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## Introducing ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

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### What is the GAC?

The GAC is an advisory committee to ICANN, created under the ICANN ByLaws. It provides advice to ICANN on public policy aspects of ICANN's responsibilities with regard to the Internet Domain Name System (DNS).

The GAC is not a decision-making body. It advises ICANN on issues that are within ICANN's scope.

GAC advice has a particular status under the ICANN ByLaws. Its advice must be duly taken into account by the ICANN Board, and where the Board proposes actions inconsistent with GAC advice it must give reasons for doing so and attempt to reach a mutually acceptable solution.

The GAC appoints a non-voting liaison to the ICANN Board. This is normally the GAC Chair.

### Who are the GAC's Members?

The GAC elects a Chair and Vice Chairs from its membership. The current GAC Chair is Ms Heather Dryden from Canada, and the Vice Chairs are from Australia, Switzerland and Trinidad and Tobago. The Chair and Vice Chairs are approaching the end of their official terms and the process of electing a new leadership team is underway.

GAC membership consists of national governments and distinct economies recognized in international fora; and, usually in an observer capacity, multinational governmental and treaty organisations and public authorities (including all the UN agencies with a direct interest in global Internet governance such as the ITU, UNESCO and WIPO). There are currently 137 GAC Members and 30 Observers.

### Why does ICANN have a Governmental Advisory Committee?

ICANN is a multi-stakeholder entity in which governments need to participate alongside the domain names industry, the technical community, business and non-commercial users, and civil society. The GAC was established in 1999, in parallel with ICANN's first public meetings, and has operated continuously since then.

ICANN looks to the GAC for advice on public policy aspects of specific issues for which ICANN has responsibility. This is an important dimension of ICANN's work.

### How does the GAC operate?

The GAC determines its own operating procedures and these are set out in the GAC Operating Principles. GAC face-to-face meetings are held in conjunction with ICANN meetings, which currently occur three times a year.

Advice from the GAC to ICANN is determined on the basis of consensus. Advice is conveyed to the ICANN Board, usually in the form of a communiqué issued at the end of each GAC meeting. Each communiqué and the minutes of GAC meetings are made available online.

The GAC works inter-sessionally on priority issues, usually via teleconferencing. In addition, working groups are used to focus on particular areas such as working methods and issues for future gTLDs.

The work of the GAC is supported by a dedicated Secretariat provided by ACIG (an independent consulting firm) and by ICANN staff.

## What are the benefits of GAC membership?

The Internet domain name system is a key part of critical Internet infrastructure for the global digital economy. Government and IGOs who participate through the GAC benefit from:

- The opportunity to provide advice direct to the ICANN Board on public policy aspects of the operation of the Internet domain name system.
- Contributing at an early stage of ICANN's policy development processes to ensure consistency with laws and public interest.
- Access to face to face meetings and online discussion with other GAC members and observers, including national governments and inter-governmental organisations, which inform development of GAC advice.
- Access to relevant subject matter experts within the GAC and across ICANN, enabling GAC members to remain informed about technical innovation in the domain name system and its future evolution.
- Support from a professional full-time Secretariat.

## GAC Achievements

- Substantive policy outcomes, including
  - The 2007 new principles for generic top level domains (gTLDs)
  - New gTLDs scorecard, which was important to the new gTLDs program and widely hailed as a major success and model for the future
  - ICANN's acceptance of safeguards for new gTLDs to reflect law enforcement and consumer protection concerns.
  - WHOIS principles, including bringing law enforcement to the ICANN table to address cybercrime
  - Maintaining security and stability of the DNS
  - Delegation and administration of country code domains (ccTLDs)
- Structural and process outcomes, including
  - Greater accountability and transparency of all areas of ICANN (including the GAC itself)
  - Liaison with the ICANN Board, through the GAC Chair's membership and a formal register of GAC advice and actions taken
  - Cross-community activities between GAC and ICANN policy-making bodies such as those dealing with generic and country-specific top level domain names.
  - Operation of a travel support program to assist developing countries to participate in GAC meetings.

## More Information

More information on the GAC is available at

<https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/Governmental+Advisory+Committee>, or email [gacsec@icann.org](mailto:gacsec@icann.org).

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## FACT SHEET: How to Become a GAC Member

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New GAC members are always most welcome.

ICANN relies on its Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) for guidance and advice to the ICANN Board on public policy aspects of ICANN's work, particularly with regard to the Internet's domain name system.

The GAC has around 140 governments as Members and some 30 Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) as Observers. Membership is open to all national governments and distinct economies. There are no membership fees or charges.

### Eligibility

Members of the GAC must be national governments, multinational governmental organisations and treaty organisations, or public authorities.

Each may appoint one representative and one alternate representative to the GAC. The accredited representative of a Member may be accompanied by advisers.

The accredited representative, alternate and advisers must hold a formal official position with the Member's public administration. The term 'official' includes a holder of an elected governmental office or a person who is employed by such government, public authority or multinational governmental or treaty organisation, and whose primary function with such government, public authority or organisation is to develop or influence governmental or public policies.

For further details about the membership rules, please refer to Article IV of the GAC Operating Principles: <https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+Operating+Principles>.

### Exchange of Letters

In order to become a member of the GAC you must:

- Send a signed letter, on official letterhead, addressed to the GAC Chair. A sample letter is provided over the page.
- State the name and full contact details of the appointed GAC Representative. The letter may also inform GAC leadership of a designated alternate Representative and of any designated Advisors.
- Electronically scan the letter and attach it to an email. Send the email to [gacsec@gac.icann.com](mailto:gacsec@gac.icann.com).

The request will be reviewed by the GAC Chair and Vice Chairs.

Once the request has been approved, the person or persons designated as representatives will be added to the GAC e-mail list, and be provided with access to the Members Only part of the GAC website.

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## Sample Letter

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[Official Letterhead]

Ms. Heather Dryden  
Chair, Governmental Advisory Committee  
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

**Re: Membership request and nomination of GAC representative(s) on behalf of [national government]**

Dear Ms. Dryden,

The [ministry, department or agency] is the national authority of [country or distinct economy with two-letter code xx] that looks after matters related to Internet governance, including those under the purview of ICANN. The [ministry, department or agency] formally requests membership to participate in ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and is pleased to appoint [GAC Representative name (s)] as the representative(s) on behalf of [national government].

Please find the relevant point(s) of contact information below:

**Prefix or Title:**

**First name:**

**Last Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Employer:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Phone 2:**

Sincerely,

[Letter to be signed by relevant government minister or senior official with lead responsibility for ICANN/GAC issues as designated by the requesting national government]

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## FACT SHEET: How to change a nominated GAC representative

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The ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) has around 140 governments as Members and some 30 Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) as Observers. Membership is open to all national governments and distinct economies. There are no membership fees or charges.

Sometimes a nominated GAC representative leaves their role and another person is nominated in their place. To formalise the change, an exchange of letters is required.

### Eligibility

Members of the GAC must be national governments, multinational governmental organisations and treaty organisations, or public authorities.

Each may appoint one representative and one alternate representative to the GAC. The accredited representative of a Member may be accompanied by advisers.

The accredited representative, alternate and advisers must hold a formal official position with the Member's public administration. The term 'official' includes a holder of an elected governmental office or a person who is employed by such government, public authority or multinational governmental or treaty organisation, and whose primary function with such government, public authority or organisation is to develop or influence governmental or public policies.

For further details about the membership rules, please refer to Article IV of the GAC Operating Principles: <https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+Operating+Principles>.

### Exchange of Letters

In order to change a nominated GAC representative you must:

- Send a signed letter, on official letterhead, addressed to the GAC Chair. A sample letter is provided over the page.
- State the name and full contact details of the new GAC Representative. The letter may also inform GAC leadership of a designated new alternate Representative and of any designated Advisors. It may also be useful to name the outgoing GAC representative, who is to be replaced.
- Electronically scan the letter and attach it to an email. Send the email to [gacsec@gac.icann.com](mailto:gacsec@gac.icann.com).

The change request will be reviewed by the GAC Chair and Vice Chairs.

Once the request has been approved, the person or persons newly designated as representatives will be added to the GAC e-mail list, and be provided with access to the Members Only part of the GAC website.

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## Sample Letter

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[Official Letterhead]

Ms. Heather Dryden  
Chair, Governmental Advisory Committee  
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

**Re: Changes to the nominated GAC representative(s) on behalf of [national government]**

Dear Ms. Dryden,

The [ministry, department or agency] is the national authority of [country or distinct economy with two-letter code xx] that looks after matters related to Internet governance, including those under the purview of ICANN.

The [ministry, department or agency] formally notes that [name of outgoing representative] is to be replaced as the nominated GAC representative. The [ministry, department or agency] is pleased to appoint [GAC Representative name (s)] as the representative(s) on behalf of [national government].

Please find the relevant point(s) of new contact information below:

**Prefix or Title:**

**First name:**

**Last Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Employer:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Phone 2:**

Sincerely,

[Letter to be signed by relevant government minister or senior official with lead responsibility for ICANN/GAC issues as designated by the requesting national government]

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## FACT SHEET: GAC Leadership Team

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The role of the leadership team includes:

- Leadership of the GAC and associated groups as agreed by the GAC.
- Strategic liaison with ICANN; other ICANN advisory committees and supporting organisations; and with other relevant stakeholders.
- Prioritising the work of ACIG and ICANN staff in support of GAC activities.

### GAC Chair – Ms Heather Dryden

Ms Heather Dryden is the Chair of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee. She also is the GAC's liaison to the ICANN Board.



Ms Dryden is a Senior Policy Advisor at the International Telecommunications Policy and Coordination Directorate at the Canadian Department of Industry.

Ms. Dryden holds a BSc. (Hons) Degree in International Politics and Strategic Studies.

### GAC Vice Chairs



#### **Mr Tracy Hackshaw, Trinidad and Tobago.**

Tracy has been involved in Trinidad & Tobago's National Information & Communication Technology (ICT) program since 2005, and is currently the Deputy National Chief Information Officer at the Ministry of Science and Technology.



#### **Mr Peter Nettlefold, Australia.**

Peter is the Director of Internet Governance and Numbering at the Australian Government Department of Communications.



#### **Mr Thomas Schneider, Switzerland.**

Thomas is Deputy Director of International Relations and International Information Society Coordinator at the Federal Office of Communication, Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Energy, Communication.

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## FACT SHEET: GAC Secretariat and ICANN Support Team

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### Overview

The GAC receives support in its work from a team made up of staff from the Australian Continuous Improvement Group (ACIG) and ICANN. Working together, these staff provide a range of services to all GAC members and observers, including organising meetings, briefing, website and email administration, liaison with ICANN and travel support. They are available and more than willing to provide help to any GAC member.

**To contact any member of the GAC Secretariat and ICANN Support team: [gacsec@icann.org](mailto:gacsec@icann.org)**

### ACIG GAC Secretariat

ACIG is an independent consulting firm engaged to provide secretariat support to ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee. ACIG's services are funded by three GAC members: Norway, the Netherlands and Brazil. However the ACIG team reports directly to the GAC Chair.

#### **What does the ACIG GAC Secretariat do?**

The ACIG GAC Secretariat works in co-operation with ICANN support staff to the GAC, the GAC Chair and Vice Chairs. Some of ACIG's main tasks include:

- Prepare and distribute agendas, briefing or summary papers, and other preliminary material to support the formal GAC meetings.
- Provide support to the GAC Chair during GAC meetings.
- Provide support and advice to the GAC Leadership Team, GAC members and to the GAC working groups during the time between GAC's face to face meetings.
- Continuously review and improve the way GAC operates.
- Provide support and assistance to new GAC members.

#### **Who are the ACIG GAC Secretariat team members?**



**Mr Tom Dale ([tom@acig.com.au](mailto:tom@acig.com.au) - Ph.+61 418207376)** leads the ACIG GAC Secretariat team. Tom is widely experienced with GAC, ICANN and the domain name sector. He has served on ICANN's Government Advisory Committee; was instrumental in the establishment of .au Domain Administration; and Chaired the OECD Task Force on Spam.

Tom is an experienced senior manager, adviser and consultant with a particular focus on the public sector, regulatory policy, legislation and international issues.



**Ms Michelle Scott Tucker ([michelle@acig.com.au](mailto:michelle@acig.com.au))** has also served on ICANN's Government Advisory Committee; and, as a senior public servant, led the Australian Government team which originally provided secretariat support to the GAC. Michelle is now one of ACIG's Company Directors and brings her public and private sector experience in evaluation, process improvement, and operational review to the processes and operations of the GAC.

## ICANN GAC Support Team

ICANN provides staff members to support and assist the various supporting organisations (SOs) and advisory committees (ACs). All these staff members work within ICANN's Policy Development unit.

The GAC has two ICANN staff members allocated to provide support and assistance.

### *Who are the ICANN GAC Support team members?*



**Mr Olof Nordling** (olof.nordling@icann.org) is the Director of Service Relations at ICANN and Branch Manager for ICANN's Brussels office.

He is a Swedish national and holds an MSc. Prior to joining ICANN in 2005, Olof was Head of TeliaSonera's Brussels office. At TeliaSonera, a Swedish/Finnish telecommunications company, he was responsible for relations to the EU institutions for telecommunications policy matters. Before that, Olof was a Counselor and Head at the Science and Technology office at the Swedish Embassy, and has also worked as a Deputy Trade Commissioner for Sweden.

Olof provides information to the GAC about ICANN's activities. He also provides a point of liaison between the GAC, ICANN and the other supporting organisations (SOs) and advisory committees (ACs).



**Ms Julia Charvolen** (julia.charvolen@icann.org) is ICANN's GAC Services Co-ordinator. Julia's role includes:

- Maintaining the GAC mailing list and membership records.
  - Managing the correspondence flowing to and from the GAC Chair.
  - Administration of the GAC website.
  - Arranging the translation of nominated GAC documents.
- Co-ordinating the arrangements for formal GAC meetings including room bookings, liaison with hosts and technical support.
  - Making the arrangements for inter-sessional GAC meetings including call set-up and administration.

## Other ICANN support

At every face to face meeting of the GAC, ICANN provides (and funds):

- Live translation of the proceedings into seven languages (Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish).
- Live English scribing of the proceedings, with full transcripts provided at the end of each meeting.
- The GAC meeting room and associated technical support.

In the periods between those face to face meetings ICANN provides (and funds):

- Hosting of the GAC website
- Translation of nominated GAC documents into the seven languages listed above (at no cost to GAC members).
- Tele-conferencing facilities (at the cost of a local call to participating GAC members).