

# PRSP Pre-ICANN79 Briefing

Policy Research and Stakeholder Programs (PRSP)

Global Domains and Strategy (GDS)  
20 February 2024



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# Introduction

The Policy Research and Stakeholder Programs (PRSP) team is part of ICANN's Global Domains and Strategy (GDS) function. Its scope includes enabling informed participation in the ICANN multistakeholder model and helping to foster secure, stable, and universal operation of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and email addresses for Internet users around the world. PRSP plays an important role in supporting the Policy Development Process (PDP) by providing GDS liaisons to various working groups, currently including:

- The Transfer PDP Working Group (WG),
- Applicant Support GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) and
- IDNs Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) WG.

Both the Applicant Support GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) and the IDN Expedited PDP Phase 1 have recommendations currently before the Board.

This PRSP briefing<sup>1</sup> provides status updates and progress reporting on the various community-facing projects that the PRSP team supports, in preparation for discussions during the upcoming ICANN79 meeting. The pre-ICANN meeting briefings are a valuable resource for the community, and help to increase visibility and accountability for the multiple projects the PRSP team supports and leads.

Links to previous PRSP Pre-ICANN meeting briefings can be found [here](#).

We would like to inform readers that there is also a detailed New gTLD Program: Next Round status update that can be found [here](#). This update was previously included in this briefing but it is now published as a standalone document.

Feedback on this document is encouraged so that the PRSP team can improve briefings for future meetings. PRSP team members will be present at ICANN79 in Puerto Rico to help support a number of sessions as described in this briefing. Do not hesitate to reach out to any of the PRSP team members either in person in Puerto Rico or via email at [prsp-team@icann.org](mailto:prsp-team@icann.org). We look forward to engaging with the community and hope to see you at ICANN79.

Karen Lentz  
VP, Policy Research and Stakeholder Programs

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<sup>1</sup> **Note on GNSO Policy Briefing:** This briefing was inspired by a similar briefing published regularly by the GNSO before each ICANN public meeting. The GNSO Policy Support Team has developed this publicly available GNSO Policy Briefing to help community members prepare for ICANN79. It provides an overview of the status of the GNSO PDP working groups and teams, as well as information about other GNSO policy-related activities, including PDP Implementation Review Teams (IRTs). The document includes links for additional background reading to help readers prepare for ICANN79. You can read the GNSO Policy Briefing: ICANN79 Edition [here](#).

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# 1. Policy Implementation Projects

## 1.1 Ongoing

### 1.1.1 Registration Data Policy (EPDP Phase 1)

#### **Session details for ICANN79:**

GDS: Registration Data Policy IRT - Collaborative Planning for Transition Work Session

Saturday, 2 March 2024

16:15-17:30 ET (20:15-21:30 UTC)

<https://sched.co/1a17X>

#### What to expect on this project during ICANN79?

There are multiple stakeholders involved in producing and testing the changes required to accommodate the transition from the Interim Policy to the new Registration Data Policy. The Implementation Review Team (IRT) will be discussing the collaborative approach to the policy implementation activities in preparation for the transition planned to begin on 21 August 2024.

For updates please see the [Registration Data Policy IRT community workspace \(wiki\)](#) and be sure to join the ICANN79 session.

#### What is the current status of this project? What has happened since the last ICANN meeting?

The Board considered the inputs of the [GAC](#) and [Registrar Stakeholder](#) Group concerning the provisions for urgent requests for disclosure of data. The Board also considered the discussions during ICANN78 that indicated stakeholder support for moving forward with the policy while considering the issues around urgent requests separately. In addition, SSAC produced the [SAC122 report](#) advising on solutions to Urgent Requests.

The Board has directed ICANN org to proceed with this policy implementation without the Urgent Request requirement. Therefore, the Registration Data Policy is pending publication.

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## What is the topic/background?

The draft Registration Data Policy language, review, and analysis of all impacted policies and procedures were published for [Public Comment](#) on 24 August 2022. The [Public Comment Report](#) was published on 20 January 2023 following a three-month public comment period accommodating two extension requests from the community due to the large and complex scope of the subject matter, which included:

- draft policy language for the Registration Data Policy,
- revisions to 20 [impacted policies and procedures](#),
- a new policy advisory to replace the [existing advisory](#), and
- an updated Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) Profile.

The gTLD Registration Data Policy encompasses 34 policy recommendations from three ICANN Board Resolutions over three years:

- EPDP Phase 1: [Board Resolution](#) in May 2019 (29 recommendations)
- EPDP Phase 2: [Board Resolution](#) in June 2021 (4 recommendations)
- Supplemental Recommendation 12: [Board Resolution](#) in February 2022 (1 recommendation)

The implementation plan includes:

- Registration Data Policy
- Revisions to 20 [impacted policies and procedures](#)
- A new policy advisory to replace the [existing advisory](#)
- An updated RDAP Profile

This policy replaces the [Interim Registration Data Policy](#) that has been in effect since 20 May 2019 and requires contracted parties to continue to implement measures consistent with the [Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data \(Temp Spec\)](#) as a result of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Temp Spec, which modified existing requirements in the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) and Registry Agreement (RA) to comply with GDPR, was adopted by the ICANN Board on 17 May 2018. Following Board adoption, an EPDP was initiated on the Temp Spec to determine if it could become an ICANN consensus policy as is, or with modifications.

The Interim Policy, currently in place as of 20 May 2019, requires contracted parties to continue to implement measures consistent with the Temp Spec, which expired on 25 May 2019.

### More Information

For further information, please consult the [Consensus Policy Implementation Framework page](#) on ICANN.org.

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## 1.1.2 Rights Protection Mechanisms (RPM) Phase 1

### What to expect on this project during ICANN79?

The Rights Protection Mechanisms (RPM) Implementation Review Team (IRT) is not expected to meet during ICANN79. The Implementation Project Team (IPT) is continuing to work with the IRT toward implementing the recommendations in the first implementation category identified below.

### What is the current status of this project? What has happened since the last ICANN meeting?

The IRT is assisting ICANN org in the implementation of the policy recommendations from the Phase 1 work of the Policy Development Process (PDP) Working Group on the Review of All RPMs in All gTLDs. This project incorporates a phased approach that allows for straightforward-to-implement recommendations to be implemented first, with recommendations with more significant complexity and timing considerations to be implemented sequentially according to level of effort.

Since ICANN78, the implementation team has been in the process of reviewing the [public comments](#) received on the proposed updates to existing RPM documentation in the first implementation category with the IRT, to consider whether any further changes need to be made as a result of the input received. In addition, the implementation team has also started working on the recommendations in the third implementation category concerning the development of educational materials to assist users of the RPMs.

### Project timeline - upcoming milestones and completion date

Based on the RPM IRT Phase 1 [Implementation Plan](#), ICANN org estimates that implementing the 15 recommendations in the first group, which have been identified as the most straightforward to implement as they involve updating existing procedural documents, will require a minimum of five to six months. Implementing the remaining recommendations is estimated to take a minimum of one year due to their complexity and the need to involve multiple stakeholders. Since the implementation team first convened in the last quarter of 2022, implementation is projected to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2024.

### What is the topic/background?

On 18 February 2016, the GNSO Council [resolved](#) to initiate a two-phased PDP to review all existing RPMs in all gTLDs.

The Working Group finalized its recommendations and submitted its Phase 1 Final Report to the GNSO Council on 24 November 2020.

On 16 January 2022, the Board [adopted](#) the policy recommendations from the Phase 1 PDP and directed a tiered approach for the work based on timing, staffing, and resourcing needed for implementation of the recommendations. In adopting the recommendations, the Board [noted](#)

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that implementation of the recommendations could be divided into several categories. These implementation categories are:

- Recommendations that call for updates to existing operational practices or documentation concerning the RPMs where no substantial resources are required for implementation - sixteen (16) recommendations;
- Recommendations to maintain the status quo (i.e. maintaining the Phase 1 RPMs as implemented for the 2012 New gTLD Program) - nine (9) recommendations;
- Recommendations that require substantial resourcing, and involvement of multiple stakeholders to implement - six (6) recommendations; and
- Recommendations affecting subsequent round(s) of new gTLDs - four (4) recommendations.

On 24 August 2023, the implementation team published for Public Comment the proposed changes to the RPM-related procedural documents as revised in accordance with the relevant PDP Phase 1 outputs. The Public Comment period closed on 3 October 2023.

For more information, including regarding past meetings, please consult the [RPM IRT community workspace \(wiki\) page](#). The Policy Implementation Status webpage can be found [here](#).

### 1.1.3 New gTLD Subsequent Procedures

ICANN org has convened and is currently working with an Implementation Review Team (IRT) on implementing these recommendations. See the detailed briefing [here](#).

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## 1.2 Upcoming Policy Implementation Projects

As described in this section, there are a number of policy recommendations pending implementation. The estimated timelines are published [here](#). The team is currently working on integrating these activities into chartered projects, including the sequencing and allocation of available staff resources, and taking into account any necessary dependencies.

### 1.2.1 Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation Issues (PPSAI)

ICANN org held a constructive informal discussion at ICANN78 with former PPSAI IRT members and other interested stakeholders. The discussion focused on understanding the impact of the forthcoming Registration Data Policy and identifying areas that may not be fit for purpose in the current registration data landscape. ICANN org took the action to review and identify any areas that may have changed since its last analysis in [January 2021](#), and provided an update to the GNSO Council in January 2024 on its current progress. ICANN org aims to conduct another informal session with the community, as well as provide an update to the GNSO Council during ICANN79 on its analysis and the proposed approach forward to satisfy the requirements of the policy recommendations in the [PPSAI Final Report](#).

#### More Information

- [Final Report on the Privacy & Proxy Services Accreditation Issues Policy Development Process](#)
- [Previous IRT's Workspace](#)

### 1.2.2 EPDP Phase 2A on Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data

The EPDP team divided its work into two phases, where Phase 1 completed with the GNSO Council adoption of the [EPDP Phase 1 Final Report](#) on 4 March 2019, and the EPDP Phase 2 Final Report on 24 September 2020.

The [Phase 2 Final Report](#) noted that "As a result of external dependencies and time constraints, this Final Report does not address all priority 2 items". On 21 October 2020, the GNSO Council adopted [instructions](#) for the EPDP Phase 2A to address the remaining carried over items from EPDP Phase 1:

- 1) differentiation between legal and natural person registration data, and
- 2) feasibility of unique contacts to have a uniform anonymized email address.

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On [17 December 2020](#), the EPDP Team commenced its deliberations on Phase 2A and published its [Final Report](#) in September 2021. On [27 October 2021](#) the GNSO Council approved all the recommendations by a GNSO Supermajority vote.

The ICANN Board of Directors [adopted](#) the [EPDP Phase 2A recommendations](#) on 10 March 2022. ICANN staff will conduct the implementation of the EPDP Phase 2A recommendations in consultation with an IRT.<sup>2</sup>

#### More Information

- [Final Report of the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Expedited Policy Development Process](#)
- [ICANN org Policy Implementation Page](#) (EPDP Phase 1 IRT)
- Please continue to consult this page for updates to the status of this policy implementation: [Policy Implementation Status Page](#)

## 1.2.3 Translation and Transliteration of Contact Information

The ICANN Board [adopted](#) the recommendations of the PDP working group in September 2015. Since starting implementation work in July 2016, ICANN org worked with the IRT to produce a [preliminary policy document](#).

Given the implementation's connection to the evolution of registration data policies and procedures, ICANN org assessed the PDP working group's recommendations per Recommendation 27 of the EPDP on the Temp Spec for gTLD Registration Data Phase 1 Team's [Final Report](#).

#### More Information

- [Final Report on the Translation and Transliteration of Contact Information Policy Development Process](#)
- [PDP background](#)
- [Policy Implementation Status webpage](#)
- [IRT workspace](#)

## 1.2.4 IGO-INGO Access to Curative Rights Protection Mechanisms and Specific Curative Rights Protections for IGOs

In April 2019, the GNSO Council voted to adopt Recommendations 1–4 of the [Final Report](#) of the International Governmental Organization and International Non-Governmental Organization

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<sup>2</sup> Please see [the Consensus Policy Implementation Framework \(CPIF\)](#) and the [IRT Principles and Guidelines](#) for more information on the roles and responsibilities of the IRT.

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(IGO-INGO) Access to Curative Rights Protection Mechanisms Policy Development Process, but elected to refer Recommendation 5 to the Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms (RPMs) in All gTLDs Policy Development Process (PDP) Working Group. In January 2020, the GNSO Council adopted an addendum to the RPMs charter to integrate consideration of Recommendation 5 and initiate a separate IGO Work Track.

In August 2021, the GNSO Council took the procedural step of initiating an EPDP on Specific Curative Rights Protections for IGOs to continue the work of the IGO Work Track. The EPDP Team delivered its [Final Report](#) to the Council on 4 April 2022 and the Council approved the five (5) consensus recommendations in June 2022.<sup>3</sup> During its 30 April meeting, the ICANN Board adopted the four recommendations that the GNSO Council approved from the IGO-INGO Access to Curative Rights Protection Mechanisms PDP, as well as the five recommendations that the GNSO Council approved from the EPDP on Specific Curative Rights Protections for IGOs.

The [Board resolution](#) directed ICANN org to proceed with the implementation of these recommendations as soon as feasible.

#### **More Information**

- [Final Report on the IGO-INGO Access to Curative Rights Protection Mechanisms Policy Development Process](#)
- [Final Report of the Expedited Policy Development Process on Specific Curative Rights Protections for International Governmental Organizations \(IGOs\)](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that the [Specific Curative Rights Protections for IGOs EPDP's Final Report](#) (April 2022) differs from the [IGO-INGO Access to Curative Rights Protection Mechanisms PDP Final Report](#) (July 2018)

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## 2 Research and Other Ongoing Work

### 2.1 RDS-WHOIS2 Recommendation 3.1 | Updating all Information Related to RDS (WHOIS)

In 2017, the Registration Directory Service Review Team (RDS-WHOIS2-RT) began its work to “assess the effectiveness of the then current gTLD registry directory service and whether its implementation meets the legitimate needs of law enforcement, promoting consumer trust and safeguarding registrant data.” RDS-WHOIS2-RT presented 22 recommendations to be implemented. Recommendation 3.1 calls on ICANN org to update all web documentation related to RDS (WHOIS) and by implication other information related to the registration of second-level gTLDs domains. In addition to these webpage updates, ICANN org should conduct focus groups concerning these webpage updates to ensure that the information is accessible and understandable.

In Q4 2023, ICANN org completed the necessary revisions to the web documentation and related materials. ICANN org staff is currently in the process of developing a focus group protocol to gather the appropriate feedback to assess whether these updates meet the recommendation requirements.

### 2.2 RDS-WHOIS2 Recommendation 3.2 | Identifying & Targeting Outreach towards Groups Outside of those that Routinely Engage with ICANN organization

RDS-WHOIS2-RT Recommendation 3.2 calls on ICANN org to identify groups outside of those that routinely engage with ICANN organization, and to target these groups through RDS (WHOIS) outreach so that the wider community is aware of any RDS (WHOIS) policy and processes changes. ICANN org is currently drafting an implementation plan for this recommendation and will align with internal stakeholders to develop, execute, and document an appropriate outreach plan.

### 2.3 CCTRT Recommendation 1 | Formalizing and Promoting Ongoing Data Collection

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ICANN org is drafting a proposal to implement Recommendation 1 from the Competition, Consumer Trust, and Consumer Choice Review Team’s (CCT-RT) Final Report, which calls for ICANN to “formalize and promote ongoing data collection”. The proposal draws from the Implementation Plan for the CCT-RT’s recommendations, the Board implementation directive, and the capabilities and resources already available within ICANN org. The aim is to present a consolidated view of data collection activities within ICANN org, how they have evolved to fit the need for data expressed by the CCT-RT, and how ICANN community groups can access and request data for their work.

## 2.4 CCTRT Recommendations 4, 13, 15, 21, 23 | Contracted Parties Survey

The CCT-RT reviewed the effectiveness of safeguards put in place to mitigate possible issues arising from the New gTLD Program. Five [CCT-RT Final Report](#) recommendations call on ICANN org to survey contracted parties for the data necessary to further assess the impact and effectiveness of safeguards. ICANN org is in the process of designing a voluntary pilot survey to gather this requested data.

To ensure the most meaningful and useful data can be collected from this survey, ICANN org consulted with contracted parties from July to December 2023 to gather feedback on survey design. Findings from this consultation suggest ICANN org complement the voluntary pilot survey with interviews to offer a more nuanced understanding of the impact of registration restrictions. The voluntary pilot survey and interviews are anticipated to be conducted in Q2 2024. Once data collection is complete, results and participation rates will be reviewed to assess whether data brings valuable insights to ICANN org and the community, and whether these data collection efforts should be repeated at regular intervals. The anticipated completion date is Q2 2024.

## 2.5 CCTRT Recommendation 23 | Assessing Accessibility of Contact Information for Domains in Highly-Regulated Sectors

ICANN org has begun work for the implementation of CCT Recommendation 23 item (B), which calls on ICANN org to produce “a review of a sample of domain websites within the highly-regulated sector category to assess whether contact information to file complaints is sufficiently easy to find.” There are currently 33 TLDs identified as Cat-1 highly regulated sectors (“Cat-1 TLDs”) per the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) Beijing Communiqué.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See: <https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/icann46-beijing-communication>.

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As of Q1 2024, ICANN org has identified approximately 931,295 domain names registered in Cat-1 TLDs and has compiled a sample of 385 domain websites for manual review and assessment. ICANN org has developed a set of criteria to determine whether contact information to file complaints is sufficiently easy to find. Data analysis and a report of findings, which would conclude the recommendation's implementation, is expected for completion by the end of Q1 2024.

## 2.6 TLD Operating Model Study

ICANN org published a Request for Proposal in March 2022 to perform a global study focused on operating models, user requirements, and other factors related to running a TLD in the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS). The goal of the study is to provide evidence-based information related to possible operating models, opportunities, and partnerships for TLDs that may benefit diversity and innovation in the gTLD space. The results should help the ICANN org and community understand what information is most important to consider in developing rules and procedures for the next round of gTLDs in order to support diversity and innovation in the DNS while maintaining DNS security, stability, and resilience.

In August 2022, ICANN org selected Analysys Mason to conduct the study, and the project started in September 2022. Analysys Mason completed the drafting phase of the project in Q4 2023 and the paper is currently undergoing internal review.

The [Request for Proposal: Top-Level Domain Operating Model Study](#) page provides more details about the scope and methods of the study.

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## 2.6 Operational Design Phase (ODP) Community Consultation

As established in the [Operational Design Phase \(ODP\) Process Paper](#), ICANN org will conduct a community consultation to ensure that the ODP operates effectively and fulfills the needs of the ICANN Board, community, and org. Data collection and analysis for this project will be performed in two phases.

The initial phase of research, which includes the collection and analysis of ICANN org and GNSO Council data, was concluded in December 2023. Findings from this initial phase of research have provided insights into the effectiveness of various ODP processes, the impact on the transparency of the policy implementation process, and community involvement. This feedback has been used to inform the design of data collection tools to be used in the second phase of research, where ICANN org will gather additional feedback from the ICANN Board and community.

Data collection for this second phase of research will begin in Q1 2024. Findings from both research phases will be summarized in a final report and published for Public Comment. This community consultation will form a key component of the ongoing review and improvement efforts of the policy and implementation lifecycle.

## 2.7 Guidelines for GDS Liaisons to PDPs

In September 2022, ICANN org published a set of guidelines for GDS liaisons to a GNSO policy development process. The goal of these guidelines is to both provide GDS liaisons with the foundational knowledge and tools required to carry out the liaison function effectively as well as provide transparency and clarity to the ICANN community on the expectations for the role.

Based on feedback received from the GNSO Council at ICANN76, ICANN org has now updated these guidelines to account for the interaction between the Board and GDS liaisons as well as the role of the GDS liaison to identify dependencies with other PDPs or ongoing community work that may have an impact on the implementability of recommendations. The updated guidelines have been shared with the GNSO Council, and ICANN org provided an overview of the updates made to the GDS liaisons handbook during ICANN78. The updated guidelines are now published on the Consensus Policy Implementation Framework (CPIF) [page](#).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Consensus Policy Implementation Framework (CPIF) process:  
<https://www.icann.org/policy/implementation>

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## 2.8 Policy Status Report: Policy & Implementation Non-PDP Recommendations

The GNSO Council has requested a Policy Status Report on the Policy & Implementation Recommendations (PSR), with the aim of providing the GNSO Council with sufficient data and metrics to assess the impact of previously adopted and implemented recommendations. The PSR may serve as the basis for further review and/or revisions to the policy recommendations if deemed appropriate.

### Background of the PSR

In June 2015, the GNSO Council adopted the [Policy and Implementation Working Group Final Report](#), followed by Board approval of the parts pertaining to the ICANN Bylaws in September 2015. The recommendations of the Policy & Implementation Working Group resulted in:

- The GNSO Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) (see <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en/#annexA1> and <https://gns0.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-4-epdp-manual-24oct19-en.pdf>)
- The GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) (see <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en/#annexA2> and <https://gns0.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-5-ggp-manual-24oct19-en.pdf>)
- The GNSO Input Process (GIP) (see <https://gns0.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/annex-3-input-process-manual-24oct19-en.pdf>)
- The Implementation Review Team (IRT) [Principles & Guidelines](#)<sup>6</sup>, as well as the requirement to form an IRT following the adoption by the ICANN Board of GNSO Policy recommendations
- The [Consensus Policy Implementation Framework](#) (CPIF)
- A set of policy & implementation principles / requirements

As part of the GNSO Council resolution, it was recommended that “a review of these recommendations is carried out at the latest five years following their implementation to assess whether the recommendations have achieved what they set out to do and/or whether any further enhancements or changes are needed”.

This Policy Status Report is a first step in that review. The PRSP team is currently working with the GNSO support team to draft this report, which is planned for delivery to the GNSO Council by the end of March. Based on the information contained in this report, which will be updated taking into account public comments received, the Council will decide how to proceed.

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<sup>6</sup> Linked to this is also the GNSO Council liaison to the IRT role description (see <https://gns0.icann.org/sites/default/files/file/field-file-attach/gns0-liaison-wg-28sep21-en.pdf>) that was developed at a later stage and flagged for further review as part of PDP 3.0. The liaison has been a valuable addition in helping to coordinate with the GNSO Council and for making determinations on escalation where necessary.

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## 3 PRSP Team

The PRSP team includes:

Karen Lentz, Brian Aitchison, Isabelle Colas-Adeshina, Peter Eakin, Leon Grundmann, Michael Karakash, Antonietta Mangiacotti, Jenn Shin, and Jessica Villaseñor.



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