

---

ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – GNSO: SCCI Work Session  
Wednesday, March 11, 2026 – 16:30 to 17:30 IST

ANDREW CHEN

Hello, and welcome to the SCCI session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy, and the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct concerning statements of interest. Please observe the following guidelines to participate in this session. I will also post them in the chat for your reference. Only questions posted in the Zoom chat identified as a question will be read aloud during the session as time permits and when directed by the chair of this session. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand in Zoom or otherwise as directed. When speaking, please state your name for the record and speak clearly at a moderate pace. I will now hand the floor over to Manju Chen.

MANJU CHEN

Thank you, Andrew. Hello, everyone. I guess we are sorry to not have done a better job of reminding people that we are having this session in Mumbai this time, because I have talked to quite a lot of people who did not know that we were having this session. But we can do with what we have. Can we start with the slides? Welcome, by the way. First is welcome and SOI updates. I am waiting to see if

---

***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.***

---

there is anyone who wants to update their SOIs. I am not seeing any hands. Let us move on.

Just a look back at what we have done in 2025 and what we are going to be doing for this year. We have already finished the review of the policy and implementation policy status report, and we delivered our recommendations to the Council, and Council has adopted the recommendations.

For this year, we will be focusing on this thing called Continuous Improvement Program. Now we are on Phase 1, which is where we will be assessing and doing a prioritization of what we should assess first and what kind of areas should be the priority of this assessment. In Phase 2, we will improve according to the results of the assessment. In Phase 3, we will analyze and try to see if there are any more areas that will be left for the next phase of the Continuous Improvement Program, because this should be a recurring program. This is a three-year timeframe. This year we will mainly focus on assessment and prioritization.

We are supposed to be developing criteria and indicators. For those who are new to this, this actually started long before SCCI was SCCI. We were doing this even when it was a Council committee called CCOICI. At that time, we were already reviewing this Continuous Improvement Program framework because there was a cross-community group working on this already. We have already developed a GNSO set of criteria according to the principles provided by the CIP Cross-Community Group. The preparation has

---

been done, and now we are going to review the criteria and then develop indicators per criteria. After we do that, we will start to plan what surveys or what kind of methods we are going to use to assess using the criteria and indicators we have developed. In the end, according to the results of the surveys and whatever methods we decided to use to assess the performance of the GNSO as a whole, we will suggest improvement activities. This year, mainly, we are going to focus on the criteria and indicators.

This is the timeline of this year's work plan. This year we will mostly be starting with what we think should be the best indicators to assess effectiveness and all those principles, such as whether the GNSO is fit for purpose. Hopefully by April, we will already complete the indicators, and then we will give them to the stakeholder groups and constituencies you represent for you to evaluate, review, and suggest whether we need to update or revise the indicators that have been developed by SCCI. After we finalize the criteria and indicators, we will develop an assessment plan, start collecting data, and identify gaps. By the end of this year, we should be able to develop a plan for improvement according to the results we got from the survey that is based on the indicators we are developing now. I am stopping here to see if there are any questions. Jen, please.

JENNIFER CHUNG

Thanks, Manju, for going over the project plan. I see we are supposed to complete indicators by April. We are almost in mid-

---

March, so it seems like it is moving pretty quickly. I am just getting some clarification there.

MANJU CHEN

The indicators actually already have a draft. In the leadership, we were discussing whether those are the indicators we were actually trying to do. That is also one of the main discussions we are going to have for this meeting, because we were trying to see what kind of principle and what we really want to assess through those indicators. Since there is already a draft with three to five indicators for each criteria, it will be easy to tweak them according to the discussion we have today and finalize a new draft. That will be the meaning of complete indicators. What is more important is for the SG/Cs to review the draft and come back to us with your suggestions on what we need to either revise, add, or delete. It says complete, but that is actually completed by our marvelous staff instead of the SCCI. The most work will be happening between April and June where the stakeholder groups will be discussing them. Am I missing anything?

STEVE CHAN

Thanks, Manju. You did not miss anything. I just wanted to pull something up from the chat which might be helpful for everyone to see. If that was labeled as a complete draft of indicators, that would probably make a lot more sense. It feels much more final to have that all done by April, but that is not the intention. It is to have the

---

group agree that these are a good set of draft indicators, which will then be in a good place to circulate with the broader SG/Cs. Thanks.

MANJU CHEN

Let us move to the next slide. There might be a lot of confusion about this Continuous Improvement Program. It is actually a pilot. This is a pilot because the community feels that it will be more effective if we replace organizational reviews that the community used to have with a Continuous Improvement Program conducted by the community members themselves. This recommendation came from ATRT3. To see if this recommendation makes sense, they started the CIP to pilot this, and this pilot should be three years. We are only starting it this year. After three years, when we finish the pilot, we will see whether it really worked. If it does, the Board might decide that from now on we will not be doing organizational reviews anymore and will do the CIP instead. That is basically the concept of the CIP.

MANJU CHEN

The CIP gives five principles, and under those they give a set of criteria. That is how you do continuous improvement. You have principles for the things you want to test, such as whether the structure is serving its purpose and whether it is effective in serving its purpose according to the Bylaws. Under the principle, you have a set of criteria to describe how those are met. Under the criteria, there will be indicators for you to actually test whether these criteria are fulfilled. It is a complicated process. If you have done

---

continuous improvement in your company, you are probably very familiar with this. The leadership team struggled a little, but we figured it out, and hopefully that explanation can help you understand this more too. These indicators should abide by the SMART principle. They have to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. We added stakeholder expectations because we have to use this in the ICANN context and take stakeholder feedback into account. I will stop here to see if there are any questions. Ajith.

AJITH FRANCIS

Thanks, Manju. This is just a reminder or comment on where we left off in our last virtual meeting. We have collectively reviewed the criteria and we did get feedback from our different stakeholder groups as well. I just wanted to add that context that we are approaching this piecemeal. We have done the criteria, and now we are working on the indicators. Thank you.

MANJU CHEN

Thank you very much, Ajith. Everybody needs this refreshment. For developing the indicators, we were seeking guidance from those who know this better than us. We gathered additional guidelines. First, each SO and AC, which in our case is the GNSO, will have the flexibility to determine the criteria, indicators, and design how they best suit each SO/AC. This comes from the idea that organizational reviews did not work because they used outside independent experts. The community felt we should not be evaluated by

---

someone from the outside who does not know us. If we are to improve, we should do it ourselves. Second, do not try to force quantitative indicators where it does not make sense. We do not want this to be just a numbers game because that is not productive. A statement-based indicator can be good too, because sometimes you need a mechanism or structure to prove you have that process in place. Third, it has to be as meaningful as possible. We do not want to develop indicators just to prove everything already works, nor do we want to focus on an ideal fantasy that is hard to achieve. We want to go into the middle. There are things we are doing well, but there is definitely room for improvement, and we have to make that visible through the indicators. It is not only about ticking boxes; there will be indicators showing where we are not there yet so we can realistically fill the gap. These are great guidelines. Thanks to whoever gave them to us. I am not seeing any hands or questions in the chat. We can move to the next slide.

MANJU CHEN

This is the main question we are posing to the group. What are the things to consider? How should we develop the indicators per the guidelines? Do all indicators need to be measurable and quantifiable? For example, looking at the principle that the GNSO is fulfilling its purpose, Criterion 1 is that there is agreement that the GNSO is fulfilling its purpose. This includes initiatives to advance ICANN's mission and combat domain name security threats. Under that criterion, there are three indicators. The first is that the GNSO has a mechanism in place that governs GNSO

---

processes, which is a statement. The third is that at least 51% of surveyed constituents agree that the GNSO is fulfilling its purpose, which is quantifiable. We are asking if you think this mixture of indicators is good or if we should focus more on one type or the other. These are the questions we want to open for discussion. Does anyone have immediate feedback?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

If I understand this correctly, each and every SG/C will have its own mission and its own way of operation. In this statement, the criteria and indicators are understandable, but they apply to every SG/C. You have put it generally as GNSO. Should we replace the GNSO part with each SG/C and read it that way? The GNSO is very generic.

MANJU CHEN

That brings us back to the question of scope. This is the GNSO, so we are doing it on a GNSO scale. The focus should be on the GNSO. While the first indicator mentions the GNSO, the third one mentions constituents, which includes all SG/Cs. We assess the GNSO as a whole instead of individually group by group. This was how the organizational review was done, and that principle is carried over in the CIP. Of course, there are indicators where we need to go deeper to the SG/C levels, but it is a GNSO scope.

STEVE CHAN

Thanks, Manju. This is Steve Chan from staff. To put it succinctly, it is definitional for the CIP program to be at the SO and AC level, as

---

well as the NomCom. Information from the SGs and Cs might help meet the indicators, but at its core, the CIP is at the SO/AC level.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

Can we restructure this to be like a tree? We need to evaluate each SG/C at their own level, but it all rolls up to the entire GNSO. It seems to me like it needs restructuring because at times we are going to consider the entire Supporting Organization, and at times it breaks down to all the SGs and Cs. Maybe we evaluate each SG/C and then collectively assess the performance of the GNSO.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

I think both of you are right. It is meant to be at the SO and AC level, and the work and processes of the SGs and Cs can roll up into what is counted within the GNSO's CIP framework. You can have indicators stating that the GNSO has a mechanism in place, and you could link to the various operating documents of the SGs and Cs as evidence. As part of that exercise, if you find that a group does not actually have that mechanism, that is a possible improvement activity you could look at. It can run both ways. You can look at everyone holistically as part of the GNSO and take a look at specific parts if you want to roll it up, but it is not something where you need to look at every single SG/C and apply every indicator to each of them. It is meant to be at the GNSO level.

---

AJITH FRANCIS

I want to add two things. First, we have to reconcile the fact that the different SGs and Cs operate in very different ways. Yielding results at an SG/C level might not be comparable. This is why it is being done at a GNSO level, while recognizing the independence of the SGs and Cs to structure how they operate.

Regarding the examples, this is indicative at the moment because we had an initial discussion in leadership about the structure. It is a delicate balance to get the indicators right in terms of phrasing them, because we must also reconcile the fact that there is an assessment process informed by the indicators. We are balancing the tension between being prescriptive in terms of quantity and identifying the gaps we want to address. We are taking the time to develop these indicators at a slow pace.

STEVE CHAN

This is Steve from staff. I thought it might be helpful to look at this example in terms of what the response would be to the indicator. The indicator is the prompt telling you what information you are supposed to go looking for. For the first one regarding a mechanism, the answer could be the GNSO Operating Procedures. For the second one regarding an existing body, the answer could potentially be the GNSO Council as that mechanism. I hope that helps crystallize what the indicator is and the evidence you are supposed to seek to meet the criterion.

---

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

I have no problem with looking at the GNSO as a whole and breaking it down to each SG/C. However, some of the indicators break down to each SG/C, and at times we look at the GNSO collectively. We should identify those from the get-go and treat them respectfully. The ones we need to assess individually should be put aside, and the collective work needs to be identified properly. Even the individual work reflects on the status of the GNSO itself. I suggest we segregate our approach.

MANJU CHEN

It will be easier once we share the full set of indicators to see whether that fits what you think. Based on this specific example, it probably does not say as much as when seen collectively. When you bring it back to your respective groups, it will be easier for you to see where we have to dive deeper or stay at the GNSO level. As Christian explained, even though the indicators look like higher-level questions, we can provide detailed answers that list out the SG/Cs already fulfilling those details. In a sense, we see the forest and the trees. Peter, please.

PETER

Thanks, Manju. I just wanted to get a feel for what the 49% of surveyed constituents are saying concerning whether the GNSO is fulfilling its purpose. If we can have visibility into what the others are saying, that can help us look at what is not working. Perhaps we will look at that later in the conversation.

MANJU CHEN

I think that is something we can discuss more after the survey and when we are developing an improvement plan. We do not have to be so worried about it at this stage because we are currently discussing the indicators. Once we finalize the indicators, we will design the mechanisms to assess them. Then, according to the results, we will develop an improvement plan. That is when we will look at where things should be improved.

AJITH FRANCIS

To add context, the question of what would be asked and what responses are solicited is a step in the actual assessment. What we are trying to define here are the hypotheses we need to test and the thresholds for agreeing that those hypotheses are valid. Translating that into indicators has been a balance between defining binary yes or no mechanisms versus actually measuring something. We are at a foundational level of trying to agree on how to define the questions based on what we want to find.

PETER

That helps because I am trying to put my research hat on. If I hear you correctly, we are trying to agree on indicators and define hypotheses so we can measure what we need to measure. If the hypothesis we define is not based on the problem we are trying to solve, then what are we doing? We have to have a problem to solve

---

for us to know the method we need to use. I will allow the process to go on. Thank you.

STEVE CHAN

This is Steve again. I will take a stab at trying to provide more clarity to Peter's question. We are trying to identify the indicators which allow us to collect data and information, and that information is intended to help the GNSO figure out where it needs to put its attention for improvements. If it came back that only 51% think the GNSO is meeting its purpose, that is a good place to investigate. If it shows 98% agreement, that is a less appropriate place to pursue further improvements. If it came in at 49%, that is a big number that does not agree with the hypothesis, and that is where you want to investigate further.

PETER

Thank you, Steve. That context is really helpful and makes sense. I was looking at it from the perspective that if we are trying to define something, it has to be based on what people think the problems are so we can identify the right questions or indicators. If we do not know what the problem is and we are just trying to define an indicator, are we trying to test whether the survey is right or if the 51% is right? Steve has provided enough clarification. I just wanted to see which direction we are taking.

---

MANJU CHEN

Is there any other feedback? If not, let us go back to the previous slide. I think we can agree that we are using a mixture of measurable and binary indicators because that is the best mixture to assess the GNSO. As I am not seeing disagreement, that will be the principle we use for developing the first set of indicators for the team to review. The second question is better discussed when we have the full set of indicators because some criteria might be more suitable for the GNSO Council while others concern the GNSO as a whole. Steve, can you help me here?

STEVE CHAN

This is Steve from staff. This is really just a precursor to when we actually get into the detail of looking at all the criteria and indicators as a whole. As mentioned earlier, we have a set of criteria that are stable, but as we started identifying indicators, we spotted a couple that probably make sense to consider amending. We still have the ability to amend the criteria as needed once we better identify what those indicators should be. We wanted to get an overall approach first and make sure there is agreement before trying to fill out the whole set for the group to consider.

MANJU CHEN

Do we have any preliminary response or feedback to this? If not, we can move to the next steps. Peter, please.

---

PETER

Regarding the first point about whether all indicators need to be measurable and quantifiable, to what extent do we want to measure this and what kind of frameworks are we going to use? I like the idea of quantifying indicators and processes, but how do we ensure we can quantify them and measure them? I would love to hear if the leadership or staff has thought of an approach. When talking about quantification, we have to talk about statistical methods to analyze and measure the indicators.

CHRISTIAN WHEELER

This is Christian from ICANN staff. It definitely depends on the indicator you are trying to measure. According to the SMART format, the M stands for measurable. All indicators should be measurable. Whether that is yes or no, or true or false, that is a measure. You do not need a percentage or statistic for everything because you might be looking for data that does not exist or is not needed. For example, an indicator could be that the GNSO completes a certain number of PDPs per year. That number might not show if the GNSO is actually effective or meeting its purpose. A more qualitative indicator, such as the GNSO regularly reporting progress on its PDPs, is more indicative of the GNSO fulfilling its purpose. It does not have numbers but is still measurable. We want a healthy balance so it does not become a check-boxing exercise. Once the indicators are nailed down, the next step will be determining the best methodology to get that information and seeing what the limitations are.

Thank you so much for that feedback. I agree that it depends on the indicator and the availability of data to actually use the SMART approach and the method to quantify what we want to measure. That is very helpful.

Staff will start to develop the draft indicators based on the discussions we had today. Tentatively, we will have our next SCCI meeting on Wednesday, 25 March 2026. Please be prepared to come. Hopefully we will be able to circulate the indicators before the meeting so we can have a preliminary discussion. Is there any other business?

Maybe send us the indicators a week or two weeks earlier so we could give them some thought. Since these are suggestions, I do not think it is an issue.

We must be mindful that after this hectic ICANN meeting, our staff will have a well-deserved break and other important jobs to do. We will try to circulate them as early as possible, but this is not the only thing on their plate. We are in pretty good shape with our indicators, so it should not take too much time. We will do our best. Ajith, please.

AJITH FRANCIS

We will work with staff to see what is the best time. The purpose of the next meeting would be for us to discuss the indicators collectively for the first time. We would definitely have time to take this back to our SG/Cs. This is an iterative exercise because we will probably have to go through the indicators a couple of times until we get them right.

JOHN MCCABE

Thank you, Manju. I was looking at my notes here, and 25 April is a Saturday.

MANJU CHEN

It is 25 March, not 25 April. Jen, please.

JENNIFER CHUNG

Thanks, Manju. I already see in the chat that Seo-Yeong says meeting invites are coming soon. If our next call is going to be at the end of March and we expect to complete the draft indicators by the end of April, is our meeting cadence going to be weekly?

MANJU CHEN

I guess that is something we will have to see based on how the discussions go, but Steve will be more knowledgeable about this.

---

STEVE CHAN

This is Steve from staff. We have not discussed it, but if we are trying to meet that timeline, we would presumably be meeting on a weekly basis. Regarding the earlier discussion, I will be upfront: we cannot have the full set of draft indicators in your inbox for a week or two by 25 March. We are already two weeks out from that now, and we have travel and transition weeks. If it is a requirement to have them in your inbox before we meet, then we would probably push the meeting out to the following week.

AJITH FRANCIS

I completely agree with Steve. If we decide to keep the 25 March date, maybe we can use that to discuss the indicators collectively for the first time. Even if we do not have it in our inboxes, we can at least have an initial conversation. It allows us to keep the cadence and have feedback on the indicators.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

In that case, we will be meeting sometime in mid-April again to evaluate and probably get the report once we have taken that back to our constituencies and stakeholder groups.

MANJU CHEN

On 25 March, we will try to refresh people on the criteria we already have. Based on that, there are indicators that are the most preliminary draft. We might discuss the GNSO Council versus GNSO issues during the meeting too. Refreshing the criteria will be the main focus, and that discussion will feed back into the indicators

---

we are developing. In the meeting after 25 March, we will start with the indicators.

AJITH FRANCIS

I apologize, I misspoke. When I said criteria, I meant indicators.

MANJU CHEN

It is okay. We will know better once we send the meeting invitation. We are at time. Thank you very much for joining, and we will see you on 25 March online.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**