

Draft Final Report Study Group on Capacity Building Report on Increased Participation
27 February 2013

Key Recommendations Part I and II

Part I: Engagement, Keeping Engagement Alive, Review of Working Group Organisation

- Do not restrict membership of Working Groups;
- Be clear about the responsibilities of the Working Group participants;
- Find out the skillset of the community members, target this more efficiently and enhance the skills that exist;
- Put more responsibility on the Working Group Chairs to lead their respective groups in a clear and inclusive way.

Part II: Summary Part II: Identification and Prioritisation of Workload

- The ccNSO Secretariat is to use a standard template when summarising official requests for input;
- Set up a Council “Triage Working Group” to filter the requests for input before forwarded to Council for final assessment;
- Follow a strict timeline, which makes it possible to take a decision within five working days on whether action is needed;
- Use prior defined “task forces”, composed both of Council and Community members, to ensure a competent and timely response;
- Prioritisation should be based on how important and urgent the matter is.

Background

At the ICANN meeting in Costa Rica, the ccNSO Council held a meeting to discuss the ccNSO Workplan and the increasing workload, which the ccNSO is facing. At the subsequent ccNSO Council meeting on 14 March 2012, the ccNSO Council passed following resolution:

Resolution 72-02: THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to set up an informal study group to advise the Council on further steps to balance the increasing workload and the capacity of the ccNSO. The study group is requested to report to the Council by the ICANN Prague meeting and seek participation of members of the ccTLD community.

The members of the Capacity Building Study group are:

Victor Abboud, .ec
Fernando Espana, .us (Working Group Chair)
Ondrej Filip - Programme Working Group Liaison
Sokol Haxhiu, NomCom appointee to the Council
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The Group was supported by Bart Boswinkel and Gabriella Schitteck, ccNSO Secretariat.

The work of the group was divided into two parts:

In the first part, the group looked into Engagement, Keeping Engagement Alive, Review of Working Group Organisation.

This part was first presented as an interim report to the ccNSO Council at the Prague meeting on 27 June 2012. Some slight amendments have been done to Part I since, reflecting the feedback received.

The second part deals with Identification and Prioritisation of Workload.

Part I: Engagement, Keeping Engagement Alive, Review of Working Group Organisation

1) Methodology

A set of questions were provided to the group by the ccNSO Chair Lesley Cowley, as guidance to what issues needed special attention:

- 1) Why did people who are currently members of WGs/Council Members etc get involved in the work of the ccNSO?*
- 2) How could we use these motivations to get more people involved?*
- 3) What are the barriers to people getting engaged?*
- 4) What could we do to address them?*
- 5) Why do some people join WGs, but then be inactive in that WG? What could we do to address these reasons and this situation?*
- 6) How could we better organise the work that people do for the ccNSO? Do participants get enough support/recognition in their home ccTLD or region for example?*
- 7) Looking at the work plan for the ccNSO, which areas might be easiest for new people to get engaged in and how might we encourage participation?*
- 8) Are there any changes to the way that we organise and divide our work that would make it easier for people to get engaged?*

The Study group primarily looked into working groups, as it considered working groups being the most important structure used by the ccNSO to organise its activities. However, the recommendations also apply for engagement in other structures, such as the Council.

2) Engagement

2.1 Reasons for Engagement

The Study Group analysed the motivation factors to become engaged in a working group.

Following elements were defined:

- A wish to contribute to its work and the belief that one is capable to do so;
- The wish to achieve a goal of mutual interest, knowing that it cannot be achieved alone;
- Psychological aspects: belonging to a group improves ones self-esteem and helps socialising with colleagues. Taking on a role in a working group can also be considered as a job challenge, which is a motivating factor for many

people.

2.2) Barriers for Engagement

The Study Group also looked into what barriers there could be for people not wanting to join a working group:

- Mental barriers: New/inexperienced community members do not know what is expected from them and feel intimidated by working with more experienced colleagues;
- Skill barriers: The participant does not have the right profile sought for and/or does not feel he/she has anything to contribute with;
- Workload: Too many work engagements in the home arena, no spare time for community issues;
- Lingual barriers: Non-native English speakers feel that discussions are too hard to follow;
- Certain requirements for joining a working group: Limited number of participants; limits of participants per region.

2.3) Study Group Recommendations for Increased Engagement

Clarify Requirements, Expectations and Goals:

- The Council is recommended to make clear to community members what the Working Group requirements are and what experience is needed, so that people with the desired profile apply to the right Working Group.
- The Council is recommended to highlight the expectation that the volunteers commit to *actively participate* in the work of the Working Group; the Charter of a Working Group should therefore have the possibility to include a condition on regular participation from the volunteers. For example, if a volunteer has not attended more than three subsequent meetings in a row without a valid reason, the Working Group Chair is encouraged to approach the volunteer to encourage further participation. If that member decides not to continue its involvement, or does not respond in a timely manner, the Working Group Chair may notify the ccNSO Council and suggest additional steps to resolve the situation.
- The Council is recommended to develop a description on what skillset is needed for the particular working group, which is to be published on the website.

However, the call for volunteers should also ensure that people that are interested in the topic, but lack experience, do not feel excluded;

- The Council is recommended to document general “Working Group Expectations”, which explains what is expected from a working group

member. It should be easily accessible for community members and distributed when a new working group is set up;

Activate Engagement from Experienced Community Members:

- The Council is recommended to encourage established community members to actively approach and invite both new ccTLDs and inactive ccTLDs to get involved in a particular working group, if their profile meets the skill requirements;
- The Council is recommended to set up a “Mentor Programme”, where more established ccTLDs offer their guidance throughout working group work and ICANN meetings;

Avoid Restrictions:

- The Council is recommended to strive to avoid setting restrictions (such as numeric or geographic limits) when making calls of volunteers for the working groups.

The Council is recommended to review the charters of the active working group charters and consider whether the limits are necessary.

Simplify Language:

- The Council is recommended to request the working group Chairs to aim to keep the working language as simple as possible, both in speaking and writing.

Working group Chairs are recommended to constantly encourage and remind native English speaking working group members to be considerate and try to speak slow, using easy words.

3) Keeping Engagement Alive

3.1 Reasons for Ceasing Engagement in Working Groups

The Study Group looked into why some people cease their engagement in a working group, after their initial wish to be involved.

The Study Group believes that reasons for becoming inactive in a working group could be:

- The working group member feels alienated with the goal of the working group;
- The working group member feels alienated with the atmosphere in the working group;

- The working group members has lost track of where the working group is in its work and what its end-goal is;
- The work burden in the home arena has unexpectedly grown and does not leave time for community engagements.

3.2 Study Group Recommendations for Keeping an Active Engagement

Clarify and Increase Working Group Chair Responsibilities:

- The Council is recommended to encourage the working group chairs to ensure a proper work environment by:
 - o Ensuring to share relevant information with the entire working group;
 - o Benchmarking the goals of the working group regularly;
 - o Keeping track of which working group members ceased to participate and reach out to them, encouraging them to commit again.
- The Council is recommended to instruct the Capacity Study Group members to develop a set of Best Practices for Working Group Chairs, which may be considered by the aspiring Working Group Chair and help them in structuring their work;
- The Council is recommended to ask all working group chairs to provide an Assessment Report of their working groups – an overview of how active their working group members are and their thoughts on what they think the reason for the non-activeness (if any) could be;

Improve Information and Processes:

- Prior to the call for volunteers, the Council is recommended to make an estimation on how much time needs to be invested in the work of the working group, this shall be communicated in the call;
- The Council is recommended to define a “minimum engagement requirement” for working group participation, of which the working group members are aware and to which they need to commit to, and which shall be communicated in the call;
- The Council is recommended to put a formal “Resignation process” for working group members in place, applicable for each working group, so that the working group members know they can always resign, for example if the workload becomes too heavy;
- The Council is recommended to put a formal “Replacement process” in place, if the resigning working group member feels that a colleague from the ccTLD could pick up their role in the working group.

Make Further Research:

- The Council is recommended to request the ccNSO Secretariat to conduct a short survey where non-active working group members are asked for the reasons for their reduced participation;

4) Review of Working Group Organisation

The Study Group members looked into how the current Working Groups are structuring its work and whether this could be amended in order to encourage further participation.

Following recommendations were defined:

Balance Setup of Working Groups:

- The Council shall aim to obtain a balance of “experts” and less experienced ccTLDs within the Working Groups;

Break up Tasks:

- Working group chairs are recommended to break up the tasks of the working group into smaller parts and divide the tasks between the members, so that everyone gets involved. This should be done early in the process so that the Working Group Working workload doesn't seem overwhelming.
- The Council is recommended to review whether there are administrative elements across all working groups that are similar and repetitive, which could be structured and distributed amongst working group members.

Increase Use of Collaborative Tools:

- Chairs of working groups are recommended to improve the meeting efficiency by implementing and encouraging the use of facilitating collaborative tools, such as Adobe Connect or the WG Wiki. The ccNSO Secretariat shall assist in the development and broadening of the use of such tools, if needed.

Part II: Distribution and Prioritisation of Workload

1) Prerequisites and Methodology

In order to balance the workload and capacity of the ccNSO, the Study Group needed to understand the current workload and how it is anticipated to evolve.

The Study Group noted that the ccNSO today has a well functioning mechanism to respond to its internal needs and requests. However, it also realised that there is no real mechanism in place for work prioritisation.

Furthermore, the Study Group noted that one of the major challenges the ccNSO is facing in the context of its mandate is the increasing number of requests for input and comments from non-ccNSO related entities in the ICANN environment, ranging from the ICANN Board to Working Groups from other SO's. Some of the topics are ccTLD community or ccNSO related, some are not.

Requests for input usually come through postings on the ICANN website i.e. the announcement of Public Comment Fora or direct requests through the SO-AC alert email list. In rare cases they are submitted directly to the ccNSO Chair, other Council members or the ccNSO Secretariat.

With a few exceptions (such as ICANN's Strategic Plan and Operating Plan and Budget), these requests for input are treated on an ad-hoc basis – the Community is usually informed by the Secretariat on relevant Public Comment Periods, but no requests for input are actively forwarded to the Council for consideration.

Overview ccNSO Topic Identification methodology:

Originator	ccNSO members Meeting	ccNSO Council in meeting	Public Statement ICANN Officer	Request for PDP (Board, RO, 10 members, Council)	Public comment a (ICANN staff or other SO/AC)	Direct Request other SO/AC, ICANN Board (Board resolution)		Invite request to other SO / AC
Formal Identifier	Council	Chair	Chair	Chair	Ad hoc	Ad hoc	Chair / Staff, ad-hoc	
Process	Council meetings guideline	Council meetings guideline	ccNSO Statement	Annex B ICANN Bylaws	No process and structure to identify requests, and initiate action	No process and structure to identify requests and initiate		
Decision timing	ccNSO Council meeting	ccNSO Council meeting	Council meeting	Council	Council	Council	Council meeting	

The Study Group felt that it is necessary to create a structure that would enable the Council to identify all potential needs for activities and decide in a systematical manner whether to take any action, which options are:

- No response/no action
- Informal response (face to face meeting)
- Letter from the Chair
- ccNSO Statement or Position
- Study Group (community or Council)
- Working Group (community or Council)
- Cross-Constituency Working Group
- Standing committee (Community or Council, example SOP WG)\
- PDP

As a first step, the Study Group therefore sought to set up a structure to enable the Council to deal with requests systematically and efficiently, and at the same take timely and informed decision on a request with the appropriate action (ranging from no response to a PDP).

To meet these requirements, the Study Group looked into following elements:

- 1) *Who should monitor requests for input?*
- 2) *What information is needed to enable the Council to decide timely*
- 3) *Who should assess a request for input?*
- 4) *Who should decide?*
- 5) *How should the request for input be dealt with, if the decision is to Action?*

Several models were considered and their benefits and disadvantages were discussed.

The group was guided by the principle to keep the process as lightweight as possible, as it was felt a complicated structure would not be successful.

The Study Group also noted that there are situations where requests are received in a more informal manner (through the Chair, or a Councillor) and is aware that the proposed model cannot be used in all circumstances. However, the vast majority of requests can be handled through the proposed model, which will help structuring the potential workload.

2) The Proposed Triaging Process

The Study Group is proposing a four-step model, in which the various requests for input are filtered through two layers (ccNSO staff and a small group of designated Councillors), and providing the full Council a chance to familiarise itself with the topic and take an active decision whether to pursue it, or not. The process is not foreseen to take more than five working days:

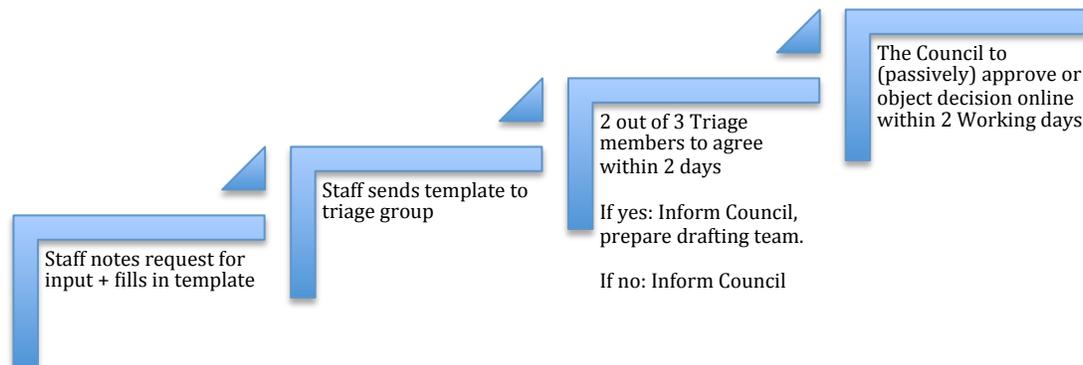
- 1) Staff notes the request for input and fills in a special template containing basic information on the request. (The suggested template is available in appendix 1)
- 2) The template is forwarded to the designated members of a “triating” group (consisting of three Councillors).

- 3) 2 out of the 3 triage group members have to agree within two (working) days with the advise of staff. In case less than two triage group members are available, the Chair, or one of the vice-Chairs, will be asked to step in.

If advise is yes: The Council is informed and a drafting team is appointed (preferably pre-defined taskforce groups, consisting of Council + community members, who are ready to act on request) or other action taken (call for volunteers, letter from Council etc). However, a majority of the Council, may decide no action is needed.

If advise is no: The Council is informed. A majority of the Council may decide otherwise.

- 4) The Council receives input and has two (working) days to either actively or passively (by not objecting) endorse the advice or: actively propose an alternative mode of action, by majority vote.



3) Prioritisation Model

When identifying what prioritisation model would suit the ccNSO needs best, the following criteria were set to guide the group:

- It should be an easy-to-follow, lightweight model;
- It should lead to a logic decision;
- A decision should be possible to be reached in a timely manner

Various models were explored, including “Dotmocracy”- , “Paired Comparison”- , “Quadrant-” and “Grid Analysis” models¹. The GNSO prioritisation model² was also looked into, however, as it was abandoned by the GNSO due to its complexity, it was not considered as a suitable alternative.

¹ A summary of the various models is available at <http://www.ohpe.ca/node/11169>

² <http://gns0.icann.org/drafts/wpmg-section-6-and-annex-09apr10-en.pdf>

The Study Group came to the conclusion that the principles of the so-called “Eisenhower Matrix” most accurately reflect the aforementioned criteria.

The “Eisenhower matrix” is based on the criteria Urgency versus Importance:

	Important	Not Important
Urgent		
Not Urgent		

In addition to these criteria, the (volunteer) capacity needed and availability determines the outcome of the process.

In preparation of a Council decision on the priority, an assessment of the number of volunteers and the duration of their involvement is needed. The Triage Committee, assisted by the Secretariat, could do the initial assessment.

Based on the importance and urgency of a work item and capacity needed, the priority of the item itself - and in relation to other work items - can be determined by the Council (high, middle, low). The goal is to focus and involve the community on items with the highest priority, and only if feasible, focus on the lower priorities.

Once the priority is determined, the Secretariat will note whether the new item has been initiated, the date it was done and include it in the work plan.

In Appendix 2 a more elaborated description of this model is presented.

4) Recommendations Part II: Identification and Prioritisation of Workload

- The Council is recommended to adopt the proposed Process for the prioritisation of Workload
- The Council is recommended to designate a “triage” group, comprised by three Council members, which is prepared to assist in prioritising incoming requests for input;
- The Council is recommended to make a call within the Council and the ccTLD Community for volunteers for standing “Task Forces”, which should be prepared to draft replies in a timely manner on requests for issues. The Secretariat is to define which task force groups are needed and is to maintain a list of volunteers for the various task forces.
- The Council is recommended to approve to follow the principles of the “Eisenhower Matrix” when taking decisions on what to prioritise.

APPENDIX 1

Template Topics to be Considered by Triaging Group

Topic:

Originator:

Summary of request:

Date received:

Last day for Comments/ input/response, if any:

Recommended action, if any: (alternatives: None, letter from Chair/ Council, ccNSO statement/position paper, WG, PDP)

Expertise needed, if any:

Date of submission to Council:

Last date of Council decision:

Impact on ccNSO/ccTLDs:

APPENDIX 2

PRIORITISATION – Decision Making

(High/Medium/Low)

		Alternative Modes of Action							
		No response	Informal response	Letter from Chair	ccNSO Statement	Study Group	Working Group	Cross Constituency Working Group	PDP
Prioritisation criteria	Assess Importance (Relevancy for or impact on ccNSO/ccTLD)								
	Assess Urgency (Expected response time, if any)								
	Assess Capacity Needed								
	Asses Capacity Available								
Council Decision	Priority								
	Priority in comparison to other activities								
Administrative checks	Initiate Work								
	Final Go								
	Include in Work Plan								

In the **vertical column** the prioritisation criteria are presented that should be considered. Especially the “Capacity” criteria should be taken into consideration, as whilst a topic can be both important and urgent, not much can be done, if there is no capacity available to address the issue:

- Importance (impact on ccNSO/ccTLD)
- Urgency (expected response time)
- Capacity Needed
- Capacity Available

Council decision

- Priority
- Priority in comparison to other activities

The Secretariat has to consider following aspects:

- Initiate Work
- Final Go
- Include in Work Plan

The **horizontal column** presents options on types of possible actions from the ccNSO:

- No Response
- Informal Response
- Letter from Chair
- ccNSO Statement
- Set up Study Group
- Set up Working Group
- Set up Cross-community Working Group
- PDP

The options outlined on the horizontal line also indicate how much time it takes approximately for each action to be completed (“No response” being least time consuming, versus “PDP” being most time consuming).

The Council is expected to keep these criteria in mind, when taking a decision. However, it is anticipated that the ccNSO Chair will primarily be responsible (overseeing) the process and ensure this prioritisation model is followed, with the assistance of the ccNSO Secretariat.