

---

PANAMA - GAC: Independent Secretariat and Other GAC Operational Matters

Thursday, June 28, 2018 - 10:30 to 11:15 EST

ICANN62 | Panama City, Panama

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: So can you please take your seats we will be starting immediately. And apologies for the late start.

So this is GAC session agenda Item 24 on GAC Independent Secretariat and other administrative matters as well. For new members to start a quick background. The GAC currently receives support from GAC support staff. Represented by Rob, Julia and independent secretariat. That used to provide us by 2.5 FTE. Which is full time employment but now reduced to one, represented by Tom here. This was obviously for funding purpose ACIG has provided to GAC since November 2013 this hybrid setup some members felt the need for independent secretariat for the GAC.

We started it started by three donor countries. So the secretariat was funded by Brazil, Norway and Netherlands. And then fairness purposes we tried to have the secretariat fund distributed among more members. I think we have now about a dozen, but I stand to be corrected, who pay different amounts and have different commitments in terms of the frequency of paying and the duration of the commitment. So the

---

*Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.*

---

independent secretariat services are provided under contract between ICANN and ACIG. And the funding is from GAC members are who are donors. By the Swiss Government and donor countries.

So ACIG services continue until 31st of January may potentially end their service by the end of December. So the objective of this session today is notifying GAC members that hand over is already taking place between Tom and ICANN support staff. And meanwhile we need to confirm those GAC members' wishes to continue and financially support an independent secretariat function.

And should this be the case, agree to call for volunteers to establish a small task force to potentially progress basically first task will be assessing options for sustainable function arrangement. Including a time line, evaluation criteria and selection committee.

And of course, report to the GAC the recommendations within agreed timeframe. But as mentioned earlier since this process would probably take some time and for practical reasons it's obvious even if we agree to have an independent secretariat we might not be able to have one in place by Barcelona.

So the hand over is already taking place between the independent secretariat and ICANN support staff.

---

So let me reiterate again the objective of this session that first of all we want to confirm that GAC members wishes to continue and are ready to financially support an independent secretariat function. And my understanding is that with the current funding we have, we can secure one FTE for the coming year. Jorge is that right?

JORGE:

Swiss Government for the record but here with hat for the GAC. Funding on just a couple of short information before responding. The current donor base, or current base of countries that have been making contributions in the last two years is of 18 countries but it's correct more or less it's a dozen per year because not all countries are donating every year. And as to the question, more than saying the full time employees I think it's useful to know more or less, the amount of contributions of income, the funding association channels. And in 2018 this will cover 240,000 approximately that the ACIG support service it cost.

And for 2019, if secretariat is in place in time and we have the tendering process in time, I would risk saying because of course, this depends on the independent donors but it's foreseeable (indiscernible) in our disposals. How many that FTE that depends of course, who would apply, propose in the

---

tendering process. And a part from these let's say 200,000 Euros I think it's already public that Japanese Government has made a very generous offer of financing the secretariat cost and during the Kobe meeting. But of course, I guess that financing is contingent that we have the secretariat working at that meeting already. So that would increase the level of funds at the disposal of the independent secretariat function.

And I stand ready for any other questions of course? Thank you Manal.

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: Thank you very much Jorge. So I would like then to open the floor for comments or views on how we should proceed. I mean if we would like to have an independent secretariat in place it's becoming a matter of urgency now. The contract is not going to be renewed and going through tendering process and evaluation. Yes Brazil.

THIAGO JARDIM: More of a procedural question, I am wondering it would be possible to start preparation to have this process in place and move forward with the tendering process. And eventually we might find ourselves in a situation where there is no funding. Would this be a problem? Is it possible to have a tendering

---

process that is conditional on sufficient funding and perhaps we could because again the amount of people we can hire to function as independent secretariat might depend not just on funding but also on the price of the services. So if we know that there are interested people who would cost less, and then this could help us in making our decisions. Thank you.

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: So I can see Jorge, and Jorge please correct me if I am wrong. I understand that we have funding for one year but the keyword is sustainability. We don't have a sustainable model for but please go ahead.

JORGE: Let's say that we have this donor base now of around 18 countries who are generously contributing with more or less 12 doing it effectively each year. From the numbers we have and also the intention expressed by contributors I think it's as I said before more or less safe to foresee that in 2019 we could be we could have a floor of funding about 200,000 Euro. Of course, this is not set in stone but think that it's quite foreseeable that this would be the case, especially if we take action early and colleagues who are willing to fund, pencil their contribution into their budgets for 2019. So that's the best educated guess I can give.

---

Of course, the long term sustainability is related but I think different issue which means that okay, this is very voluntary based system. We have been able to go from three generous donors to a team, between 12 and 18. It could be of course, advisable to work out for stable system for the independent secretariat. But that might require more time than what we need for the short term especially if we want to have continuity, and if we want at the Kobe meeting in early 2019. We already have the new provider. And turning to the question of Thiago. It's normal business practice that you provide and your request for proposals a floor of funding and that you provide options in that contracting proposal of additional services and then you see what are the offers from the providers.

So if we go out with a floor of 200,000 Euros and define the services to be provided and that's easy to do because we have it from the current contract with ACIG then we would see okay what are the offers and maybe providers from some countries may be able to squeeze in more FTE for 200,000 Euros. If it were a Swiss provider for 200,000 Euros you won't be able to squeeze in one FTE. Of course, that is a very expensive country. I hope this clarifies things a bit thank you.

---

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: Thank you very much Jorge. So Tom you would like to say something.

TOM DALE: Just a couple of points. Firstly, Jorge indicated he was not familiar with ICANN procurement practices. I can assure ACIG is quite familiar with them now. It's a fact that the in our case over the last five years the negotiations of what I think is reasonably straight forward contract have been very prolonged. I don't know if ICANN does that to everybody. Nonetheless I am stating it. Whoever you get to respond to any tender that the GAC may wish to put out may find similar lines. I am sharing that past experience and also make the offer that while our services at the present time are likely to conclude on the 31st of December this year up until that time we would be happy to share those experiences with whoever in the GAC is taking the exercise forward.

If that is helpful. The second point from a commercial perspective, yes it's certainly helpful to and quite important to have some indication of the budget including budgeting floor in one of the other elements is the term of any proposed contract and from the point of view of small or medium size firm or even a large, there is a big difference between one year contract and three and five year contract. I appreciate those factors will be

---

driven by decisions. The GAC has not yet been able to make concerning sustainable funding, models and amounts. But I am just noting from a commercial perspective that would affect any company's decision to respond.

So the clearer it can be the better. So I would hope some common sense advice and just finally I did do, what I was asked to do at San Juan meeting, which was to look at comparable arrangements across ICANN. And it is true there is independently funded secretariat function for the registry and registrar group. They confirm that they are essentially administrative function and do not provide type of briefing or in meeting support that we have done.

There was an ICANN program to fund stakeholder SOs/ACs and community groups with things like preparing public submission but that funding is no longer available. To close the loop on something that I was asked to check. Even though we are working towards the conclusion of our contract to the extent it's appropriate and the GAC members believe it's appropriate I am happy to share our experiences as a commercial provider if that helps you. Thank you.

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: Thank you very much Tom. So are there any other comments?  
Brazil please.



THIAGO JARDIM:

Are we going to leave this meeting with a decision taken on the matter? I think it would be important to do so. The only shot that we have is to launch a process. We have sufficient funds for one year. Then we should do so, I believe, and see what we can get. As to the question of sustainability, we could then start to engage in an effort to identify alternatives. Try to broaden the basis of donors but it could be the alternatives different to that as well. This is discussion that we would take alongside most urgent necessity and putting forward and offering what we have currently which just might be offer for one year contract. I think people would be interesting. If I wasn't working for the government and didn't know ICANN, I would be a candidate myself.

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR:

Thank you Thiago. I was going to propose as a matter of practical. Start asking for volunteers to form this working group or task force that would work on tendering process. So we have three aspects here. The handing over is already taking care of at least temporarily through ICANN support staff. We need tendering process to be launched as soon as possible so that we can have the independent secretariat in function as soon as possible.

---

And finally as Thiago noted, sustainability is an issue that we can take later but now as a matter of urgent that we have funding for upcoming year probably start task force. We are trying to dig previous documentation and previous material that could help the working group jump start their works. So meanwhile, I would like to seek volunteers. Yeah Brazil, go ahead.

THIAGO JARDIM:

I think we can there are many GAC members who already left or not present in the room. We can come out today with a decision to establish this task force or whatever you want to call and circulate in the GAC mailing list a call for volunteers and have someone from leadership involve in this question. And if no one else volunteers him or herself to do this, I could try to lead this effort alongside with other volunteers from the wider GAC membership. Thank you.

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: Thank you Thiago. I think is constructive suggestion. If there are no objections we can send an email to the GAC mailing list, summarizing our discussion here and seeking volunteers among the broader membership.

I am sorry Senegal please.

---

SENEGAL:

Thank you Madame Chair. I think it's possible to setup group in accordance to Brazil's suggestions but for us it's important to see which are the GAC expectations for the secretariat services. Currently we have certain level of service. So do we want that same kind of service? Or do we want to add new functionality? In the last meeting we realized there were a lot of concerns, a lot of questions about the language aspect. We really appreciate the work being done by the interpreters. And we would like as part of the functionality to also have an independent secretariat with the ability to translate certain documents into certain UN official languages if possible. If that is not possible at least into French because it is very important for many governments, especially the French speaking governments to have these documentations in French. Our governments read the documents we present to them in French. For them it's difficult for them to read GAC official documents.

GAC as government body should be able to take a step forward and get translations for the most important documentations into all of these languages. In addition to all the reports that we prepare we can offer our documents, GAC official documents, in those languages. I think it's important for GAC to take these opportunities to consider this possibility. The functionality that we expect from these new independent secretariat. This should

---

be taken into account by this new task force to be created.  
Thank you.

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: Thank you very much Senegal. And I think we already have the task or the functions that are expected from the independent secretariat currently, so we can also circulate this over email and definitely take into consideration other input related to what we expect from the independent secretariat.

So if there are no other comments or questions maybe we can stop at this and move to other administrative issues. Okay. Then we will be circulating an email on the GAC mailing list summarizing the discussions, seeking volunteers and sharing the current job description of the independent secretariat.

So with this I understand we have a few other administrative matters Rob so please over to you.

ROBERT HOGGARTH: Thank you Manal. Can you take us to slide two? The goal of this update and I am going to measure my speaking for our interpreters. I am going to touch on the highlights here. Give you updates on broad actions and plans for operating principles development, volunteer opportunities. I will follow up with you

---

by email and offer you a very quick election reminder. If we can go to slide five please.

I am just going to go to next step on the Operating Principles. Basically at ICANN61 there was an agreement to move forward with evolution of the Operating Principles primarily under the direction of the leadership team. This has been a very tight and challenging time period inter sessional between ICANN61 and ICANN62, the leadership still views this as important area to focus on. They hope to be able to make progress on making some analysis and recommendations with respect to the working group case study, that part of the Operating Principles with you by Barcelona. I will proceed with sharing the GAC membership. And mapping document that show the overall plan with moving forward with the Operating Principles and then of course, the working group model work will be a first step.

If any of you want to help to contribute to those efforts please reach out to me as a GAC staff perspective. And we will do the appropriate connections with the leadership team. And otherwise we will provide you update on the Operating Principles work when we get to Barcelona. I don't anticipate and I just looked up to the leadership team here that there will be specific recommendations. But certainly an update to some of the thoughts and plans that they are exploring.

---

If we go to the next slide I am looking at circulating an email to you all here by the end of today that will outline two volunteer opportunities that are presented through broader ICANN Org actions. The first opportunity or role is to act as GAC liaison. Norway presently plays that role. Her term ends in October and not going to serve. Opportunity for GAC membership to step into her shoes. The slide and you will see later in the email you will see what the CSC does. Relate to the naming function. It's an interesting opportunity not only for people who have familiarity with but others who are looking to learn and provide broader support for ICANN to offer their services on behalf of GAC and ICANN in that respect.

The second role, is to serve on a review team that is taking a look at (indiscernible) function. All of these mechanisms to insure that the naming function is operating appropriate and service level standards. This is in commission of this work is the replacement for the United States NITA role. These are responsibilities in terms of review team, the review team will assess what sort of work they have in front of them. And I imagine like many review teams from time to time will probably meet at an ICANN meeting to discuss their work. Although that is not planned at the moment.

So look for an email from me with more information, means and mechanism of advising us if you are interesting. From a

---

leadership perspective, the leadership team needs to make a decision in the mid-August time frame for both of those positions. So you will see that this is an interest from hearing from any of you or your colleagues who want to participate to let the leadership team through the GAC staff know by the end of this coming month. By the end of July if you are interested in any of these opportunities please express it.

We can go to the next slide please. We are looking at just once again reminding you about the nominating period being open for the GAC 2018 leadership election. There is one change in the dates here that I just wanted to alert you to. You all have in your inbox or all dutifully read the announcement of the nominating period that opened yesterday, 27 of June. The only change in the date is when I talked to you on Monday I was looking at old ICANN meeting date. The nominating period has to close 45 days before the annual general meeting. So the nominating period will be open now until September 5th. Please follow through with that. All the details in the email I shared with you. Manal that is my system of updates I will turn it back to you. Thank you very much.

MANAL ISMAIL, GAC CHAIR: Thank you very much Rob and thank you very much. We are just on time and I can see co chair of the auction proceeds are in the

---

room. This concludes agenda 24 on independent secretariat and other GAC operational matters. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]