GNSO Council Liaison to GNSO WGs – Role Description (updated in 2021 to include PDP 3.0 recommendations)

As a chartering organization, the GNSO Council appoints a liaison typically to all GNSO Working Groups as well as Implementation Review Teams. In addition, the GNSO Council also appoints liaisons to the ccNSO and GAC; for the latter, a specific application process is in place (see next section for further details). The role and responsibilities of a liaison are described in the GNSO Working Group Guidelines as well as the Implementation Review Team Principles & Guidelines. This document aims to summarize the liaison responsibilities and outline the GNSO Council's expectations with regards to the role of a liaison.

A liaison must be a member of the GNSO Council.

Responsibilities of a liaison to a GNSO Working Group:

- The liaison is appointed by the GNSO Council and as such is accountable to the GNSO Council;
- The liaison may serve as an interim WG Chair until a WG Chair is named. As per current practice, it would not be appropriate for the liaison to be considered for a permanent Chair or co-chair/vice-chair position;
- The liaison is expected to report to the GNSO Council on a regular basis (at a minimum, at or before an ICANN public meeting and as issues or significant milestones arise in the group's work) on the progress of the Working Group. Such report is expected to be coordinated with the WG leadership;
- The liaison will assist the WG Chair as required with his/her knowledge of WG processes and practices;
- The liaison will refer to the Council any questions or queries the WG might have in relation to its charter and mission;
- The liaison will assist or engage when the WG faces challenges or problems, and will notify the Council of efforts in this regard;
- The liaison will assist the WG Chair in suspected cases of abuse of ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior and/or restricting the participation of someone who seriously disrupts the WG;
- The liaison will facilitate in case there is disagreement between the WG Chair and WG member(s) in relation to designation of consensus given to certain recommendations.
- The liaison is expected to be a regular attendee/participant of WG meetings;
- The liaison is expected to fulfill his/her role in a neutral manner. Should the liaison wish to intervene / participate in WG deliberations in his/her personal capacity, the liaison is expected to make it explicitly clear when he/she is speaking in liaison capacity and when speaking in personal capacity.
- The GNSO Council liaison is responsible for ensuring that the WG Chair(s) are informed about activities of the GNSO Council that have an impact on the Working Group. This includes not only actions taken with respect to substance related to the Working Group,

but also any actions taken on matters upon which the Work Group depends or on which the Council depends on the Working Group.
- The GNSO Council Liaison should participate in regular meetings with the WG Leadership and consult with WG Leadership prior to providing updates or reports to the GNSO Council.
- The GNSO Council Liaison should be the person upon whom the Working Group relies to convey any communications, questions or concerns to the GNSO Council.

The liaison is expected to fulfill the liaison role in neutral manner, monitor the discussions of the Working Group and assist and inform the Chair and the WG as required.

Responsibilities of a liaison to a GNSO Implementation Review Team

- The Council liaison is expected to ensure a direct link to the GNSO Council if/when needed;
- For example, in the event of disagreement between ICANN Staff and the IRT or any of its members on the implementation approach proposed by ICANN Staff, the liaison is expected to work with the GDD Project Manager to resolve the disagreement.[1] Should the disagreement prove irreconcilable despite such efforts, the GNSO Council liaison in consultation with the IRT is expected to make an assessment as to the level of consensus within the IRT on whether to raise the issue with the GNSO Council for consideration, using the standard decision making methodology outlined in the GNSO Working Group Guidelines. If the GNSO Council liaison makes the determination that there is consensus for such consideration, the liaison will inform the GNSO Council. The GNSO Council will consider the issue and make a determination on how to proceed. This process also applies to cases where there is agreement between the IRT and GDD staff concerning the need for further guidance from the GNSO Council and/or when issues arise that may require possible policy discussion;
- The liaison will facilitate in case there is disagreement with the decisions of the GDD Project Manager and/or the IRT.

GNSO Council Expectations of all Liaisons

Taking into account the responsibilities of a liaison, the GNSO Council furthermore expects that all liaisons:

- Will do his/her best to stay up to date on the deliberations to be in a position to provide the GNSO Council with updates at appropriate times;
- Will make clear when he/she is acting in her liaison capability vs. participating as a WG/IRT member;

[1] Should the Council Liaison not be willing or available to carry out this role, the IRT will inform the GNSO Council accordingly and identify a member of the IRT to take on the role of the GNSO Council liaison for this specific purpose.

- Is alert to situations that may require liaison involvement and be prepared to act swiftly, when needed;
- Will notify the GNSO Council as soon as he/she is no longer able to take on these responsibilities so that another liaison can be identified.

GNSO Council Liaison to the Country Code Names Supporting Organisation (ccNSO)

The GNSO Council also appoints a liaison to the ccNSO. The role of the liaison is to follow the deliberations of the ccNSO and identify when there are issues or topics being discussed that are of mutual interest. Furthermore, the liaison is expected to be available to answer any questions or relay any queries the ccNSO may have for the GNSO Council. As such, the GNSO liaison to the ccNSO is expected to:

- Participate in the meetings and activities of the ccNSO;
- Be sufficiently informed of ongoing GNSO efforts to communicate and advocate the positions of the GNSO to the ccNSO on topics of mutual interest;
- Report to the GNSO on current and upcoming activities of the ccNSO that may be of relevance to the ccNSO and broader ccTLD community;
- Actively prepare for and participate in bilateral meetings between the GNSO and ccNSO Councils.
- Report to the GNSO Council not less than once a month on the activities of the ccNSO. This can be done in writing to the Council mailing list and could include sharing meeting agenda's and/or meeting outcomes. The liaison should seek specific direction from the GNSO Council on issues of mutual interest where GNSO Council input is required.

GNSO Council Liaison to the GAC

The responsibilities and expectations with regards to the GNSO Council liaison to the GAC are separately documented in this process: https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/request-liaison-gac-23sep21-en.pdf. Note, the selection process for this position is also documented there.

PDP 3.0 Improvement #5
GNSO Council Liaison Supplemental Guidance
Finalized on 14 January 2020

Introduction

At the 2019 Strategic Planning Session, a small team of Councilors agreed that providing more specific guidance, perhaps in the form of a checklist, would be beneficial to liaisons. Further, it was agreed that having this more specific guidance would not only better serve the liaisons, but would also help establish expectations for the GNSO Council and the WGs they serve. This supplemental document is to be used as a complement to the Role description found here: https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/gnso-liaison-wg-22feb18-en.pdf.

There is one job duty below that is highlighted and italicized because of its importance, but also because of its overarching nature. The liaison's primary responsibility is to facilitate the managerial role of the GNSO Council in overseeing the activities of the GNSO PDP working group. **"The liaison is expected to fulfill his/her role in a neutral manner."** This means that everything the liaison does during his/her tenure, including but not limited to participating in WG calls, reporting status, conveying information, and escalating issues, should be done in that neutral manner.

Job Duty	Phase	Type	Recommended Frequency	Ideas/Best Practices Handbook	Suggested Time Commitment
The liaison is expected to fulfill his/her role in a neutral manner. Should the liaison wish to intervene / participate in WG deliberations in his/her personal capacity, the liaison is expected to make it explicitly clear when he/she is speaking in liaison capacity and when speaking in personal capacity.	All	Basic Expectations	Ongoing	• The liaison's primary purpose is to serve as the liaison. The liaison can "take off their liaison hat," which must be done explicitly, but doing so is strongly discouraged. Potential liaisons and the Council should take this into account prior to appointing a Councilor to the position. • If the liaison is constantly "taking off his/her hat," this is likely to negatively affect the liaison's ability to serve in the role in the neutral manner and the	N/A

				Council and liaison may want to consider whether another individual is better able to serve in this role. • A liaison should recuse him/herself in the substantive deliberation within the WG if such work conflicts with his/her job duty as a liaison, who is involved in the operation/ management of the WG. • This particular Job Duty is overarching and affects all other Job Duties.	
The liaison may serve as an interim WG Chair until a WG Chair is named. As per current practice, it would not be appropriate for the liaison to be considered for a permanent Chair or co-chair/vicechair position;	PDP Start Leadership transition	Guidance/ Leadership	As needed	None	1-2 WG meetings in total, plus preparation
The liaison is expected to be a regular attendee/participant of WG meetings;	All	Basic Expectations	As dictated by the WG	• Attend meetings to the extent you can • Utilize meeting recordings and transcripts to catch up • Monitor email list	1-2 hrs per week
The GNSO Council Liaison should participate in regular meetings/interactions with the WG Leadership and consult with WG Leadership prior to providing updates or reports to the GNSO Council.	All	Basic Expectations	As dictated by the WG	• Change "meetings" to "interactions" to accommodate how each individual WG Leadership team functions. The interactions do not necessarily need to be in addition to regular leadership interactions (e.g., if may be beneficial to include the liaison in the various leadership channels of communication.)	1-2 hrs per week

				• Feeds into reporting/escalation	
The liaison is expected to report to the GNSO Council on a regular basis (at a minimum, at or before an ICANN public meeting and as issues or significant milestones arise in the group's work) on the progress of the Working Group. Such report is expected to be coordinated with the WG leadership;	All	Reporting (Shared Responsibility)	Each Council Meeting	Regular reporting (i.e., monthly) is expected to be shared responsibility, with WG leadership, staff, and the Council liaison all being involved. • Development of regular reporting materials (WG leadership, staff, in consultation with the liaison) • Send regular reporting materials (WG leadership, staff) • Identify material changes, issues, or milestones that should be shared with Council (WG leadership, staff, in consultation with the liaison) • Send material updates to Council mailing list prior to any Council meeting (WG leadership, staff) • Discuss any material issues during Council meeting during project list review (if any) (WG leadership, liaison) • [If any further discussion is needed, the liaison can ask that the item be added to a Council meeting agenda (Council liaison)]	Collectively, approximately 2 hrs per month. However, commitment will be higher if escalation is needed.
The GNSO Council Liaison should be the person upon whom the Working Group relies to convey any communications, questions or concerns to the GNSO Council.	All	Conduit (primary responsibility)	As needed	• Task is done collaboratively with WG leadership, with staff, including the Conflict Resolution Staff in the ICANN Policy Team, available as needed • Consider any privacy concerns	

				when communicating • Consider if guidance is needed from Staff or Council Leadership • Feeds into reporting/escalation	
The GNSO Council liaison is responsible for ensuring that the WG Chair(s) are informed about activities of the GNSO Council that have an impact on the Working Group. This includes not only actions taken with respect to substance related to the Working Group, but also any actions taken on matters upon which the Work Group depends or on which the Council depends on the Working Group.	All	Conduit (primary responsibility)	As needed	• Liaison to communicate with WG Chair(s) in whatever manner is established (e.g., email, meetings, Slack-type channels, etc.) • Liaison to engage WG Chair(s) in a manner that facilitates regular and material communication about key issues, milestones, etc.	
The liaison will refer to the Council any questions or queries the WG might have in relation to its charter and mission;	All	Conduit/escalation (primary responsibility)	As needed	• Task is done collaboratively with WG leadership, with staff available as needed • Consider any privacy concerns when communicating • Consider if guidance is needed from Staff or Council Leadership • Feeds into reporting/escalation	
The liaison will assist or engage when the WG faces challenges or problems, and will notify the Council of efforts in this regard;	All	Conduit/escalation (primary responsibility)	As needed	• Task is done collaboratively with WG leadership, with staff, including the Conflict Resolution Staff in the ICANN Policy Team, available as needed • Consider any privacy concerns when communicating • Consider if guidance is needed from Staff	

				or Council Leadership • Feeds into reporting/escalation • The liaison may be called upon to help resolve a 3.7 appeal process (see PDP 3.0 Improvement #9: Clarification to Complaint Process in GNSO Working Group Guidelines)	
The liaison will assist the WG Chair in suspected cases of abuse of ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior and/or restricting the participation of someone who seriously disrupts the WG;	All	Conduit/escalation (primary responsibility)	As needed	• Task is done collaboratively with WG leadership, with staff available as needed • Consider any privacy concerns when communicating • Consider if guidance is needed from Staff or Council Leadership • Feeds into reporting/escalation	
The liaison will assist the WG Chair as required with his/her knowledge of WG processes and practices;	All	Conduit/escalation (primary responsibility)	As needed	• Consider any privacy concerns when communicating • Consider if guidance is needed from Staff or Council Leadership • May be helpful to consult with staff	
The liaison will facilitate in case there is disagreement between the WG Chair and WG member(s) in relation to designation of consensus given to a certain recommendations.	Consensus Call	Conduit/escalation (primary responsibility)	As needed	• Task is done collaboratively with WG leadership, with staff, including the Conflict Resolution Staff in the ICANN Policy Team, available as needed. Pertains directly to section 3.6 of the WG Guidelines (see PDP 3.0 Improvement #4 Consensus Playbook) • Consider any privacy concerns when communicating	

				• Consider if guidance is needed from Staff or Council Leadership • Feeds into reporting/escalation	