many of you are familiar with regional internet registries? Or if you've been to an RIR meeting? Okay. Have any of you been a fellow in an RIR meeting? Okay, a few of you. So you're familiar with APNIC, the Asia Pacific Network Information Center. That's the regional internet registry for the Asia Pacific region. The AFRINIC regional internet registry for Africa. We also have RIPE NCC, which is the regional internet registry for Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East. LACNIC for Latin America, and ARIN for North America. Am I forgetting any? No, I think I got all five.

So these five communities exist outside of ICANN, but they're partnered with ICANN through the address supporting organization. And what's important to keep in mind about the address supporting organization, for those of you who have been fellows at your regional internet registry meetings, the policy that happens there is regional. So that's policy

specific to internet resource allocation, internet number resource allocation in your region. The policy that happens in ICANN is global. So the overall global coordination of internet number resources. And that's where the distinction happens and where the address supporting organization gets involved. The second supporting organization is the Country Code Name Supporting Organization. You're probably all familiar with your own country's ccTLD. Maybe you're from Mexico and it's .mx. Maybe it's .uk if you're from the United Kingdom or .ng for Nigeria, et cetera. Those are the ccTLDs that are administered by an operator in your country. And there's a supporting organization that develops policies for those country codes.

And then the third, we'll spend most of our time today discussing this particular group only because that's most of the work that you see outside this room. The ASO has some work sessions here, but because global policies are so unique, you actually don't see a lot of numbers policy at ICANN. It mostly happens at the regions. The ccNSO just finished some policy development work. But as I said, most of the work relates to the GNSO that you'll see here in Istanbul. And that's the generic name supporting organization. And they focus on probably the largest part of the domain name ecosystem, which is generic top-level domains. So that's everything from .Istanbul to .com to .car, et cetera. So the generic TLDs that are part of the namespace. Any questions about the scope of the supporting organizations?

LILY EDINAM BOTSIOE:

Yes. I just have this question. My name is Lily and I'm an ICANN 801 fellow. Because you made a distinction between the RIRs, regional

work, and then what ICANN does, how do you ensure that there are no conflicts when it comes to the work they do and what ICANN does, which is global? So in the region, they can do something and maybe it is outside the scope just to know what a distinction is between what they can do and how you can ensure that there are no conflicts in your work.

CARLOS REYES:

There's an MOU, a memorandum of understanding, between the regional internet registries and ICANN that specifically defines what global policy is. So if an issue is not what's in the MOU, then that means it's regional. So that's how we avoid conflict or confusion, in that global policies are very specifically defined as something that requires global coordination by the IANA, the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority. Good question. I also wanted to say something that I forgot. So no, it's okay. It'll come back to me.

This is a very scary infographic. And actually, it's been simplified. What you see here took a lot of work to condense the words. But what we're trying to do, and you can access this infographic from our website. It's available in multiple languages. We also have videos that go through the infographic. But what we included here, the whole infographic, so that you see each supporting organization has its own process for how it develops policy. And the reason I always spend time on the scope, as we discussed earlier, is think about it like a restaurant. The ASO is an Italian restaurant, so you would go there for pizza. The ccNSO is a Chinese restaurant, so you go there for some sort of stir fry. And then the GNSO is perhaps a Mexican restaurant. You wouldn't go to the ASO

asking for a quesadilla. I mean, they probably could make it. It may not be the best. And you wouldn't go to the GNSO asking for a pizza. And that's why I think the scope is so important. Because sometimes you, as community members, or even the public, may have an issue that you want to discuss. But you need to know where to ask it so that the community can actually work on it. Because otherwise, you're just going to get stuck in this conversation about, oh, this isn't in scope, and maybe keep working on it. And that can be defeating to you as a volunteer. But that's why I think it's important when you have an idea, you step back and think, where does this belong?

And like I said, each supporting organization manages its own process. How that management happens, there's a council. So elected representatives from the supporting organization communities manage their work. That's where they develop charters for work parties. They elect leaders to lead the work parties and the working groups. They review the recommendations. They deliberate the recommendations. And ultimately, they deliver some sort of report with recommendations to the board. So what you see at an ICANN meeting, it's mostly the supporting organizations, their councils, their working groups. So when you look at the schedule and you think, what is the Transfer PDP Working Group? That is a working group within the GNSO that's been tasked by the GNSO Council to develop recommendations. So those members are discussing their charter and their work and the questions.

So what we'll do today is we'll go through the process for the GNSO at a high level. And then Siranush has these slides so we can circulate them

with you. We're only focusing on the GNSO today in the interest of time, but you can see the processes for the ccNSO and the ASO in the slide deck. So I'll pause after I finish the GNSO. Ozan will walk us through the advice development processes later. So if you have questions about advice, we can defer those to Ozan later. Any questions about what we're about to do for the next few minutes?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: And the slides are uploaded in the meeting website.

CARLOS REYES: Great. All right. So let's deep dive into the GNSO. So we already discussed the scope of the GNSO, which is gTLD policies, and we already discussed that the GNSO Council manages that policy process. If we talk a little bit about the composition of the GNSO Council, really there are two sides to it. There's the contracted parties. These are the stakeholder groups that represent the registries and registrars that have contracts with ICANN. So the reason this is important is because the outcomes of the GNSO, so the policies that the GNSO develops, are binding on the contracted parties, and those are implemented through the contracts that ICANN has with them. So let's say you have a registry of a TLD or a registrar that sells domain names. They are committed to following the policies that the GNSO develops and that the board approves through those contracts, and that's why that side of the GNSO is called the contracted parties house. The other side of the GNSO is called the non-contracted parties house, and as you may guess, that means that they do not have contracts with ICANN, but they have a

stake in the outcomes of the GNSO, and they represent non-commercial and commercial stakeholders. Within the non-commercial stakeholder group, they break down further into non-commercial users and not-for-profit organizations, and then the commercial interests, they break down into the business constituency, so for small, medium, and large businesses, intellectual property interests, and internet service providers. Any questions about the composition of the GNSO? Is anyone here from, interested in one of these groups? Like, is anyone here? Yes.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: And we will have GNSO council representative tomorrow telling you more about GNSO council work.

CARLOS REYES: And I think most of the constituency groups also present, right? They're also here? Yes. Yeah, so ask them about how to join their constituencies. They all have membership processes, and we don't manage that as staff. It's up to the communities to decide who they welcome as members. I saw, I think, two hands here. Yes, go ahead.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thanks so much. I have a quick question about the contracted parties. So you said they have formal contracts, legal contracts with ICANN, but my question is, are these contracts static? And if not, how often do they change the, you know, the content within these contracts? And by the way, I'm affiliated with the NCUC already. Thank you.

CARLOS REYES: Oh, good. Welcome. So the contracts are dynamic in the sense that there's, anytime there's a new policy approved by the GNSO, it has to be reflected in the contracts. But there can also be negotiations outside of policy development too. A good example of this is earlier this year, the contracted parties engaged with ICANN on targeted negotiations around DNS abuse. And then the registry, the base gTLD registry agreement was updated to reflect those terms. And those have been implemented as of April. So it evolves as the industry evolves. Good question. There was another hand over there.

NITISH REDDY YERRADODDI: Yes. Hi, I'm Nitish from India. So I was just curious, how do we become part of any of these constituency groups? Like, is there any restriction, just like there's a restriction of the number of members in the council? Is there a restriction on the number of members in the constituency group? And is there any criteria per se? Thank you.

CARLOS REYES: Good question. I don't think any group has a cap on the number of members. In fact, I think most of them are always interested in growing their membership base, especially from regions where their membership may lack representation. So the best way to learn about the membership process, as Siranush mentioned, you will have presentations from, I think, most of these, if not all of the constituencies, and ask them about their membership process. Sometimes it's as simple as going to their website and filling out the membership form. And like I said, there are people from those

constituencies in this meeting in Istanbul. So feel free to approach them as well. But it's not something that the staff manages. The constituencies manage their own membership process. Good question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: We will have also a presentation from non-contracted parties and contracted parties today and tomorrow. So wherever you have the interest to go with that, that's the session for you to ask the question. Thank you.

CARLOS REYES: All right. So let's, at a high level, if you look at the GNSO operating procedures, which explain how a policy development process or, excuse me, the policy, the GNSO policy development manual, that explains how the work transpires. It is very detailed. So what we did here is we raised those topics to a higher level for the purposes of outreach. And we highlight a few key steps.

The first is identifying an issue. Identifying an issue. And this is what we were discussing earlier about ensuring that a problem statement or a question or some sort of policy issue fits within the remit of the GNSO Council and the GNSO. And that's important because if it's not related to gTLD policy, then the GNSO will not get involved and it won't start some sort of work effort around it. So that's why identifying the issue is so important.

That takes us into scoping. Typically, once that issue has been identified, the Council will request some sort of issue report that's

developed by staff. And basically we do a scan of what is the issue, what are the current questions, what work has been done in the past. And we try and help the community just understand the current landscape of that particular issue. We also publish that for public comment. So there's an opportunity for the public to provide their input, especially because we have excellent resources on our staff. We have colleagues who are experts in their own fields, but we don't know everything. And I think having an opportunity to invite public input is important because it strengthens the work. So anytime you see in our slides these little arrows, that's where we highlight opportunities for public input. And this is how you, there was a comment earlier about how do people get involved. The supporting organizations and the advisory committees, the work is limited to those members, but there's always opportunities for public input. So I think it's important to keep that in mind. Maybe right now you don't have the time to get involved in the ICANN community on a regular basis. You can still participate in policy and advice development. And that's what we try and highlight with the arrows. So we have identified the issue. We've scoped it to make sure it is a deliverable output. And then we've gone through public comment. And then at this point, the council looks at this and says, okay, we have a specific question or a specific set of questions to tackle an issue that's important to our members. And that's within our remit. We have the ICANN organization. All of these matters are aligned so we can initiate. We can begin a policy development process. And that's usually in the form of. A working group. And if you've ever been part of a policy development process working group, you know that it is supported by the policy team. We help with scheduling its workshop sessions, its

calls. We help the leadership team develop agendas, we help members with research and writing, et cetera. So it's very much a collaborative effort. We're there to support the community and their work. Any questions about these first three steps in a GNSO? policy development process.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Just I'm curious to know how long does it take from the very first step to the very last step?

CARLOS REYES: I always got this question. It's a very good question. Three years. Yes, I'm serious. And I think it's important to keep in mind a few things. They're complicated issues. And you have a lot of interests. We talked about the composition of the council. You have a lot of different voices participating. And finding consensus among all of those different interests and voices is challenging. The other thing you have to keep in mind, like most of us, most of you here, Ozan, Siranush and I are employees of the organization. This is our day job. Some of you have other day jobs. Some of you are finishing school. Some of you are raising families. So the work that you carve out for ICANN is on borrowed time. So trying to get a group together every other week, you have to find the time to prepare for the call, participate in the call, and then follow up on action items that you get on a call. So managing asynchronous work is work. It's a lot of work. And that's why these meetings are so valuable, because you're here, you're in person, you're speaking with your colleagues, you can have hallway conversations. But when we work

outside of the meetings, the work has to continue, but it's just very different conditions. So sometimes it's frustrating that the work takes so long, but it's also deliberate in that we're dealing with a global resource. We're dealing with the domain name system of the Internet. If a policy is developed in a rushed way or in a way that doesn't incorporate all of these views, that can be problematic. You can introduce instability into the domain name system, and that is contrary to the ICANN mission. So the time is an issue. Our community is always looking for ways to expedite that or to identify efficiencies to fix that. And I think earlier we had the comment about, you know, are the contracts static? The policy development process is not static either. The GNSO Council is always looking for improvements, and this continuous improvement cycle is something that is very much a part of the ICANN culture. But there's a lot of perspectives, and that's just the perspectives within the GNSO, right? If you introduce the advisory committees or even public input, it's another layer of consideration. So it's deliberately thorough. Good question. Any other question? Okay, let's go to this side and then over here.

MIRA FAJRIYAH:

Hello, this is Mira, ICANN Fellow from Indonesia. My curiosity actually related to the last question about the efficiency. And I particularly want to understand more about the EPDP, the expedited policy development process. I noticed that it intended to extend the topic that has been discussed in the PDP. And I would like to know maybe from your experience or you can share stories how this EPDP actually contributes to the effectiveness to the PDP process. Thank you.

CARLOS REYES: Good question. Let me finish describing the PDP, and then I'll explain what an EPDP is. So we will come back to this. OK, over here. Sorry, I think it was. Yes, over there.

OYINKAN REBECCA ADEBIMPE: Hi, my name is Oyin Kong. I'm representing Ireland, also a fellow. I wanted to know, is it possible in this process that sometimes it goes backwards rather than forward? For instance, it's moved to the scoping stage and then goes back to the identification stage. Is that something that happens?

CARLOS REYES: No. And I think the steps build on the other. So you can't really start something and then scope it because the council would not want to start something that wasn't specific to its mission. So, yeah, the steps are intentionally in that order. Good question. Yes.

ABDULRAHMAN ABOTALEB: Thank you, Abdulrahman Abu Talib. As you mentioned that the time issue is the biggest challenge in this EPDP process, do you accept this challenge as is or do you evaluate this process every time? And did you discuss like innovative options and solutions to optimize and make the process more efficient and more quick to do? Thank you.

CARLOS REYES:

The answer is yes. The community leaders, especially working group chairs, the chair of the GNSO Council, they're always in communication to try and find out how can we keep driving the work? What can we do to drive the work? Sometimes it means one of the working groups has a workshop that's outside of an ICANN meeting and we bring them all together for three or four days. And in that period, three or four days of working together, they will make more progress than, you know, three or four months. Because, as I said earlier, sometimes when you leave the ICANN meeting, the work then spreads out over virtual space, basically. We support the community through Zoom meetings. Obviously, we all survived the pandemic. We all remember what life on Zoom was. And it's a challenge. There's only so much interaction you can get from virtual meetings. So sometimes different subsets of the working group will say, let's take this part of the report and write it. Another part of the working group takes another part. But then you have to bring it all together and edit and write and rewrite and revise and review. And it's a lot of work, but they're always looking for areas to improve. There was a question about the expedited policy development process, so we'll talk a little bit about that as well, which is a new mechanism to try and accelerate some of the work. But fundamentally, you cannot shortcut discussions and deliberations. There's administrative things that you can improve. But the substantive discussions, there's no way to really shortcut that, because that's where the stakeholders are engaging actively in an important topic. And that's where the consequences are for not only the contracts, but our mission.

So let me finish talking about the last steps of the PDP. So we talked about the working group and how we support their meetings through

Zoom and workshops and ICANN sessions, etc. Step four is really what takes the longest. That can take two years or so for a working group to work through their charter, their questions, identify all of their recommendations, revise their recommendations, and then ultimately achieve, hopefully, some sort of consensus on them.

The working group will present their report to the GNSO Council, and then we get to step five, where the GNSO Council considers that final report. And ultimately, if the GNSO Council adopts the final report, then it goes to the Board. And the Board reviews it, consults with the ICANN community again, specifically with the Governmental Advisory Committee. And if the Board determines that the policy development process was followed, that all stakeholders have been consulted, that there has been public input, and that the ICANN organization has the resources to implement it, then the Board will vote on that final report.

So at every step of the policy development process, whoever leads that particular step—whether it's a working group or the Council or the Board—there's always an effort to ensure that all stakeholders have participated, have had their voice heard, have provided input. And then if it's approved by the Board, then it's up to the staff to implement that. Questions about how a PDP wraps up?

AVIRAL KAINATURA:

Just a clarification that if we have different issues that we are tackling, do we have to create separate working groups for that?

CARLOS REYES: Yes. And that's partly because, one, it just keeps the work organized, but two, a working group ideally comprises members who are interested or have expertise in that particular topic. And that way it's focused.

MILLENNIUM ANTHONY: I was just curious about what if now the GNSO Council has not approved, like they haven't decided that this issue can lead to a policy development. Does it mean it automatically gets approved or what happens?

CARLOS REYES: So if the GNSO Council determines that an issue is not within their scope, typically—let's say you have the proposal and the GNSO Council says, this is a great idea, but this is not within our remit. At that point, you could probably try to go to another supporting organization and approach them if the issue is within their remit. Maybe it's not, then you can go to an advisory committee to consider it as advice. But it's important that all of the ICANN groups have very specific missions and mandates according to the bylaws. So they will only respond to work that falls within that category. That doesn't mean that there cannot be a conversation within ICANN about it, but if you want advice or policy, it has to be framed in a way that the supporting organizations or advisory committees can act on it. Otherwise, it's really just a discussion within the ICANN community.

SANA NISAR:

Yes, hello, thank you for your presentation until now. My name is Sana Nisar, and I'm an ICANN 81 fellow. So I'm from Pakistan, and I'm currently a part of PPSAI IRT working group. So being in a working group, I have one question. Like, once the ICANN Board already received the final report from the GNSO Council, so are there any specific areas or recommendations that frequently require further consultation with the community or the GAC?

CARLOS REYES:

Yes. So basically, once a policy is approved, you mentioned you're part of the IRT, right? So IRT is the Implementation Review Team. Once a policy is approved and the ICANN organization starts preparing to implement that policy, we put together a working group of community members who were involved in developing the policy to help us when we implement the policy. So oftentimes we may have clarifying questions, etc., that we need to check with the community and say, look, this is how we plan to implement this. Does this align with the recommendations? Does this fit the discussions, etc.?

So anything that's related to implementation of the policy would happen within the IRT, which is what you're doing now. In the course of developing the implementation plan, if there are questions that emerge that are beyond implementation, then it would be up to the IRT to go back to—excuse me—up to the community to discuss that within the GNSO again, because there may be ambiguity or inconsistencies or questions about the policy itself. That's different than the implementation of the policy. So the IRT helps us clarify questions around implementation, but if there are questions about, let's say, the

recommendations, then they would have to be considered by the community again—in this case, the GNSO Council.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes, for me to understand. So my understanding is that the community is anyone from industry, non-commercial sector, government, registries, registrar. So how ICANN Board or the working group reaches out to the community? Through what channels? So how does it work?

CARLOS REYES: So when we talked earlier about a working group as part of the GNSO, or a working group can be part of a ccNSO, or a working group can be part of one of the advisory committees. When the Board wants to speak with the working group, they can always do it directly, but they often reach out through the elected leadership of that supporting organization—so the Council or the leadership of the advisory committee.

OYINKAN REBECCA ADEBIMPE: Okay, hi, Oinko again from Ireland, fellow. The question I had was sort of the piggyback of the last one around the development process. For some context, I work in policy, and every so often you'd see a policy come through the identification stage, even get as far as scoping, and then it falls through. And I was wondering if the same happens here as well with the GNSO and the policy development process. If the policies do fall through, I understand that they don't go backwards, but if it's something that happens and they fall through, or if the identification process is a very foolproof one where that doesn't happen.

CARLOS REYES:

I think we can always have situations where recommendations don't reach consensus. And in the final report, typically what the GNSO Council does—or any working group—if a recommendation has consensus, then they will include it. And sometimes there may be a section on, these were the other issues that we discussed that we didn't achieve consensus, couldn't agree on a recommendation, but we think they're still important. And that may be future policy work. But this particular group, based on our charter or scope, didn't achieve that. Maybe it can be considered in the future.

And, you know, that's just part of the process. That's normal. That's how sometimes you just don't agree. Maybe you have siblings and you don't agree on which restaurant to go to one night. So your parents have to decide. So, you know, that's sort of human nature, and it's part of the process. But it's important to document it so that the next time this issue comes up in some way in the ICANN community, the community can say, oh, this is what was discussed last time. These were the contours of that discussion. This is where they made progress. This is where they didn't. And we reframe the question: Can we address it in another way? And, you know, this happens in legislative bodies all over the world too. You know, sometimes if any of you work for your parliament or your congress or your city council, sometimes you may propose something and it fails, and then you have to step back and think about it again and try again. So that's, I think, a feature more than a bug.

WAQAR AHMAD: I would like to know that when policies are adopted by a GNSO Council, how you implement those policies in those countries where you feel that their law can contradict their policies, and how you resolve the conflict.

CARLOS REYES: That goes to the question earlier about the implementation review teams. So if there are questions about the policy, as staff, when we develop the implementation plan, if it's a fundamental issue with the policy recommendation, then the IRT would have to go to the GNSO Council to either rephrase the recommendation, reconsider it, and then obviously it would have to be approved, etc. So it's deliberately designed to always go back to where the policy came from—in this case, the supporting organization. But as I mentioned, staff—we work with the Implementation Review Team, which is comprised of the community, to help us design how to implement the policy.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [inaudible] ICANN fellow. Recently there was a pilot holistic review team that was set up. So is PDP part of the mandate, or is it only for IRT?

CARLOS REYES: Good question. So within the ICANN bylaws, there are mandated reviews. And the reviews are in a few areas. One is the reviews of the supporting organizations and advisory committees—basically, are they functioning effectively, and are they fulfilling their mission? Those are called organizational reviews.

There's also specific reviews that are related to ICANN's mission, and is ICANN completing that mission effectively? So sometimes it's about security and stability or consumer choice, etc. And the ICANN community has had a conversation about, are reviews effective? Are they fulfilling their purpose as intended in the bylaws?

A few years ago, there was an effort to look at reviews as a mechanism, as part of our accountability. And that's what the holistic review is about. The holistic review is a review of all the reviews. And we have a pilot effort underway that's looking at how to define the terms of reference for how reviews are conducted.

So they may look at the GNSO PDP or the ccNSO PDP, etc., from a meta level. They're not looking at the substance of it, but they're saying, are PDPs working? And they may issue recommendations, but it's very much still in the pilot phase. We normally don't talk about reviews in this session, but reviews are a whole other area of ICANN's work.

Before we move on from the GNSO—and I'm getting tired of speaking for 45 minutes, so I'm going to hand it to Ozan—but I did want to go back to the question about the expedited PDP. So the expedited PDP essentially modifies step one, which is the issue report. There isn't an issue report in an expedited PDP, because at that point, the GNSO Council has determined that there is a need for a policy development process. So there are modifications to the PDP with steps one about the issue report, and step two—you really don't need it because there's no issue report to consider. So an expedited PDP just starts at step three.

But as I mentioned, it retains step four, which is the deliberations. So we've had a few ePDPs—expedited PDPs—in ICANN since 2017. We've had one on access to GTLD registration data. There was a phase one and a phase two of that. And we had an ePDP on internationalized domain names, all within the GNSO. And they all have delivered reports. So sometimes, if the question or the issue is specific enough already, then the Council could say, we're ready to begin now. Good question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: We also have hand raised. Saba, please go ahead.

SABA TIKU BEYENE: Thank you very much for giving me the floor, and thank you for the wonderful presentation. So I'm really interested in how ICANN policies can make a positive impact in parts of the world where internet access is still limited. And so I would love to hear more about what ICANN is doing in order to make sure that its policies, especially on DNS and internet protocol management, support the needs as well as the challenges of developing regions, as myself coming from one of those regions, which is Ethiopia. So are there any specific initiatives or any adjustments in those policies that ICANN is exploring to help these communities access and also to benefit from the internet more effectively? Thank you.

CARLOS REYES: So at least within the supporting organizations, because policies are global in nature, there often isn't a regional focus or recommendations

are often not scoped for specific regions because, as I mentioned, policy is global in nature. But that doesn't mean that the policy development cannot be influenced by developing or versus developed economy conversations or by stakeholders from developing communities. So the recommendations have to be global in nature so that ICANN can actually act according to its mission for the overall GTLD namespace. But you probably would not see a recommendation coming from the GNSO Council that is specific to that developing or developed dynamic. But as I said, those conversations can definitely inform how the policies are developed.

IDA PADIKUOR NA-TEI:

Okay, thank you for the opportunity. So my question was on step four, forming a working group. I was wondering, how do you ensure that the working group is actually consulting with the community? Is there a protocol or a process that you follow or you check to ensure that you're not just giving your reports, but they actually consulted with the community? Thank you.

CARLOS REYES:

Good question. So, yes, there's a few checks. The GNSO Council, when it's reviewing the final report, will look for public comment. That is the baseline mechanism to consult the community. Let's say the final report has recommendations that are relevant to governments. The GNSO Council will say, oh, did you speak with the Governmental Advisory Committee? Or let's say the recommendations may have security, stability, resilience implications, and they'll say, did you

consult with the Security and Stability Advisory Committee? Or if it somehow implicates root server operators—that could be related to root zone scaling and how many gTLDs are introduced into the root zone, etc.—then the Council will say, did you consult with the relevant group—in this case, the Root Server System Advisory Committee?

So the Council does that check. And as I mentioned, there's also public comment that's required by the GNSO PDP manual. The Board will also do that when the report reaches its step in step six. So when the Board is looking at the report, they will say, okay, did the Council do its work and the working group do its work of incorporating community input? So there are requirements within the Board consideration step, the Council consideration step as well. So there's really no way that something would reach the Council, or even much less the Board, that hasn't been robustly discussed within the community. Good question.

Okay, let's move on to advisory committees and Ozan will walk us through the At-Large

OZAN SAHIN:

Hello everyone, good afternoon. My name is Ozan Sahin. I am also a member of the Policy Development Support Team and I'm based in Türkiye. And now the time to talk about the advice development and advisory committees at ICANN. Carlos mentioned there were three supporting organizations and now in terms of advisory committees, we have four. The first one you see on the top is the At-Large Advisory Committee standing for the interests of the individual and internet users. So the executive body of the At-Large community is the At-Large

Advisory Committee or ALAC and it's composed of 15 members. So there are two members from each of the five regional At-Large organizations. There are five regional At-Large organizations and you may have heard of LACNIC for Latin America, NARALO for the North America or AFRALO for Africa, EURALO for Europe and then APRALO for Asia Pacific region. So two members from each of these five regional At-Large organizations and then five appointed members by the ICANN nominating committee.

So the grassroots of the regional At-Large organizations are called At-Large structures. And in some cases, these can be organizations. In other cases, these can be individuals. You may have heard of some organizations in the internet governance like Internet Society and many Internet Society chapters are also At-Large structures contributing to the work of the At-Large community within their region. The other advisory committee here is the Governmental Advisory Committee or GAC which provides advice on public policy issues and particularly on interactions with policies and national laws or international agreements. So there are, as far as I know, more than 180 governments and economies represented in the Governmental Advisory Committee now. And they also provide advice to the ICANN board within their remit. So all of the four advisory committees provide advice to and recommendations to the ICANN board or provide recommendations within their specific expertise again to the ICANN board or ICANN community.

Moving on to the third advisory committee which is the Root Server System Advisory Committee or RSSAC. And they provide advice on the

operation administration, security and the integrity of the root server system. Some of you may know that there are 12 root server organizations running 13 root servers, root server identifiers. So the representatives in the RSSAC are coming from these root server operators. One primary representative, one alternate representative and there are also liaisons coming from the partners in the root zone.

And finally, the fourth advisory committee here is the SSAC, Security and Stability Advisory Committee. And SSAC advises the ICANN board and committee on matters related to the security and integrity of the internet's naming and address allocation systems. So today we will focus on the advice development process of ALAC. And before going there, there's another infographic this time showing the advice development process of all of the four advisory committees. Let me put also the link to this infographic so that it's not quite visible for you at the moment so you can take a look yourself. Now, focusing on the At-Large advice development process, as I said, ALAC expresses the interests of the individual internet end users as part of the post-development and advice to the board. So you see some similarities here again, in terms of phases, identification of the issue phase and then comes the scoping issue, scoping the issue. Any At-Large committee member can bring up the issues to the attention of the At-Large Advisory Committee, ALAC. And then in the next phase, the ALAC discusses the issues to determine the impact on individual users and scope. This is the determination whether the issue brought up is within their remit or scope or not. And then if it's within the scope, then the ALAC determines the key elements of its position. And in the next two phase, the participation phase, ALAC designates the issue shepherds to

participate in the post-development and issue shepherds lead drafting of ALAC responses.

Sometimes you see the advisory committees appointing liaisons or observers or members to some of the working groups so that these individuals can follow the work that's being done, can report back to their advisory committee and lead the drafting of the position of the ALAC for that specific matter. And then on the final phase, advice phase, the ALAC reviews and calls for consensus or votes on their final statement. And when ratified, the ALAC sends the advice to ICANN board and ICANN organization and supporting organizations and advisory committees or other ICANN committee members for consideration.

Before going into some of the current post-development processes that we would like to highlight to you today, let me pause here to see if you have any questions about the advice development process. Please go ahead. I see a lady in the second row who raised hand.

ELLA TITOVA:

Yes, thank you. I just want to understand from the beginning when you say that the issue is coming to the ALAC and ALAC members decide, is the issue in the scope of the ALAC responsibility or no? How it is decided? For example, I am an ALAC member and I say, yes, it is in the scope. And you're saying, no, it is not in the scope. How the consensus is made there? Thank you.

OZAN SAHIN:

We had to discuss because none of us directly supports the At-Large Advisory Committee. But as far as we know, the, when you brought up the issue or when you, you know, submit your position on whether this is within the remit or not, this is usually done within the region At-Large organization. So if region At-Large organization comes to a consensus to bring up to the attention of the ALAC, whether they're, you know, supporting a position or not, then I think ALAC will have formal rules on how to achieve the consensus to decide that. But to be honest, I'm not sure about how the RALO itself determines, you know, just compares the conflicting views about whether this is within the remit or not. This can be, you know, simple majority votes or, you know, further discussion with the person who raised the issue and how they brought, escalate the issue to ALAC at that point. I'm not sure about that.

IDA PADIKUOR NA-TEI:

I'm new to ICANN, this is my first time, so this question might be a little funny. But I know that most of the advisory committees are volunteer-based, so I just want to confirm, so for all the categories, the GAC, RSSAC, At-Large, security and stability, are they all volunteer-based?

OZAN SAHIN:

That's a great question. I thought I'd addressed that, but I forgot. So, for At-Large, yes, that's on volunteer-based. I'm trying to go back to for advisory committees. You can be a member of the regional At-Large organization within your region, and then start contributing to the work of the ALAC. But when it comes to the GAC, the governments have the authority to make appointments for their own country to the GAC, and name the person who will represent them within the GAC. And for

RSSAC, the root server operators will name their representative within the RSSAC. As I said, there are 12 root server operators, so they will name their representative within the RSSAC, and then the partners in the root zone will appoint liaisons. But for RSSAC, to improve their accountability and to add to their pool of expertise, there's also RSSAC caucus, where you see many DNS experts who contribute to the work of RSSAC. So, these technical people may apply to become an RSSAC caucus member, and RSSAC reviews their applications. So, for that, you don't need to be coming from a root server operator. If you're a DNS expert, you may apply to become an RSSAC caucus member and start contributing to the work of RSSAC. And finally, for SSAC, there are, again, technical experts within the SSAC, and the membership is, again, based on application. So, there is a specific language on the SSAC webpage that tells you how to apply to become an SSAC member, and then the membership review committee would review your application, and then you may be admitted after that to the SSAC. I hope that answers the question. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: We need to wrap up this session already, Ozan, if you can just—

OZAN SAHIN: Okay, let's get to the next question and then wrap up. Yes.

MIRA FAJRIYAH: So Mira, a fellow from Indonesia. So I acknowledge there's this pattern in which the ICANN community establishes SOs that respectively

represent the object—I mean, the names and numbers as global internet resources. So these SOs respectively are scoping the numbers and names as global internet resources to be regulated by the community.

So I would like to understand, maybe there is justification or consideration on establishing RSSAC as AC, not SO, when it is also related to the internet resources—I mean, related as an object to the global internet resources, the root server. Thank you very much.

OZAN SAHIN:

Great question. Just to clarify, the internet number resources are managed by the regional internet registries, and the global policymaking is within the ASO, as Carlos explained. But for your specific question about the RSSAC, the Root Server System Advisory Committee is—yes, today exists as an advisory committee. But the root server operators, I think ten years ago, felt the necessity to review the governance structure of the root server system and see if there's a way to evolve the governance of the root server system.

So they held workshops, they held many teleconferences, meetings, and then they came up with some principles that should be followed in the root server system. So this resulted in an RSSAC publication called RSSAC 37, which was followed by 38 that was a proposed governance model within the root server system.

And then, following that, there was a recommendation for ICANN Board to look at that and convene a group to study on—maybe a cross-community group to study the governance of the root server system,

which finally resulted in the existence of Root Server System Governance Working Group today. So this group, Root Server System Governance Working Group, or as known, RSS GWG, has been having meetings for almost five years now. And they are also meeting at ICANN 81.

They are looking at the governance of the root server system, and they may come up with recommendations to suggest a supporting organization and other models. They're just looking at this governance now. And if you want to follow their sessions, they will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Thank you, Ozan. And we cannot take more questions for now. I appreciate, Carlos and Ozan, your time for being here. The presentation, the full presentation is posted online in the meeting schedule. We also will have all the community groups coming and explaining in particular how they work on policy and what are their own procedures. But this was a great overview to raise new questions when the community come here. So thank you very much for being here. Thank you for your time. And with that, our meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

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