

Implementation of GNSO-Approved Policy Recommendations: Input regarding timeline and transparency

25 May 2026

To: Tripti Sinha
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Dear Tripti,

The undersigned groups are writing to offer input regarding the timing and process for the ICANN Board of Directors' review of PDP Working Group Recommendations that have the approval of the GNSO Council.

We respectfully request further dialogue and consideration on the topic of how to improve this process and ensure there is transparency such that the Community can be aware of the status and expected timelines for completion of the Board's review.

Unclear timelines

The process for the GNSO Council and ICANN Board to review Policy Working Group Recommendations is set out in [Annex A of the GNSO Bylaws](#); there is a general expectation that work will be conducted efficiently and with a reasonable sense of urgency.

"The Board will meet to discuss the GNSO Council recommendation as soon as feasible, but preferably not later than the second meeting after receipt of the Board Report from the Staff Manager."

There is no further standardization of review timing; the expectation for when the Board will complete this review and return approval or rejection of the Recommendations to the Council is unclear. This results in situations such as with the [EPDP on IDNs \(Phase 2\)](#), which has been pending completion of the Board review since December 2024, and the [Transfer Policy Review PDP](#), which has been pending completion of the Board review since April 2025.

We understand that the ICANN Board's consideration is supported by ICANN Org through the creation of a Report reviewing the Recommendations, but we have been unable to find formal documentation related to this process and, as such, are uncertain whether there is an expected timeline for this Report's delivery. We are aware that this Staff Report can take quite some time to be produced, delaying the Board's ability to proceed with their review; this may stem from the absence of a clear timeline for completion of this Report.

We propose the establishment of a standard timeframe for the Board's completion of their Recommendations review, perhaps including both a target number of Board meetings and a maximum number of months (e.g. not to exceed six months). This will give the Community assurance that review will not continue indefinitely and help ensure that Policy work proceeds with appropriate urgency and efficiency.

Lack of transparency

Compounding these unclear timelines, the Board's review process is also opaque. **The Community has very little insight into whether a given topic has been addressed**, how far along the review process a Working Group's Recommendations may be, and what more may still be needed in order to complete the work. This exacerbates the sense of confusion and uncertainty as to what the Board's priorities are and whether a topic is being considered at all.

We encourage the Board to provide consistent and transparent status updates on Policy consideration work that sits with the Board, including both via ICANN Public Meetings and intersessionally; this could perhaps be included as a regular section in the Chair's Blog posts, or as a 'dashboard' on the ICANN website. The [Consolidated Scorecard Document](#) is a good start towards presenting these status updates and should be given a more permanent home on the ICANN website, including the other improvements discussed in the related [blog post](#).

Avenues for collaborative discussion

Finally, we note that **there is room for development of processes to permit discussion of Working Group Recommendations** that are before the Board. As the Bylaws currently stand, the GNSO Council sends a Recommendations Report to the Board for consideration and then the Board meets to deliberate; there is no space to ask questions or request explanation if areas are unclear, rather only a vote to approve or reject.

While the contents of the Recommendations may be deeply familiar and thus very clear to Working Group members, they are often unclear to a reader who has not spent years immersed in that Group's work. There may be proposed changes that seem unconventional or inherently risky to an outside observer, but which have been well thought out by Working Group members and which would benefit from discussion to better clarify the reasoning before the Board's decision is made. At this time, there is, unfortunately, no avenue for such discussions.

We support the creation of processes for interaction with the GNSO Council Leadership and the Working Group Chair or leadership team during the Board's deliberations in order to ensure that all relevant information is provided and any questions are answered in a collaborative and clear manner.

Conclusion and next steps

The multistakeholder model of Internet governance is often criticized as being slow, ineffective, and inefficient and we have repeatedly discussed over recent years the importance of demonstrating that we accomplish valuable work in an expedient manner. Delays at any stage of our Policy Development Process provide significant fodder for those who would like to see governance of the DNS taken away from ICANN and handled either through local legislation or by a different intergovernmental organization.

ICANN Community members from across the GNSO put in significant volunteer time and effort to conduct Policy development work and it is crucial that their work is recognized and valued, not only through public statements, but also by **reflecting that work in Policy outcomes within a reasonable timeframe**. Uncertainty about when Policy Recommendations will be reviewed and how much time may pass between the PDP Working Group conclusion and Implementation Review Team initiation can result in a sense of ineffectiveness and futility, leading to essential volunteers departing this space and focusing their efforts on other areas where they can more clearly see the effects of their work.

We offer the suggestions above and our ongoing support to the ICANN Board of Directors, however we can be useful, including discussion as needed on the Working Group Recommendations currently pending Board review.

We look forward to your response and are, of course, available to discuss further, including at ICANN86 in Seville.

Thank you,

Owen Smigelski

Registrar Stakeholder Group

Mason Cole

Business Constituency

John McElwaine

Intellectual Property Constituency

Elizabeth Bacon

Registries Stakeholder Group

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Internet Service Providers and
Connectivity Providers Constituency