

ICANN85 Policy Outlook Report



85

COMMUNITY
FORUM

MUMBAI

A wide-angle photograph of the Mumbai skyline, featuring numerous high-rise buildings and skyscrapers of varying heights and colors, situated along the coast of the Arabian Sea. The sky is a clear, pale blue with a few wispy clouds.

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Welcome to Mumbai!



The Policy Development Support team has prepared the ICANN85 Policy Outlook Report as a tool to support your preparation for the ICANN85 Community Forum. This report provides a high-level overview of the planned work of the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees during ICANN85.

We have evolved our approach to this publication, and we hope it continues to be a relevant and timely resource for you. Materials such as presentations and recordings from [ICANN85 Prep Week](#), which is being held 23–25 February 2026, will also be available for your review. I also recommend you read the [briefing](#) from our colleagues in the Global Domains and Strategy function for the latest information about policy implementation and reviews.

During ICANN85, the ICANN community will meet to advance policy and advice work in priority areas. The ICANN Board will conduct joint sessions with ICANN community groups to discuss issues of mutual interest. ICANN staff will conduct several informational sessions about the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

There will be a plenary session led by the ICANN community entitled, “From Stability to Survivability: ICANN’s Role in the Future of Internet Resilience,” and sessions on next steps in the Review of Reviews and lessons learned from the 20-year review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. We also look forward to the presentation of the ICANN Community Excellence Award during the Welcome Ceremony.

A global community of stakeholders and participants with different backgrounds and points of view help coordinate and support the unique identifiers of the Internet. The Internet functions for everyone because everyone is invited to help make it work. The multistakeholder model creates policies based on consensus, which yields legitimacy and global solutions that enable our vision of “One World, One Internet.”

Thank you for making the considerable commitment of time and effort to attend ICANN85 either in person or remotely. Whether you are a longtime ICANN community member, an occasional contributor, or joining us for the first time, I encourage you to take an active role. And if you see me in the hallways, please say hello.

Russ Weinstein

*Senior Vice President,
Policy Development Support*

Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

Regional Internet Registry Governance

CURRENT STATUS

The Address Supporting Organization (ASO) continues its work to update Internet Coordination Policy 2 (ICP-2), aiming to finish in the coming months. The ASO Address Council (AC) recently published a [summary report](#) of the second consultation and a [status report](#) on the remaining issues for the next draft of the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) Governance Document. If approved, the RIR Governance Document would supersede and replace ICP-2. The ASO AC provided updates on its work during the recent Asia Pacific Regional Internet Conference on Operational Technologies in Jakarta, Indonesia and to the ICANN community during ICANN85 Prep Week. During ICANN85, the ASO AC will hold joint sessions with interested ICANN community groups to discuss the latest draft in more detail and conduct sessions to continue its work.

NEXT STEPS

ASO Address Council members will present the latest draft of the RIR Governance Document at these upcoming RIR meetings:

- **ARIN 57** | 19–22 April 2026 | Louisville, Kentucky, United States
- **LACNIC 45** | 11–14 May 2026 | Guadalajara, Mexico
- **RIPE 92** | 18–22 May 2026 | Edinburgh, Scotland

Background

The ASO is defined in a [2019 Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#), affirming the relationship between the names and numbers communities. The purpose of the ASO is to review recommendations on global Internet Protocol address policy and to advise the ICANN Board in this area. Global policies are defined in the ASO MoU as “Internet number resource policies that have the agreement of all RIRs, according to their policy development processes, and ICANN, and require specific actions or outcomes on the part of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) or any other external ICANN-related body in order to be implemented.” The ASO ensures that the policy development process has been correctly followed in the communities of each RIR:

- African Network Information Centre (AFRINIC)
- Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC)
- American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN)
- Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry (LACNIC)
- Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC)

The [ASO AC](#) coordinates the global policy development work of the Internet numbers community and appoints members to the ICANN Board, the ICANN Nominating Committee, and other ICANN groups. The ASO AC consists of 15 members, three from each RIR.

ASO AC monthly teleconferences are open to observers. For more information, including the teleconference schedule, observer privileges, and remote participation details, visit the [ASO AC website](#).

Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

Policy Development

The ccNSO is the global forum within ICANN for country code top-level domain (ccTLD) managers to meet, collaborate, and share experiences on issues relevant to ccTLDs. While the ccNSO develops global policies related to ccTLDs, policy development represents only a part of its overall work. ccNSO policy development is targeted, infrequent, and narrowly scoped; it complements the broader work on technical and operational coordination, knowledge sharing, capacity-building among ccTLD managers, and engagement on broader topics such as Internet governance, security and stability, and emerging trends affecting ccTLDs.

Policies developed by the ccNSO include:

- **Policy for the Retirement of ccTLDs**

Status: In force

Provides a clear, predictable framework for the orderly retirement of a ccTLD, including principles for timing, stakeholder communication, and coordination with IANA. The ICANN Board approved the policy, which is now operational practice.

- **ccNSO Review Mechanism Policy**

Status: Implementation planning

Establishes a mechanism for ccTLD managers to request a review of certain IANA decisions relating to ccTLD delegation, transfer, and retirement, strengthening transparency and accountability.

- **Selection of IDN ccTLD Strings**

Status: ICANN Board consideration

Consists of a comprehensive framework for the selection and management of Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) ccTLD strings and their variants. The policy covers the processes for selection, delegation, transfer, revocation, and retirement of IDN ccTLDs, and the use of review mechanisms for related decisions. The policy builds on existing ccTLD policies and does not alter the current frameworks for delegation, transfer, revocation, or retirement.

Other Work

The ccNSO will host a comprehensive and diverse program during ICANN85, covering strategic, technical, industry, and community-focused topics relevant to ccTLD managers and the wider ICANN community. The program offers multiple opportunities to engage, learn, and contribute, with full details available on the [ccNSO ICANN85 workspace](#).

CCNSO GOVERNANCE AND COMMITTEE WORK

The ccNSO program begins with a series of preparatory and working sessions. The ccNSO Council will meet ahead of its 227th meeting, followed by focused sessions of several ccNSO committees and study groups. These include the Internet Governance Liaison Committee (IGLC), the DNS Abuse Standing Committee, the Universal Acceptance Committee (UAC), and the IANA Public Records Study Group. Together, these sessions set the groundwork for advancing ccNSO priorities on Internet governance, DNS Abuse mitigation, Universal Acceptance, and the accuracy and role of IANA public records.

On Sunday, 8 March, the ccNSO will turn its attention to strategic and operational topics. The ccNSO IANA Disaster Recovery Study Group will discuss next steps in its work, and the Strategic and Operational Planning Committee will meet with the ICANN finance and planning team to discuss the ccTLD-focused input to ICANN and Public Technical Identifiers planning processes. Additional sessions include meetings of the Guidelines Review Committee, the Meetings Program Committee, and the annual strategy review session, where ccNSO leaders will identify trends that could affect ICANN's mission and operations.

Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

TECH DAY: FOUR SESSIONS OF TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL FOCUS

Monday, 9 March, is dedicated to Tech Day, organized by the ccNSO Technical Working Group. Across four sessions open to the entire ICANN community, participants will explore technical, operational, and security topics relevant to ccTLD operations. One of the sessions, held jointly with the ccNSO UAC, is highlighting ongoing efforts to improve Universal Acceptance readiness and promote broader adoption.

ccNSO MEMBERS MEETING

The ccNSO Members Meeting starts on Tuesday, 10 March, with a welcome session and continues with a dedicated Internet governance session organized by the IGLC. This discussion will address regulatory developments and their potential implications for ccTLDs. Updates from ccNSO working groups and committees will follow, providing members with an overview of ongoing work and upcoming milestones.

The day concludes with a two-part ccTLD-led discussion on current market trends. The first session examines global ccTLD market trends, offering data-driven insights into growth patterns and emerging challenges. The second session builds on this foundation through case studies from ccTLD managers across the different regions and shared experiences, focusing on practical strategies that registries can apply in their own contexts.

On Wednesday, 11 March, there is a strong emphasis on community engagement and collaboration. The day begins with a casual meet-up for ccNSO newcomers, organized by the Onboarding and Mentoring Committee, offering an informal setting to connect with experienced ccNSO members. This is followed by the popular ccTLD News session, featuring case studies and updates from across the global ccTLD community.

Joint sessions round out the day, including a meeting about DNS Abuse between the ccNSO and the gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group, a discussion with ccNSO-appointed ICANN Board members, and a ccTLD consultation on the Review of Reviews. The latter will provide ccTLD manager input into the work of the cross-community group evaluating ICANN review mechanisms.

227TH CCNSO COUNCIL MEETING

The ccNSO program concludes on Thursday, 12 March, with the ccNSO Council meeting, which is open to observers. Agenda items include discussions about ccNSO Council roles and responsibilities and the annual election of the ccNSO leadership team.

Background

The ccNSO is one of the three Supporting Organizations within ICANN. Created in 2003 for and by ccTLD managers, the ccNSO develops and recommends global policies, such as the retirement of ccTLDs, to the ICANN Board. The ccNSO provides a global platform to discuss topics and issues of concern, build consensus and technical cooperation, and facilitate the development of voluntary best practices for ccTLD managers. Membership in the ccNSO is open to all ccTLD managers.

The ccNSO is administered by the ccNSO Council, which consists of 18 councilors (15 elected by ccNSO members, three appointed by the ICANN Nominating Committee). ccNSO councilors are actively involved in determining the work and direction of the ccNSO and managing the policy development process; they also lead and participate in [various ccNSO working groups](#), engage with the ICANN community on topical issues, and develop positions based on ICANN community feedback. The ccNSO Council meets during ICANN Public Meetings and monthly teleconferences. All ccNSO Council documents, minutes of meetings, resolutions, and discussions are published on the [ccNSO website](#).

Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

Policy Development

DNS ABUSE MITIGATION PDP 1 WORKING GROUP

BACKGROUND

Mitigating DNS Abuse remains a priority issue within the ICANN community due to its ongoing impact on the security, stability, and resilience of the DNS. In recent years, the ICANN community has made measurable progress, including through global amendments to the Registrar Accreditation Agreement and Registry Agreement that strengthened baseline DNS Abuse mitigation obligations. Notwithstanding these developments, the GNSO Council determined that additional gaps warranted further examination.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Accordingly, the GNSO Council [requested](#) the development of an Issue Report in August 2025 to assess remaining DNS Abuse mitigation gaps and to determine whether further policy development was appropriate. This work was informed by the findings of the [DNS Abuse Small Team](#), relevant research and data, ICANN Contractual Compliance input, and extensive feedback received through [Public Comment](#) and in sessions during ICANN Public Meetings. The [Final Issue Report](#), published in December 2025, concluded that two issues should be prioritized for policy development: Associated Domain Checks and Unrestricted Application Programming Interface (API) Access.

Following consideration of the Final Issue Report, the GNSO Council [voted](#) to initiate two policy development processes (PDPs) on DNS Abuse Mitigation: PDP 1 on Associated Domain Checks, which will convene its working group immediately, and PDP 2 on safeguards for unrestricted API access, which will convene when the GNSO Council decides on an appropriate time, taking into consideration the progress made and resources needed for DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP 1. Following the meeting of the charter drafting team, the GNSO Council [adopted](#) the DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP 1 [charter](#) on 15 January 2025. Given that the working group is representative in structure, the GNSO secretariat [contacted](#) ICANN community group leaders to nominate their representatives.

WHAT TO EXPECT

During ICANN85, there will be four DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP 1 working sessions, which will include the initiation of PDP 1, focusing on establishing the working group's foundations, confirming its work plan and timeline, introducing charter questions, and hearing initial input from technical and subject-matter experts to inform its early deliberations. Working sessions 1 and 2 will take place on Saturday, 7 March. Work sessions 3 and 4 will take place on Monday, 9 March.

LATIN SCRIPT DIACRITICS PDP WORKING GROUP

BACKGROUND

The Latin Script Diacritics PDP is set out to examine circumstances where a base American Standard Code for Information Interchange gTLD and the Latin script diacritic versions of the gTLD are not variants of each other. The working group is seeking an appropriate mechanism to be in place that will allow a single gTLD registry operator to simultaneously operate both gTLDs.

The GNSO Council [initiated](#) the Latin Script Diacritics PDP on 13 November 2024, [adopting](#) the working group charter on 19 December 2024. The working group [began](#) on 8 March 2025, with the GNSO Council approving its [project plan](#) on 10 April 2025.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The Latin Script Diacritics PDP Working Group has made substantial progress. The working group was able to answer the PDP charter questions and conduct a human rights impact assessment and a global public interest checklist on its preliminary recommendations. The working group then published its 54 preliminary recommendations and implementation guidance on 12 January 2026. The [Initial Report](#) was available for [Public Comment](#) until 23 February 2026.

Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

WHAT TO EXPECT

The working group will begin its review of Public Comment submissions during two working sessions on Saturday, 7 March. Once the working group concludes its review, it plans to stabilize its policy recommendations and submit a Final Report to the GNSO Council for its consideration.

EPDP ON THE TEMPORARY SPECIFICATION FOR GTLD REGISTRATION DATA

BACKGROUND

In February 2023, the ICANN Board [directed](#) the ICANN organization (ICANN org) to develop and launch a Whois Disclosure System, now called the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS), as requested by the GNSO Council. ICANN org launched the RDRS as a pilot effort in November 2023 and began collecting and publishing the metrics associated with it. In January 2024, ICANN released the [first RDRS metrics report](#).

One of the main purposes of the RDRS is to collect data about system usage to help inform future discussions between the GNSO Council and the ICANN Board on pending Recommendations 1–18 of the [Final Report](#) of the GNSO [Expedited Policy Development Process \(EPDP\) on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Phase 2](#).

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The GNSO Council chartered the RDRS Standing Committee to:

1. Review RDRS metrics and engagement.
2. Consider lessons learned that should be factored into the consideration of how to proceed with the recommendations for the System for Standardized Access and Disclosure (SSAD)
3. Make suggestions to the GNSO Council for a proposed recommendation(s) to the ICANN Board in relation to the consideration of the SSAD recommendations.

The RDRS Standing Committee delivered its [Findings Report](#) to the GNSO Council in November 2025 and recommended the GNSO Council propose that the ICANN Board not adopt any SSAD recommendations at this time so that the GNSO can issue supplemental recommendations based on the lessons learned from the RDRS pilot effort. The ICANN Board and GNSO Council will discuss how to proceed with the SSAD recommendations.

WHAT TO EXPECT

There is one session scheduled where the GNSO Council will discuss how to proceed with the SSAD recommendations after receiving further input from the ICANN Board. The working session is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 12 March.

Other Work

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (SCCI)

BACKGROUND

The GNSO Council [convened](#) the Standing Committee on Continuous Improvement (SCCI) as a permanent committee on 13 November 2024 to oversee the implementation of projects related to continuous improvement that are focused on structural, procedural, and process improvements to the GNSO PDP. This is the outcome of a pilot framework known as the GNSO [Council Committee for Overseeing and Implementing Continuous Improvement \(CCOICI\)](#).

The GNSO Council has the responsibility of approving SCCI projects and outcomes. The remit of the SCCI does not include projects or topics that come within the scope of policy development, which must be handled through the GNSO PDP. However, the scope of the SCCI is not limited to GNSO Council work and extends to the broader GNSO community. As necessary, the SCCI will carry out its work through dedicated task forces composed of GNSO Councilors and representatives from each GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency.

Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The SCCI submitted its Final Recommendations Report regarding the policy and Implementation Policy Status Report to the GNSO Council for its consideration. It is now in the process of developing the assessment framework, including the principles, criteria, and indicators for the GNSO Continuous Improvement Program (CIP).

WHAT TO EXPECT

The SCCI will continue its CIP work on Wednesday, 11 March. Following ICANN85, the SCCI will finalize its CIP framework and move on to planning and executing the CIP assessments.

Background

The GNSO is the policy development body responsible for generic top-level domains (gTLDs). Its members include representatives from gTLD registries, ICANN-accredited registrars, intellectual property interests, Internet service and connectivity providers, business, and noncommercial interests. The GNSO brings these different stakeholders and other parts of the ICANN community together to develop gTLD policy recommendations through a multistakeholder process driven by working groups and teams.

GNSO POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The GNSO PDP governs how the GNSO develops consensus policies related to gTLDs. A GNSO PDP lifecycle consists of different steps, including issue identification and scoping, PDP initiation, working group deliberation, GNSO Council deliberation, ICANN Board consideration, and implementation.

For more details about the steps in the PDPs, consult the information below:

- [ICANN Bylaws, Annex A](#)
- [Detailed infographic of the GNSO PDP](#)
- [GNSO PDP Manual](#)



At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

Advice

POLICY

The At-Large community recently produced five statements on policy-related Public Comment proceedings:

- [ALAC Statement on the Proposed GNSO Process for the ICANN Board to Reverse Adoption of GNSO Policy Recommendations](#) – ALAC and the At-Large community welcome the proposed amendments to the GNSO PDP and GNSO Guidance Process manuals and recommend two additions.
- [ALAC Statement on the Name Collision IPv6 Research Study](#) – ALAC and the At-Large community support establishing an IPv6-based controlled interruption mechanism but advise significant caution.
- [ALAC Statement on the Timeline for Urgent Requests for Lawful Disclosure of Nonpublic Registration Data](#) – ALAC and the At-Large community find that sections 3.8, 3.9, and implementation note K clearly describe the requirements; whereas, section 10.7 does not meet the requirements for urgent requests and is not fit for purpose.
- [ALAC Correspondence: ALAC Position on the Proposed Amendment to IETF IPMC Bylaws](#) – ALAC and the At-Large community support the transfer of the IANA intellectual property rights and the assignment of related licenses and other agreements from the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) Trust to the IETF Intellectual Property Management Corporation. ALAC and the At-Large community note their disappointment with the manner in which this matter has been handled at certain points during the past two years.
- [ALAC Statement on the Proposed Next Round Base gTLD Registry Agreement - Public Comment 2 of 2](#) – ALAC and the At-Large community concur with the removal of previously proposed “early Emergency Back-End Registry Operator” language under section 2.13 as appropriate; however, they remain concerned that ICANN’s decision to defer implementation of incident reporting obligations to a future global amendment process will delay the introduction of an essential registrant protection mechanism.

During ICANN85, At-Large will hold several sessions discussing policy advice development that will advance its current work and increase At-Large member knowledge and understanding of policy issues of interest to Internet end users.

- The **At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group** session scheduled for Saturday, 7 March will include an overview of current policy advice development, including a focus on DNS Abuse mitigation.
- An At-Large plenary session entitled, “**Progressing the DNS Abuse Mitigation Agenda in ICANN**” aims to increase understanding of the current DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP on Associated Domain Checks. This session, scheduled for Tuesday, 10 March, is the second in a series of conversations convened by ALAC for the periodic examination of policies requiring DNS Abuse mitigation with the goal of either refining or expanding on such policies through a multistakeholder approach.
- The **joint session of ALAC and the Governmental Advisory Committee**, scheduled for Tuesday, 10 March, also will include a focus on DNS Abuse looking at government expectations and end-user harm. Topics to be discussed include gTLD registration data, reporting and enforcement expectations, end-user impact and trust considerations, and the possibility of coordinated advisories to ICANN and the GNSO PDP working group.
- **At-Large will hold a session with the ICANN Office of the Chief Technology Officer** on Wednesday, 11 March. Topics expected to be covered include an update on the work and tools to support DNS Abuse mitigation, such as Domain Metrica, which provides metrics and information on DNS Abuse trends.
- The **joint session of ALAC and the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)** will include a discussion of the most recent SSAC research and topics of mutual interest.

At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

OPERATIONS

The At-Large community recently produced four statements on operations-focused Public Comment proceedings, including:

- [ICANN Public Meeting Proposed Dates for Fiscal Years \(FY\) 2029–2033](#)
- [ICANN FY 2027–2031 Operating and Financial Plan, ICANN/IANA FY27 Operating Plans and Budgets](#)
- [Draft Public Technical Identifiers FY27 Operating Plan and Budget](#)
- [ICANN Office of Ombuds Framework and Process](#)

During ICANN85, At-Large will hold several sessions related to operations, including strategic priority implementation, the Review of Reviews, and budget-related topics.

- **At-Large will hold a session focused on the Review of Reviews**, which will encourage a detailed discussion of the end-user perspective in future ICANN accountability and efficiency mechanisms. This session is scheduled for Saturday, 7 March.
- The **At-Large Operations, Finance, and Budget Working Group** will hold a session on Sunday, 8 March, which will include a trend-identification exercise with the ICANN Planning Team, a summary of current operations, and a discussion of ALAC Strategic Priorities.

Other Work

The ongoing work of the five Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs) focuses on outreach and engagement. Current At-Large policy and operational statements are also discussed to ensure that the regional perspective is included in the final statements. Each RALO holds monthly membership meetings to discuss issues of regional interest.

During ICANN85, the RALOs are organizing several sessions:

- As the host RALO, the **Asian, Australasian, and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization** will hold several sessions including its Annual General Meeting, a workshop entitled, “The At-Large Community Prepares to Review 2026 Next Round New gTLD Applications,” and a networking event focused on engaging with ICANN85 Fellows and NextGen@ICANN participants.
- The **African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO)** will hold a session, scheduled on Monday, 9 March, entitled, “AFRALO-AfrICANN Think Tank: Community Engagement, Research, and Dialogue.”
- To ensure collaboration with the other RALOs and with the ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team, a **RALO Coordination Meeting** is scheduled for Tuesday, 10 March. Topics will include a discussion with GSE regional teams and a review of regional capacity development efforts.

Background

The At-Large community consists of ALAC, five RALOs, At-Large Structures (currently 272), and individual members (currently 261). ALAC has 15 members who consider and provide advice on the work of ICANN as it relates to the interests of individual Internet users and serves as the primary organizational home within ICANN for individual Internet users.

The work of the At-Large community takes place primarily in working groups along three tracks: policy advice development, operations, and community engagement. At-Large conducts its work through regular teleconferences, participation in PDPs and other policy development work, and active engagement during ICANN Public Meetings.

Learn more about the At-Large community and how to participate on the [At-Large website](#) and [At-Large workspace](#). [Two ICANN Learn courses](#) provide additional information on how to start and sustain involvement in the At-Large community.

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

Advice

GAC members are actively involved in policy and operational topics that merit government input, contribution, and comment.

Consistent with the GAC [Strategic Plan](#) and latest [Annual Plan](#), there are several prominent areas of work: GAC readiness for the New gTLD Program: 2026 Round, collaboration on policy development efforts centered on DNS Abuse, and focused attention to issues related to the implementation of gTLD registration data policy.

NEW gTLD PROGRAM 2026 ROUND READINESS

- GAC delegates continue to collaborate with ICANN org to assure that foundational information is made available to all government representatives so that they can maximize their effective involvement in ICANN processes during the 2026 Round. GAC has scheduled capacity development sessions that specifically address their goals and interests.
- GAC members also are working to finalize their processes and workflows (e.g., GAC Early Warnings and potential GAC Advice regarding applications) in accordance with Next Round processes, deadlines, and other expectations.

gTLD REGISTRATION DATA PRIORITIES

- Following its previous Consensus Advice to the ICANN Board, GAC has been actively engaged in policy implementation discussions to determine an appropriate response time for urgent requests for the disclosure of gTLD registration data in circumstances where there is imminent threat to life, serious bodily injury, critical infrastructure, or child exploitation.
- GAC recently provided Public Comment to ICANN’s effort to finalize the consensus policy language requiring a 24-hour response timeline to authenticated law enforcement urgent requests. GAC is also seeking the prompt delivery of authentication mechanisms being developed by the GAC Public Safety Working Group in collaboration with ICANN org and a practitioners group of ICANN community representatives.
- GAC plans to closely follow the expected consultation between the ICANN Board and the GNSO Council regarding policy recommendations pertaining to the evolution of the RDRS to a more permanent request and disclosure system. GAC provided input on two occasions late last year on this matter regarding the RDRS Standing Committee Report and ICANN’s Policy Alignment Analysis.
- Accuracy of gTLD registration data is another priority policy area in which GAC continues to emphasize its importance for the security and stability of the DNS. In this context, GAC has urged the GNSO to identify an implementation path for the recent recommendation of its Small Team on this matter. GAC has recommended that registrars be required to complete validation and verification of registrant contact information before a newly registered domain name can become accessible through the DNS, or before a domain name transfer can be completed.

DNS ABUSE MITIGATION

- Following its Consensus Advice to the ICANN Board in the [GAC ICANN83 Communiqué](#) “to urge the GNSO Council to undertake all necessary preparations [...] toward starting targeted and narrowly scoped Policy Development Processes on DNS Abuse issues”, GAC provided [input](#) on the Preliminary Issue Report for such a PDP.
- Following the GNSO Council decision to initiate the first DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP 1 on Associated Domain Checks, GAC has closely followed GNSO deliberations that led to the subsequent adoption of a charter for a PDP, which is expected to convene the GNSO DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP 1 Working Group.

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

- GAC has formed a DNS Abuse Small Group that will be supporting the engagement of GAC representatives in the GNSO DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP 1 Working Group.

UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE

- Through the revitalization of its Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names Working Group and contributions to the ICANN Universal Acceptance Expert Working Group, GAC is demonstrating renewed focus on the importance of encouraging Universal Acceptance adoption.

Other Work

GAC is planning nearly 27 hours of programming featuring a combination of policy discussions, joint sessions with other ICANN community groups, capacity development opportunities, and preparation of the GAC ICANN85 Communiqué. GAC continues to build on its communiqué drafting process improvements. Based on those successful experiences, GAC is providing opportunities for early contributions from members and has scheduled nearly seven hours of document discussion and drafting time from Tuesday, 10 March through Thursday, 12 March.

All GAC sessions will be open to the ICANN community and will feature simultaneous interpretation in the six United Nations languages and Portuguese. Details regarding specific GAC sessions can be found on the [GAC ICANN85 agenda webpage](#), where all session briefings, descriptions, materials, and presentations will be published.

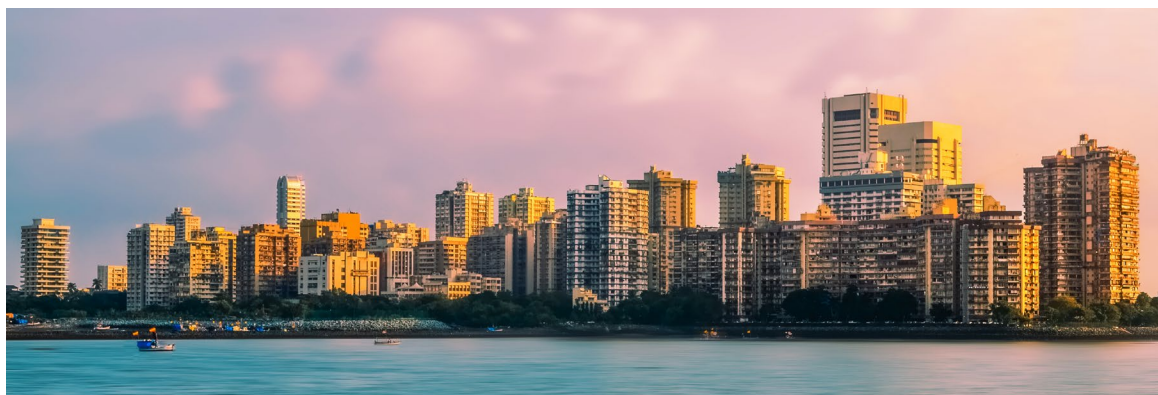
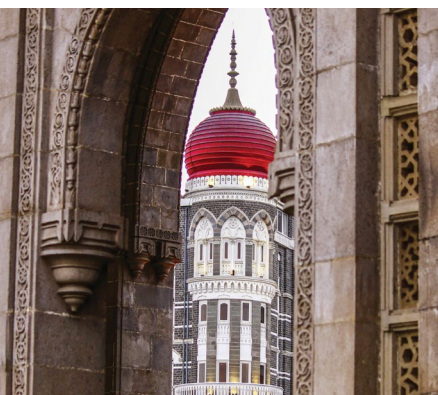
Background

GAC membership consists of national governments and distinct economies that are recognized in international forums. Multinational governmental and treaty organizations as well as public authorities participate in the GAC in an observer capacity. There are currently 184 GAC members and 41 GAC observer organizations.

GAC provides advice on the public policy aspects of ICANN responsibilities regarding the DNS. GAC consensus advice has a particular status under the ICANN Bylaws: Such advice must be duly considered by the ICANN Board, and if the ICANN Board proposes actions that would be inconsistent with GAC consensus advice, it must provide reasons for doing so and attempt to reach a mutually acceptable solution with GAC.

Over time, the ICANN Board and GAC have established a regular and consistent framework for post-communiqué discussions that ensures GAC advice is clear and carefully considered and that government issues of importance are identified and explored well before the potential for advice materializes.

Further information about GAC and its various work efforts, processes, and operating principles can be found on the [GAC website](#).



Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

Advice

Currently, there is one active [work party](#) in the RSSAC Caucus to update “RSSAC001v2: Service Expectations of Root Server Operators.” This work party will meet on Sunday, 8 March.

RSSAC is also developing the charter for a work party on interpreting Root Server System (RSS) measurements. RSSAC will discuss this on Saturday, 7 March.

ROOT SERVER SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

In June 2018, RSSAC published a proposed governance model for the RSS and Root Server Operators (RSOs) in “RSSAC037: A Proposed Governance Model for the DNS Root Server System” ([RSSAC037](#)). RSSAC037 outlined 11 guiding principles for the RSS and proposed five functions to provide governance, accountability, and transparency for the RSS.

RSSAC concurrently published “RSSAC038: RSSAC Advisory on a Proposed Governance Model for the DNS Root Server System” ([RSSAC038](#)). In RSSAC038, the RSSAC made three recommendations for next steps to the ICANN Board.

Throughout 2019, the ICANN Board—through the Board Technical Committee (BTC)—oversaw the development of a “Concept Paper on a Community-Driven Process to Develop a Final Model Based on RSSAC037” ([Concept Paper](#)) as part of ICANN Board consideration of RSSAC037. The Concept Paper outlined an ICANN community-driven process to develop a final governance model for the RSS. The Concept Paper was in response to recommendation one from RSSAC038, which called on the ICANN Board to “initiate a process to produce a final version of the Model for implementation based on RSSAC037.” That process is the focus of the RSS Governance Working Group (GWG).

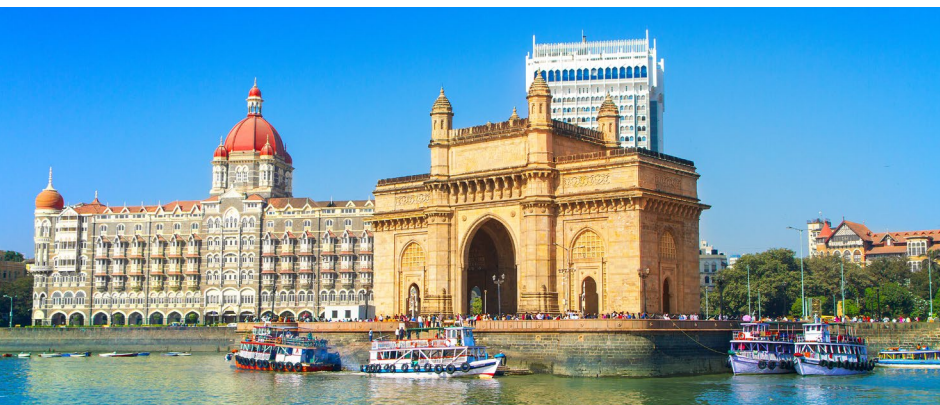
The BTC also directed ICANN org to develop a draft charter, operating procedures, and work plan for the GWG. After [Public Comment](#), the ICANN Board [convened the GWG](#) in November 2019. By convening the GWG, the ICANN Board completed its consideration of recommendation one from RSSAC038.

CURRENT STATUS

On 18 February 2026, the GWG approved and published its [final report](#) on a functional model for the RSS. The GWG proposes a governance structure in the form of the RSS Council to perform five functions, supported by a secretariat. The GWG report also outlines a three-phase implementation plan. The GWG will present its final report on Tuesday, 10 March.

NEXT STEPS

ICANN org will begin to analyze the GWG final report by assessing the feasibility of its recommendations and by developing a draft implementation plan for the ICANN Board to review. The ICANN Board will consider the GWG final report in coordination and consultation with the stakeholders of the RSS.



Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

Other Work

During ICANN85, RSSAC will meet with the ASO, GAC, SSAC, and the ICANN Board. RSSAC also looks forward to reviewing the report of the RSS GWG with the ICANN Board and ICANN community. Finally, RSSAC is working on implementing its Continuous Improvement Program.

Background

[RSSAC](#) advises the ICANN community and the ICANN Board on matters relating to the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the RSS. RSSAC consists of representatives from the root server operator organizations and liaisons from the partner organizations involved in the technical and operational management of the root zone.

The [RSSAC Caucus](#) is composed of DNS experts who have an interest in the RSS, broadening the base of diverse technical expertise available for RSSAC work. The primary role of the RSSAC Caucus is to conduct research and produce publications on topics relevant to the mission of RSSAC. The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee appoints members of the RSSAC Caucus. In addition, all RSSAC members are members of the RSSAC Caucus.



Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

Advice

There are four work parties underway in SSAC.

The **DNS Abuse and Artificial Intelligence Work Party** is in the early stages of its work, having recently finished the chartering process. This work party aims to study artificial intelligence concerns that directly impact the DNS and larger landscape and context changes that have an indirect effect on the DNS. The work party will meet on Sunday, 8 March.

The **DNS Transparency Work Party** is working on a charter to begin its research. This work party will discuss mechanisms to enable enhanced data-sharing practices for registries and registrars that will enable security firms and researchers to better study and combat security and stability threats to the DNS. The work party will meet on Sunday, 8 March.

The **DNSSEC Operational Considerations Work Party** is actively working on a report covering various components related to DNSSEC implementation, functionality, and maintenance. The report will address security, operational, and infrastructure considerations for deploying DNSSEC and examine factors promoting or detracting from adoption. The work party will meet on Tuesday, 10 March.

The **Responsible Integration into the DNS Ecosystem Work Party** is focused on examining integrations between third-party naming systems (such as Blockchain) with the DNS. The report will be informational and discuss challenges related to the domain name lifecycle, potential DNS integrity conflicts (such as name collision), security and stability risks, and policy and governance issues. The work party will meet on Sunday, 8 March.

Other Work

SSAC is co-hosting an open mic session with RSSAC and holding Lightning Talk sessions. This is in addition to joint sessions with the At Large Advisory Committee, the Governmental Advisory Committee, Contracted Parties House, and the ICANN Board.

SSAC will host the DNSSEC and Security Workshop during ICANN85. DNSSEC continues to be deployed around the world at an accelerating pace. Now that DNSSEC has become an operational norm for many registries, registrars, and Internet service providers, the workshop will provide the opportunity to hear about what SSAC is learning.

Background

SSAC advises the ICANN community and the ICANN Board on matters relating to the security and integrity of the naming and address allocation systems of the Internet. This includes operational matters such as those pertaining to the correct and reliable operation of the root name system; administrative matters such as those pertaining to address allocation and Internet number assignment; and registration matters such as those pertaining to registry and registrar services like WHOIS.

For information on how to participate in SSAC, see the [SSAC Operational Procedures](#) and the [SSAC Introduction](#).

