



**To:** Göran Marby, CEO, ICANN  
**Cc:** Maarten Botterman, COB, ICANN  
David Olive, Senior Vice President, Policy Development, ICANN  
**From:** Christian Dawson, Executive Director, i2Coalition  
**Date:** November 20, 2020  
**Subject:** Re: Draft Operational Design Phase for gTLD Policy Implementation

Göran Marby,

We thank you for the opportunity to share feedback on the paper that you shared with the GNSO Council on 5 October 2020, regarding your concept of an "Operational Design Phase". As SO/AC leaders generate their own community consideration and feedback, we wish to share a perspective from the i2Coalition, which represents a diverse group of technology providers within the Internet's infrastructure community that includes both contracted and non-contracted parties alike.

We understand that your objective for this newly proposed design phase is to better prepare the Board by providing operational and resourcing information before making decisions on GNSO-approved policy recommendations. This is an important goal, particularly for highly detailed and complex PDP processes, including the going concern of the EPDP on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data. We see value in a process that helps to determine answers to important questions such as "how will this get built, in practice?" and "who is going to pay for it, both in an initial development capacity, and on an ongoing basis?" We do not oppose the formalization of a process that clarifies those vital operational details, and we see great value in the ICANN Board having access to these key operational details prior to entering a voting procedure.

We appreciate that you made clear in your proposal that the GNSO Council is the sole manager of the PDP and gTLD policy development. You clearly communicated that it is solely within the GNSO's remit to generate consensus policy-making at ICANN, involving all Supporting Organizations. We believe that the intention of your proposed design phase concept is not to affect policy development or the Consensus Policy Implementation Framework. We appreciate that it recognizes that if policy issues are impacted, they rightfully go back to the GNSO for its consideration, rather than permitting ICANN Org or Board to make unilateral changes.

In order to properly operationalize that recognition, we ask that your proposal be further enhanced by the establishment of clear guidelines for determining what does and does not constitute policy change. We are looking for specific, clear guide rails which categorically list what can and cannot be done within an ODP without it being sent back to the GNSO for further work. Specifically, we hope to see a list of concrete objectives for an ODP document that are operational in nature and do not change in any way the course of community recommendations or give another chance to groups looking to re-litigate past policy debates. A set of clear guidelines for what is in-scope and what is out of scope for an ODP will help to ensure that if changes to, or omissions of, PDP and gTLD policy recommendations are required for cost or operational reasons, that these are clearly out of scope of the ODP and that the issue must return to the GNSO.

We look forward to your response to the community feedback you receive on your ODP proposal and believe it can make the ICANN policy development process more efficient and effective if implemented properly. We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CD', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Christian Dawson  
Executive Director, i2Coalition