ICANN | GAC
Governmental Advisory Committee

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Governmental Advisory Committee Comments
Regarding Continuous Improvement Framework

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The ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the Continuous Program Framework (hereinafter "Framework") developed by the Continuous Improvement Program Community Coordination Group (CIP-CCG) and published for public comment on 21 November 2024. GAC members have reviewed the proposed Framework and herein provide general comments regarding the principles, community commitments and next steps that have been outlined in the CIP Framework document.

The GAC thanks the ICANN org and staff for the follow-through and support of the community volunteers who have dedicated time and attention over the past year to formulating the Framework. The GAC contributed active participation to the effort and appreciates that the vision set out in the Framework is one that can be applied across the community in a common manner that also recognizes the unique organizational aspects applicable to each individual group in the multistakeholder community.

GAC Comments Regarding Framework Principles

GAC members are supportive of the five (5) main principles identified in the Framework. As articulated, those principles will offer flexibility within each community structure to apply and aspire to meet the principles while employing processes/solutions that are unique to each community group.

As GAC members have reviewed and assessed the principles, there is a clear sentiment within the committee that the GAC has successfully achieved those principles to date and is committed to regularly assessing and ensuring that those principles continue to be met in a sustained manner for years to come.

Among the proposed principles, it is observed that the reference to "collaboration" in the fifth principle is somewhat ambiguous (e.g., collaborate with whom?) and perhaps could be clarified without affecting

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the flexibility of the principle (e.g., by more specifically explaining among and with whom collaboration is expected to take place).

GAC members also suggest that the CCI-CCG consider enriching the current list of proposed Principles, Criteria, and Indicators to include considerations of 1) inclusivity/representativeness of the SOs/ACs and 2) effectiveness of decision-making within the community (for those SOs/ACs which have decision making roles). GAC Members also think it is important that further clarification might be given to the acknowledged flexibility required by different SO/ACs while maintaining consistency of approaches.

GAC Comments Regarding Community Commitment

GAC Members recognize that the collective cross-community approach to developing the Framework was quite effective in helping to achieve a common base of understanding throughout the community. GAC Members appreciate the nearly full-year commitment made by the various SOs and ACs to reach consensus and develop the Framework. It is believed that this committed effort which produced the Framework document should give the ICANN Board confidence that its decision to defer the next cycle of "Organizational Reviews" was a good one and that there will not be a need to resume the former review structure.

The wide-spread participation by the multi-stakeholder community in the Framework development process should be viewed as an example of the commitment that all the communities will make to following through on implementing the Framework as proposed.

As an example of its own commitment to the process, the GAC has included the consideration of the Framework in its Annual 2024-2025 plan adopted by the committee last year (see Final GAC Annual Plan 2024-2025 at expected outcome 2.4).

GAC Comments Regarding Next Steps

The committee is open to getting started as soon as possible on the first phase of the first three-year assessment period proposed in the Framework. GAC Members have expressed confidence that the committee can already answer yes" to each of the identified Framework principles but also recognizes that there are always particular areas or work operations that can be improved.

Some GAC Members have expressed concern that the three-year/3 phase implementation structure is quite ambitious – particularly the expectation that assessments of identified changes or improvements will potentially only be subjected to a short observation period after implementation begins. But, so long as each community has the flexibility to adjust the time for implementing individual phases within each three-year assessment period, then GAC Members are willing to use the first of two 3-year

assessment periods as a "pilot" effort. For example, the GAC has already adopted expectation of regular surveys as part of its new Annual Planning regime. In that context, feedback and assessment (Phase one of the three-year assessment period) can potentially be completed in less time, thereby offering more time for the committee to develop, implement and assess solutions in the subsequent phases - while still achieving the three-year assessment cadence. So long as the three-year assessment cadence is viewed as a "good practice" (as articulated in the Framework document), then the first assessment period (2025 – 2027) will likely prove to be quite productive across the community.

In collaboration with the full committee membership, the GAC Leadership will soon be considering options for operationalizing the proposed CIP Framework – including adjusting the next committee annual plan and re-purposing its existing GAC Operating Principles Evolution (GOPE) Working Group to undertake CIP considerations full time.

Also, through its existing connections and collaborations with other community SOs and ACs, the GAC intends to identify "best-practices" already being considered or adopted by other communities to help in the implementation of its own unique continuous improvement effort.

Conclusion

The GAC is grateful to ICANN org for this opportunity to share the committee's perspective on the CIP Framework and looks forward to contributing to future collaborative community work in this area.

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