

15 February 2023

GNSO Council Strategic Planning Session Report

To: the ICANN Board

Dear Tripti,

On behalf of the GNSO Council, I would hereby like to share the Council's December 2022 Strategic Planning Session (SPS) Report with the ICANN Board. As you may be aware, the GNSO Council met last December in Los Angeles for this recurring meeting which focused on the following themes:

1. Building personal relationships and ensuring a common understanding of the role of a Council member as well as relationships with SG/Cs.
2. Identifying pain points and possible solutions with the goal to facilitate Council work but also relationships and engagement with the broader GNSO community.
3. Common understanding of the work ahead and agreement areas of focus for the year

The attached report captures at a high level our discussions as well as the following strategic objectives the Council identified and related action items:

- Develop and implement improvements that ensure that policy recommendations are “Board ready” when these are considered for adoption by the GNSO Council.
- Ensure timely input into the Board's consideration of the SubPro ODP and related policy recommendations, as well as keeping a close eye on dependencies that are within the Council's remit to address with the aim of getting the Board into a position to be able to agree and announce a next round date before the end of this Council session / year.
- Engage in further conversations with the ICANN Board as well as the GNSO community concerning how ODP type input and assessment can be developed prior to GNSO Council consideration of policy recommendations.
- Consider how to create further transparency in small team deliberations.
- Consider how to ensure enhanced uptake and use of the techniques of the Consensus Playbook with a specific focus on scoping and chartering, learning from approaches applied in efforts such as the facilitated dialogue on Closed Generics.
- Exploring incentives for compromising and promoting opportunities for mutual gain.

As part of an action item from a previous SPS and the Council's desire to be more proactive about policy recommendations after Council approval, I also want to take this opportunity to draw the Board's attention to the Council's work in progress. These are the current anticipated dates by which the Council will consider the Final Reports of ongoing policy development initiatives:

- Internationalized Domain Names EPDP – Council consideration of Final Report for Phase 1 anticipated for January 2024, for Phase 2 – January 2026.
- Transfer Policy Review PDP – Council consideration of Final Report anticipated for February 2025.

Our hope is that this will help inform the Board’s forward planning. For further information on these and other Council activities, please see <https://community.icann.org/x/1YvzC>. Similarly, we would appreciate if the Board could provide the Council with an update on when it anticipates considering policy recommendations that have been submitted to the ICANN Board and whether there is anything further the Council can do to help inform the Board’s consideration.

Last but not least, I wanted to extend the Council’s appreciation for the participation of the GNSO appointed Board members to the ICANN Board, Becky and Matthew. The Council greatly appreciated the opportunity to engage with them during this meeting and benefit from their input and suggestions. As you will note, one recurring theme of the report is how the Council can continue improving on the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy development process. We hope to continue our engagement and conversation on this topic with the ICANN Board because we strongly believe that through open and constructive dialogue, we will be able to identify further opportunities for continuous improvement.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspects of the report further, please do not hesitate to let me know. I anticipate that the Council may want to discuss some of the topics identified in the report further during our bilateral session at ICANN76.

Sincerely,

Sebastien Ducos
GNSO Chair

ICANN | GNSO

Generic Names Supporting Organization

GNSO Council Strategic Planning Session December 2022 Meeting Report

Status of This Document

This is the outcome document from the sixth GNSO Council Strategic Planning Session that took place in Los Angeles in December 2022. This successful event saw the GNSO Council focus on the following themes: 1) Introductions & Induction, 2) Building bridges and fostering collaboration, and 3) Planning for the year ahead.

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Executive Summary

A. Background

This is the outcome document from the sixth GNSO Council Strategic Planning Session (SPS) held in Los Angeles from 14 – 16 December 2022. The meeting sought to build upon the important work and projects that had been initiated following the first Strategic Planning Session in 2018.

The objective of the 2022 SPS was to welcome and integrate new Council members, build bridges within and across houses, as well as within the GNSO, and to strategically plan for the year ahead.

The meeting had a strong attendance of nearly the entire GNSO Council with active and vocal participation from all GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies as well as Nominating Committee appointees. The GNSO's two appointees to the ICANN Board were also present and actively participated.

All of the preparatory materials for this meeting have been archived in the interest of transparency at this URL:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0AGmiYbOKNstYUk9PVA>. Additionally, all relevant Council procedures (including the GNSO Operating Procedures, Policy Development Process Manual, and GNSO Working Group Guidelines) are publicly archived at this URL: <https://gns0.icann.org/en/council/procedures>.

B. Terminology

Where there are references to the 'Council' in this document, please note this refers to the GNSO Council. Similarly, references to 'Working Groups' refer to Policy Development Process (PDP) working groups that have either been chartered by, or fall within the management of, the GNSO Council.

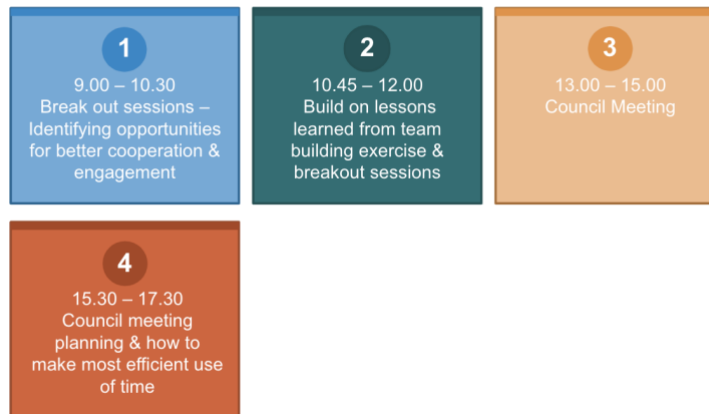
C. Focus

The meeting took place over the course of three days in the following manner:

Agenda Overview - Day 1



Agenda Overview - Day 2



Agenda Overview - Day 3



The proposed themes and objectives were as follows:

1. Building personal relationships and ensuring a common understanding of the role of a Council member as well as relationships with SG/Cs.
2. Identifying pain points and possible solutions with the goal to facilitate Council work but also relationships and engagement with the broader GNSO community.
3. Common understanding of the work ahead and agreement areas of focus for the year.

D. Outcomes

This report provides further details on the discussions, agreements, and action items that were cultivated during the 2022 GNSO Council Strategic Planning Session.

The following strategic priorities were identified for the upcoming year, namely:

- Develop and implement improvements that ensure that policy recommendations are “Board ready” when these are considered for adoption by the GNSO Council
- Ensure timely input into the Board’s consideration of the SubPro ODP and related policy recommendations, as well as keeping a close eye on dependencies that are within the Council’s remit to address with the aim of getting the Board into a position to be able to agree and announce a next round date before the end of this Council session / year.
- Engage in further conversations with the ICANN Board as well as the GNSO community concerning how ODP type input and assessment can be developed prior to GNSO Council consideration of policy recommendations.
- Consider how to create further transparency in small team deliberations.

- Consider how to ensure enhanced uptake and use of the techniques of the Consensus Playbook with a specific focus on scoping and chartering, learning from approaches applied in efforts such as the facilitated dialogue on Closed Generics.
- Exploring incentives for compromising and promoting opportunities for mutual gain.

To check on the progress of the implementation of these action items as well as allow for updates to be made, a post-SPS meeting will be scheduled in the 4-6 month timeframe after the conclusion of this SPS.

Day 1 – Introductions & Induction

A. Focus for day 1

The focus of day 1 was on introductions and induction. As the first in person SPS since January 2020, the Council decided to dedicate substantial time to introductions & induction with the objective to build personal relationships and ensure a common understanding of the role of a Council member as well as their relationship with their respective SG/Cs.

B. SG/C Chairs introductions

Following the welcome and introductions, GNSO Stakeholder Group (SG) and Constituency (C) Chairs joined the meeting virtually to provide a brief overview of their respective SG/C and explain how they engage with their respective Council members.

Each group meets on a regular basis, either monthly or every two weeks with their respective Council members to better understand the items that are in front of Council for review and/or decision. At the same time, these meetings provide an opportunity for Council members to solicit feedback from their respective groups, and where applicable, obtain voting directions.

A number of groups also shared how they interact between as well as within Stakeholder Groups / Constituencies to ensure regular communication and alignment.

The Council then engaged in a discussion on if/how could/should SG/Cs & the Council improve their coordination. Some noted that a better understanding of whom to reach out to at an SG/C level could facilitate cross SG/C communication. It was noted that although there is a wide variety of views, there may still be commonalities. Furthermore, better understanding what is behind someone's view may also aid in breaking down barriers and building trust.

C. The role and responsibilities of a GNSO Council member

This session started off with a panel discussion addressing the following questions:

1. How does your actual experience as a Council member differ from your original expectations?
2. What would you wish someone had told you or pointed you towards when you first joined the Council?
3. How do you prepare for Council work? – tips & tricks
4. What does being an “active member” of Council mean to you?

How does your actual experience as a Council member differ from your original expectations?

Panel members shared that in certain instances they had little expectations due to the sudden nature of joining the Council but that they greatly benefitted from the knowledge and guidance of sitting Council members of their respective group to get up to speed. One panel member noted that their expectation was that the Council would serve as a hub to facilitate interaction between on the one hand community and Council and on the other Council and Board, but neither seems to be happening. For some, this highlighted the need to explore how to facilitate further improved communication between the different parts of the community to ensure early warning and communication in policy related activities.

It was also noted that it is important to keep in mind that Council members are there as the managers of the process. This does not require knowing every single detail, but rather, knowing when to delegate and when to step in. It is important for Council members to know where and how to obtain further information should there be indications that further attention is warranted. Some also pointed out that the Council may need to play an increased role in following up on policy recommendations after Council approval to enhance transparency around timing of next steps and ensuring that progress is made (“managing up”).

Some suggested that the Council should try to be more hands on when it comes to managing PDPs, which may require more frequent substantive updates or intervention when there seems to be an impasse. It was also noted that it is important for the Council to remain flexible – just because something was done in a certain way in the past, doesn’t mean it has to be done the same way now. Some pointed to the use of small teams as well as the Closed Generics facilitated dialogue as ways to be innovative and flexible in dealing with issues that do not have an obvious home in one of the policy processes yet.

Proposed Action Item #1: Organize session with the ICANN Board to exchange information on how planning, management and scheduling of work is done with the objective to enhance mutual understanding and transparency. This would include a presentation by the Council of its Portfolio Management Tools.

What would you wish someone had told you or pointed you towards when you first joined the Council

Some noted that it would have been helpful to understand that the process as documented is not as linear as it appears to be from the outside.

It was noted that having immediate access to a list of acronyms could have facilitated the learning curve. The induction meetings and materials that are provided by staff

when new Council members join were seen as an invaluable tool for getting up to speed.

How do you prepare for Council work? – tips & tricks

Several Council members noted that the work they do to prepare for discussions with their respective SG/Cs have been very useful to also prepare for Council discussions. Some noted the importance but also the challenges of being able to identify how topics are at times interconnected and at what stage of work these are at.

The importance of reaching out to others for further information and asking questions was also highlighted.

What does being an “active member” of Council mean to you?

Several Council members pointed out the importance of getting involved in substantive work. Only participating in Council meetings is not sufficient and unlikely rewarding. If you want to add value, Council members need to try to absorb as much as possible and be as active as possible.

It was noted that the emergence of small teams that are made up of Council members may have made it more difficult for smaller groups to be represented / actively participate which may result in less visibility of what is going on.

Proposed action item #2: Review current small team practices to determine if there is further transparency that can be introduced in the small team activities without changing the nature of these small teams and/or creating additional burdens for staff and/or small team members. One specific suggestion was to publicly archive small team email lists, like the Council mailing list.

D. Council’s role as Manager of the PDP

As part of this session, the Council reviewed the different stages of the PDP and the tools that the Council has available to oversee and manage the PDP. The ICANN Bylaws require that the Council is the responsible party for managing the policy development process. The required steps for doing this are outlined in the ICANN Bylaws as well as the PDP Manual.

For example, in the scoping / chartering phase, the Council has started making use of scoping teams to assess and confirm a common understanding of the problem before moving forward with policy development. In addition, the Council is aiming to make more active use of the tools outlined in the Consensus Playbook, such as:

- Assessing the situation – take a deep look into the positions of the different stakeholders.
- Identify all groups with an interest. Learn about their interests and their concerns. What are potential concerns and/or issues that cannot be touched.
- Where will conflict and agreement likely exist.
- Right size the problem – limit the scope to what is achievable.
- Pick the right facilitator.
- Decide who needs to be at the table.
- Make sure that there is agreement of participation by members upfront – what is in scope, what is out of scope, what is the time commitment, etc. Hold members accountable to what was agreed at the outset.

Taking those aspects into account will make it easier to put a charter together that is fit for purpose and that sets out a path most likely to achieve consensus.

The Council is also in the process of making further updates to the PDP WG Charter template to make sure proper consideration is given to all aspects a WG is expected to consider during its deliberations.

During the course of a PDP, the Council has the following existing tools available to stay up to date of a WG's deliberations:

- [Project List](#)
- PDP WG Project Package (see for example [here](#))
- [Portfolio Management Tools](#)
- GNSO Council Liaison to the PDP
- Org liaisons to PDPs / Board liaisons to PDPs
- Join as an observer
- Public comment
- [GNSO Policy Briefing](#) prior to ICANN meetings

The Council also reviewed the information that is currently required to be included in a Final Report:

- Compilation of Stakeholder Group and Constituency Statements
- Compilation of any statements received from any ICANN Supporting Organization or Advisory Committee
- Recommendations for policies, guidelines, best practices or other proposals to address the issue
- Statement of level of consensus for the recommendations presented in the Initial Report
- Information regarding the members of the PDP Team, such as the attendance records, Statements of Interest, etc.

- A statement on the WG discussion concerning impact of the proposed recommendations, which could consider areas such as economic, competition, operations, privacy and other rights, scalability and feasibility

In addition, the Council may require in the near future that WGs provide further information in relation to the expected impact of policy recommendations on human rights as well as the expected impact on existing consensus policies.

The Council then engaged in a discussion focusing on questions such as: 1) is the Council's responsibility clearly understood?, 2) Does the Council have the tools to carry out this responsibility along the different phases of the PDP? 3) What improvements would you suggest to managing the PDP?

As part of the discussion, Council members pointed out that if an ODP is needed, it would be far more useful if it, or parts thereof, would be made available to a WG prior to Council consideration of the Final Report. Council members also recognized the value and importance of having Board and org liaisons participating in PDP WG to be able to flag potential concerns at an early stage. It was highlighted that in order for this to be effective, Board and org liaisons should be empowered to speak for their respective groups. It was noted that in relation to ICANN org liaisons, a set of proposed guidelines had been circulated to the GNSO Council for review (see [here](#)). Some noted the importance of finding an effective way of obtaining input without needing to formalize a new process or phase that would add additional time and complexity.

Proposed action item #3 – Thomas Rickert to prepare proposed Council input on the GDS Liaison guidelines.

Proposed action item #4 - As part of the upcoming review of the ODP, Council to engage in a conversation with ICANN org on how to facilitate operational input that could help inform the policy development process as well as Council consideration of recommendations earlier in the process instead of waiting until after Council approval.

The Council considered whether the Council should apply the same criteria for considering a Final Report and recommendations as the ICANN Board to make sure the recommendations are "Board ready". It was noted that there is a difference between accountability and responsibility. The Council is responsible for applying best management practices but that doesn't mean that it is accountable for ensuring all relevant assessments are carried out. Regardless, most agreed to the importance of ensuring that policy recommendations are "Board ready" before these are adopted and sent to the ICANN Board for its consideration.

The Council also discussed the role that others such as Advisory Committees play in the development of policy. Early engagement in the policy development process is definitely welcomed, and it was noted that if this input was sufficiently considered, even if not

adopted, this should give the ICANN Board ammunition to avoid second bites at the apple when Advisory Committees provide Advice that is identical to the input that had already been considered by the PDP WG. It was also noted that in addition to the review that the GNSO Council conducts of the Advice included in the Governmental Advisory Committee Communique, it should consider doing the same in relation to “Issues of Importance to the GAC” as it may help inform the ICANN Board of the GNSO position on those issues. Some noted the importance of better communication from the GNSO Council to the ICANN Board concerning the rationale for why it is recommending something to the ICANN Board and anticipating questions the Board would be expected to consider as part of its deliberations. In relation to the participation of liaisons, a similar concept should apply - concerns should be made clear at an early stage and not after a PDP WG has completed its deliberations.

Proposed action item #5: Board and GNSO Council to engage in a conversation about what “Board ready” means and if/how the information provided to the ICANN Board in conjunction with a Final Report needs to be updated.

Proposed action item #6: Council to review “GNSO Council review of the GAC Communique” template to determine if this is still fit for purpose and/or whether it should be updated to reflect include review of other parts of the Communique.

E. Team Building Exercise

The GNSO Council engaged in a team building activity that provided important insights into the role of perception, behavior and trust in building relationships and developing consensus.

Day 2 – Building bridges and fostering collaboration

A. Objective

The focus of day 2 was on building bridges and fostering collaboration with the objective of identifying pain points and possible solutions with the goal to facilitate Council work but also relationships and engagement with the broader GNSO community.

B. Breakout sessions

The Council broke out in two groups (Contracted Party House & Non-Contracted Party House) with the goal of identifying opportunities for better communication (formal and informal) within Houses, as well as within Council as a whole and with the GNSO community broadly. The two groups were asked to consider the following questions:

Part 1 - Discuss communication within the House and if/how this could be improved

- How do your SG/C's communicate within the SG/C?
- What communication channels currently exist within the House (between SG/C's)?
 - Are these fit for purpose (do they serve the work of Council well)?
 - Could they be improved?
 - What communication channels are missing?

Part 2 - Brainstorm communication gaps between Houses, Councilors, SG/G groups and GNSO community

- Identify scenarios where communication has broken down and where more proactive communication would have helped the work of Council
 - Looking for examples, not necessarily solutions
 - Include challenges with communication from Council to SG/C and SG/C's back to Council

The NCPH breakout considered the role of the Nominating Committee and noted the desire of the current appointee to improve communication amongst all SG/Cs within the house. It was noted that the NCPH to date has only had formal interaction through the NCPH intersessional in-person meetings that were organized, with the last one four years ago. At the moment, there is no official communication between the two Stakeholder Groups. All agreed that this should change by building trust through regular meetings. It was also suggested that the Nominating Committee would be invited to SG/C meetings to start gaining a better understanding of common priorities. This could allow for a description of each SG/C role and commonalities that may exist.

Proposed Action item #7: NCPH to work with NCPH nominating committee appointee and NCPH appointed Board member to plan for a joint session at future ICANN meetings.

The CPH breakout also noted the role the Nominating Committee appointee could play in serving as a bridge for communications and suggested that more regular communications with both the CPH-assigned and non-voting Nominating Committee appointees could facilitate sharing of information and views . It noted that a high degree of communication already exists between the Registrar and Registry Stakeholder Group, including at the Executive Committee level. In addition, the CPH as a whole also meets for a joint session at ICANN meetings.

Proposed Action item #8: CPH to explore monthly meetings with Nominating Committee appointees to facilitate a better understanding of positions and views.

In the discussion that followed, some noted that instead of waiting for outreach and collaboration just prior to a vote, this could already happen at an earlier stage which could also help Council identify where PDP WGs might be struggling.

Some noted that there are preconceived notions that need to be debunked as they may hinder communication and result in assumptions that are not based on facts. Several Council members pointed to the need to further discuss and consider incentives to compromise. It was observed that there is too much a sense of negotiation (“if I give you an inch, you will take a mile”) which may make WG participants reluctant to look for compromise. This may also be linked to the fear of re-litigation at later stages in the process. It was also observed that giving in on a point is seen as a loss and a concession. Some seem to be here to win, not to build consensus. It was suggested that the Council may also want to consider other ways to come to agreement – the Closed Generics facilitated dialogue was mentioned as an example (e.g., “Participant Commitments” and identifying outcomes that are NOT in scope). Some also pointed out that if the incentives to hold out are bigger than those incentives to compromise, it is impossible to make progress. As long as there are ways to route around ICANN, or the incentive to make ICANN work is not enough incentive, it is not possible to address this issue.

Proposed Action item #9: Set up follow up discussion with Council and SG/C Chairs to discuss the topic of incentives to compromise.

C. Council meeting planning & how to make most efficient use of time

The Council reviewed the current Council meeting opportunities, namely:

1. Monthly Council meetings

2. GNSO weekend sessions at ICANN meetings
3. Bilateral meetings with GAC, ALAC, ccNSO, and ICANN Board during ICANN meetings
4. Council Strategic Planning Session
5. Mailing list exchanges

As well as the opportunities to engage in planning for these activities:

- Council agenda planning document (see <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FSNIAHTjbWAZKcftI7SWwzXda1NtKxfQ2k-t0oiGr8/edit#heading=h.unjpfxy4jex9>)
- Provide input on ICANN meeting agendas
- Provide input on agenda items and speaking points for bilateral meetings
- Respond to pre-planning SPS survey

Issues to consider:

- Is the Council making most efficient use of time? If not, what changes should be considered?
- Should there be more opportunities to engage with the GNSO community, for example, during GNSO weekend sessions or open mic?
- How to ensure that GNSO community members and those working on community initiatives wanting to provide updates are heard without this creating a burden on Council?
- How to avoid duplication of information provided?

As part of its discussion, the Council recognized the importance of engaging with the GNSO community and acknowledged that the open microphone at the end of Council meetings during ICANN meetings have most recently not been optimal for community members to engage with the GNSO Council.

In relation to updates that are provided to the GNSO Council, it was suggested that focus for F2F time should be on issues requiring Council input or resolution, with the actual update being provided ahead of time, either in the form of a webinar or written update. If there is a general update scheduled as part of the ICANN meeting schedule, Council meetings should be encouraged to attend those sessions. It was noted that the GNSO Policy Update webinar follows a similar format – PDP WG Chairs provide updates to the Council during the webinar, which then allow for a further discussion, where needed, as part of a F2F session at an ICANN meeting. It was suggested that Council liaisons to PDP WG could also play a more active role in identifying what may require F2F discussion.

A number of suggestions were made during the session for how the GNSO Council could engage more effectively with the community such as reconsidering seating

arrangements, a prep week open forum meeting, and getting questions ahead of a meeting.

Proposed Action item #10: Council leadership to work with staff support on options for consideration by Council for more effective engagement with the GNSO community in the context of ICANN meetings.

In relation to bilateral meetings with the ICANN Board as well as Advisory Committees, it was noted that typically a lot of time is spent on formalities vs. actual discussion. It was also pointed out that nothing prevents bilateral meetings to take place outside of ICANN meetings, should a topic(s) warrant further engagement. It was deemed important to consider prior to every ICANN meeting whether a bilateral meeting with an Advisory Committee and/or Supporting Organization is necessary. It was noted that in most cases a preparatory meeting with either leadership and/or liaison takes place to make this determination.

Some noted that there may be a need for more proactive engagement of the community in the ICANN meeting planning process as some expressed the sentiment that the only options that are considered are those that are proposed by ICANN org to the planning committee.

Day 3 – Planning for the year ahead

A. Objective

The focus for day 3 was to obtain a common understanding of the work ahead and reach agreement on areas of focus for the year ahead.

B. Understand the Council's current and future workload

The Council started this session with a review of the Council's annual activity forecast (see annex A) which not only provides an overview of the work the Council has committed to, but also details the path and estimated timeline a certain activity would likely follow. This provided the Council with further insight into the potential workload for the year ahead, recognizing that for certain activities the Council is considered as the owner, while for others it serves as a contributor. The breakdown of the path an activity is expected to follow, created further awareness of the potential long-term impact a decision of Council to proceed with a first step has, even if there are further decision-points along the way for a go-no-go. It is important for the Council to be conscious of potential implications a decision may have on workload and the commitment of resources to a certain effort.

The Council also reviewed the Project Management Tool and was reminded that it relies on the sequencing of work instead of prioritization. For example, the Action Decision Radar (ADR) serves as a radar for things to do. It does not mean the Council needs to initiate work, but the Council is expected to make a determination of what to do next, which also includes the option to determine that no further work is needed.

The Council then considered the Council's workload which is broken down into: 1) Work that the Council is the owner of and has already committed to, 2) Work that the Council is a contributor to and which is already committed, and 3) Significant work that Council is either the owner or contributor and the work may initiate in the next year. See annex B for further details.

Discussion:

- Some pointed out that although the Council may have control over its part of the process, there is very little visibility on Board activity. The Council would welcome more insight into the Board's planning and timeline. (see also proposed action item #1).
- In relation to the documenting of activities, it might be helpful to include who carries responsibility for the activity (e.g. GNSO Council, GNSO, GNSO Staff support, ICANN Board, ICANN org).

- Some expressed concern about the duration of PDPs and the need to explore ways to reduce the overall timeline. It was suggested that providing stricter deadlines might reduce the likelihood of open-ended discussions, but some also observed that working with volunteers may not make this approach feasible. It was noted that it is maybe not about applying further pressure, but about making sure WGs have the tools to progress their work which includes scoping issues appropriately, ensuring earlier touch points, and providing incentives to compromise and work towards consensus.
- Some noted that integrating aspects of the ODP earlier in the process should be further considered, noting that this could have budget / resource implications and as a result would need to be discussed with the ICANN Board. Some noted the potential challenges of providing input at an earlier stage when policy recommendations are not yet fully developed. It was suggested that a proposed Final Report could serve as the moment of carrying out some of this analysis as at that point policy recommendations should be fully developed, while there would still be time for the PDP WG to adjust if needed. The information from this analysis could then also be considered by the GNSO Council as part of its consideration of the policy recommendations.
- It was pointed out that the ODP is optional and dependent on the complexity of what needs to be achieved. At times, the ICANN Board may need more time and information to understand the implications of accepting policy recommendations. Providing this information as part of the submission of the Final Report could reduce the need for an ODP.
- The importance of enhanced communication with the Board was also highlighted, as well as the need to engage immediately prior and after adoption of policy recommendations by the ICANN Board. It was suggested that such engagement should be planned well in advance to avoid scheduling issues and delays.
- Some highlighted the importance of proper scoping – ensuring agreement at the outset on what is considered within scope and equally important, what isn't, as well as definition of terms and agreement on (external) support that may be needed.
- It was also noted that the Council, as well as SG/Cs may need to be more on top of PDP WGs. The SG/Cs need to hold their representatives accountable, especially if they are not being constructive and/or do not accept the instructions that were provided at the outset.
- In relation to the project list, the question was asked whether there would be a better way to understand the delta's compared to the previous version.

Proposed action item #11: Set up brainstorming sessions with recent PDP WG Chairs to solicit their feedback on what should be done differently or better. This should also include consideration of if/how PDP WG reporting should evolve (for example, suggestions were made that there should be more regular reporting from PDP WGs to the Council)

Proposed action item #12: Staff support team to consider if/how the changes in the project list could be highlighted more clearly to Council.

Proposed action item #13: Staff support team to review the last column of the Action Decision Radar to clarify content.

Next, Council engaged in an exercise to identify the work that Council members believe the Council should commit to completing / significantly progressing / initiating before the AGM (if any).

In relation to work that the Council owns and is committed to, it recognized that basically all efforts are important to move forward on, especially the SubPro related items, noting that some have dependencies which means Council may not control the next steps. Furthermore, Council members recognized the importance of progressing on the different items related to SubPro and the aim to get input to the ICANN Board, even if it is initial input, in time for its workshop in January. In relation to PDP Improvements, it was noted that the Council should consider including a “Consensus Assessment Review” of the Consensus Playbook which would focus on reviewing the methods and processes described in the Consensus Playbook and see if/how these could be included into the initial stages of a PDP.

Proposed action item #14: SubPro Small team to work on developing initial input to the ICANN Board on the SubPro ODA in time for the ICANN Board workshop in January. It was recognized that this will not be the only opportunity for input, but any indications the Council could provide at that stage would help inform the deliberations.

Proposed action item #15: Council leadership to work with Melissa Allgood to review Consensus Playbook and develop recommendations for if/how the techniques described can be further integrated into the current PDP.

In relation to work that the Council contributes to, it was noted that the Council is expected to continue contributing to these efforts, but it does not control the timeline for if/when these move forward.

With regards to anticipated work, the Council noted that completing the work on the IGO Specific Curative Rights should be a priority as it had already been pending for so long.

C. Opportunities & Challenges

The Council then engaged in a discussion around main opportunities & challenges to delivering on this workload.

One of the challenges identified included the number of dependencies in relation to SubPro and how it would be important to keep an eye on these to make sure these are all moving and delivering on time.

Proposed Action item #16: Staff support team to develop an overview of all items related to SubPro and their expected timing.

It was also suggested that the Council should be more proactive in relation to communicating its achievements and 'wins'.

Proposed Action item #17: Form a small team to develop a proposed GNSO Council communications plan. In anticipation of formation of a small team, Council to consider submitting an Additional Budget Request (ABR) to support the recommendations from the small team.

D. Strategic Priorities

Based on its discussions throughout the three days of the SPS, the Council identified the following strategic priorities for the year ahead:

- Develop and implement improvements that ensure that policy recommendations are "Board ready" when these are considered for adoption by the GNSO Council
- Ensure timely input into the Board's consideration of the SubPro ODP and related policy recommendations, as well as keeping a close eye on dependencies that are within the Council's remit to address with the aim of getting the Board into a position to be able to agree and announce a next round date before the end of this Council session / year.
- Engage in further conversations with the ICANN Board as well as the GNSO community concerning how ODP type input and assessment can be developed prior to GNSO Council consideration of policy recommendations.
- Consider how to create further transparency in small team deliberations.
- Consider how to ensure enhanced uptake and use of the techniques of the Consensus Playbook with a specific focus on scoping and chartering, learning

- from approaches applied in efforts such as the facilitated dialogue on Closed Generics.
- Exploring incentives for compromising and promoting opportunities for mutual gain.

The action items identified in this document aim to work towards achieving these priorities, recognizing that for a number of these, work is likely to continue beyond the next Annual General Meeting.

E. Wrap up

The Council agreed to continue these conversations over the next couple of months and plan for regular check-ins in relation to the different action items that were identified. Council members were also asked to participate in an evaluation of the SPS (see results [here](#)). The feedback confirms the continued value of the SPS for the GNSO Council and the desire to continue with this effort in the upcoming year.

Annex B – Council Workload

Work that Council is the owner and already committed:

- Registration Data Accuracy - Scoping Team (On Hold)
- SubPro ODA small team
- GGP on Applicant Support
- EPDP - IDNs
- Transfer Policy PDP - Phase 1
- CCOICI, SCBO, SSC
- PDP Improvements
- Ongoing operations (e.g., monthly Council meetings, ICANN meetings, etc.)

Work that Council is a contributor and already committed:

- EPDP Phase 1 and Phase 2a IRT
- RPMs Phase 1 IRT
- Facilitated discussion on closed generics

On Hold:

- Whois Conflicts Procedure
- Privacy & Proxy IRT
- Translation/Transliteration IRT

Significant work that Council is either the owner or contributor and the work may initiate in the next year:

- RPMs Phases 2 - UDRP Project Status Report
- SubPro IRT
- Expiration policies (next steps?)
- DNS abuse (next steps?)
- IGO Specific Curative Rights IRT
- Accuracy Scoping Team