GNSO Participation Study

PREPARED BY: ICANN Policy Staff

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Introduction:

There has been a growing sense, among the GNSO community, that group participation rates and conference call meeting attendances are languishing. Teams appear to be struggling to complete tasks and are often finding very few participants attending conference calls where the bulk of the GNSO's work occurs. In several instances, Chairs have found it necessary to cancel scheduled meetings due to having too few members present to be productive.

The purpose of this high level analysis is to ask a series of Participation (Section 1) and Attendance (Section 2) questions using actual recorded data, maintained by the GNSO Secretariat for GNSO Working Groups and Work Teams, from the beginning of 2008 and continuing through approximately early September 2009. **This report is intended as an inquiry to encourage further community investigation and discussion about GNSO workload and prioritization of tasks, as well as future work processes and structures.** It does not purport to be a scientific or rigorous statistical examination nor does it attempt to identify hypotheses about specific underlying causes.

Working Groups/Teams Analyzed:

The study included participation/attendance data from eleven (11) groups/teams which have been sub-grouped as follows: Group A – GNSO Working Groups; Group B – GNSO Improvements Work Teams. The table below shows which specific teams were included in each sub-group and the acronym used throughout the charts and tables.

GROUP A: Working Groups	Acronym Used
Post-Expiration Domain Name Recovery Working Group	PEDNR
Fast Flux Working Group	FF
Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy-Part A Working Group	IRTP-A
Registration Abuse Polices Working Group	RAP
Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy – Part B Working Group	IRTP-B

Group B: GNSO Improvement Work Teams	Acronym Used
Communications and Coordination Team	CCT
Constituency and Stakeholder Group Team	CSG
GNSO Council Operations Team	GCOT
Policy Development Process Team	PDPT
Working Group Team	WGT
Restructure Drafting Team	RDT

The periods of attendance/participation data vary by group with some having records starting in early 2008 and a few having data as late as September 2009. An Excel workbook accompanies this report and contains the summary and raw data used in this analysis.

Note: Data assumptions and technical notes are contained in the Appendix; the summary and raw data are attached in an accompanying Excel workbook.

SECTION 1: PARTICIPATION QUESTIONS

Question 1: How frequently did the 11 groups include at least one participant from each Constituency?

In terms of participation, the analysis examined the extent to which the existing GNSO Constituencies provided at least one representative for each group. To be counted, an individual purporting to be from that community must have attended at least one conference call/meeting of the group being reported.

As shown in Chart 1 below, three Constituencies (RrC, RyC, and BC) provided at least one participant for every group in the study (Total = 11) achieving 100% participation. In the remaining cases, the Constituencies did not have representatives in all 11 groups (IPC=10, ISPC=6, NCUC=7).
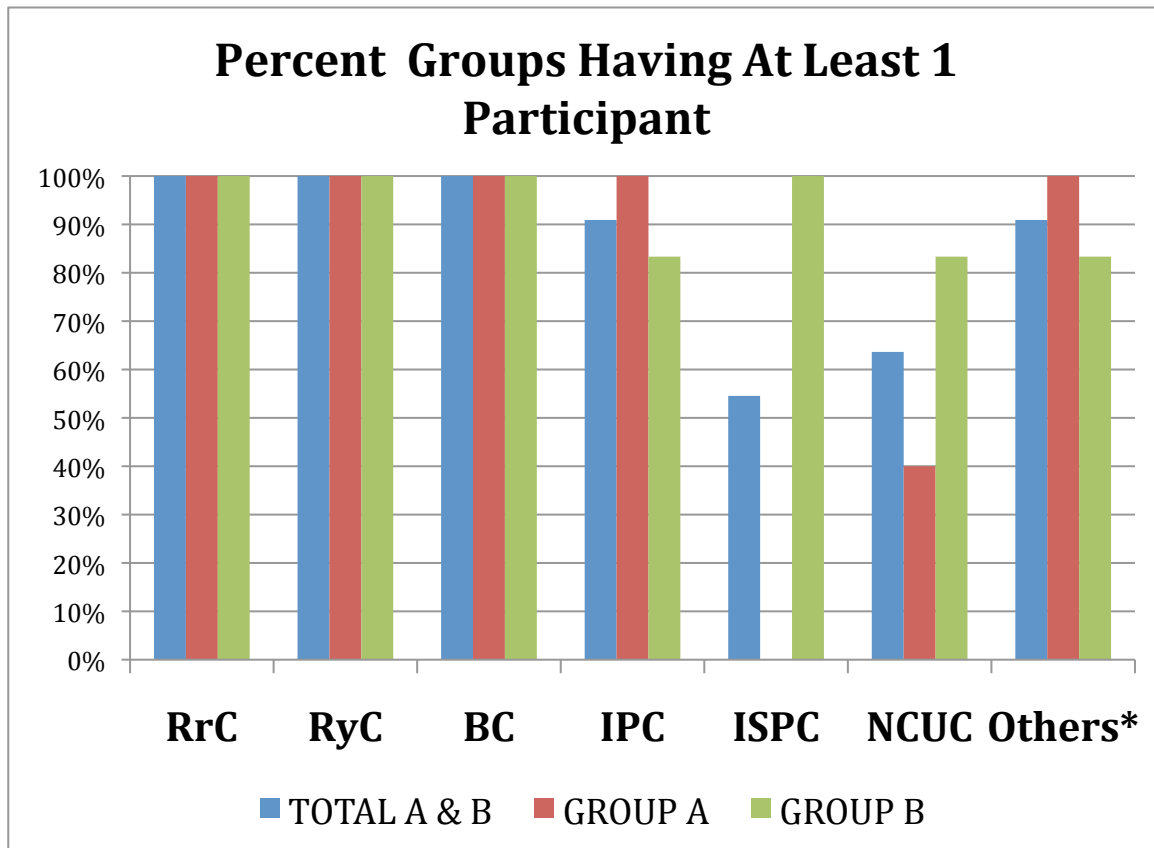

Chart 1

(*) Throughout this report, please note that "Others" is not a Constituency, but reflects an aggregation of representatives for At-Large and GAC, and Nom-Com Appointees, and unaffiliated individuals.

The following table shows those groups/teams that did not have anyone attend any session from the Constituencies listed.

Table 1. Groups with no participation from Constituencies listed by group.

Constituency	GROUP A	GROUP B
IPC		GCOT
ISPC	PEDNR, Fast Flux, IRTP-A, RAP, IRTP-B	
NCUC	IRTP-A, RAP, IRTP-B	CCT
Others		CCT

Question 2: What is the average level of participation by each Constituency across the studied groups?

This question seeks to understand how many participants, on average, were provided by each Constituency to the various groups/teams studied. As Chart 2 depicts the RrC and Others supplied an average of 4+ attendees across the eleven groups. Note that a participant had to attend at least one conference call or meeting session in order to be included in the analysis. The average aggregate result for ISPC and NCUC, just below 1, indicates that those Constituencies did not have participants in all eleven groups, and of those groups attended, did not have sufficiently large numbers to drive the average above 1.
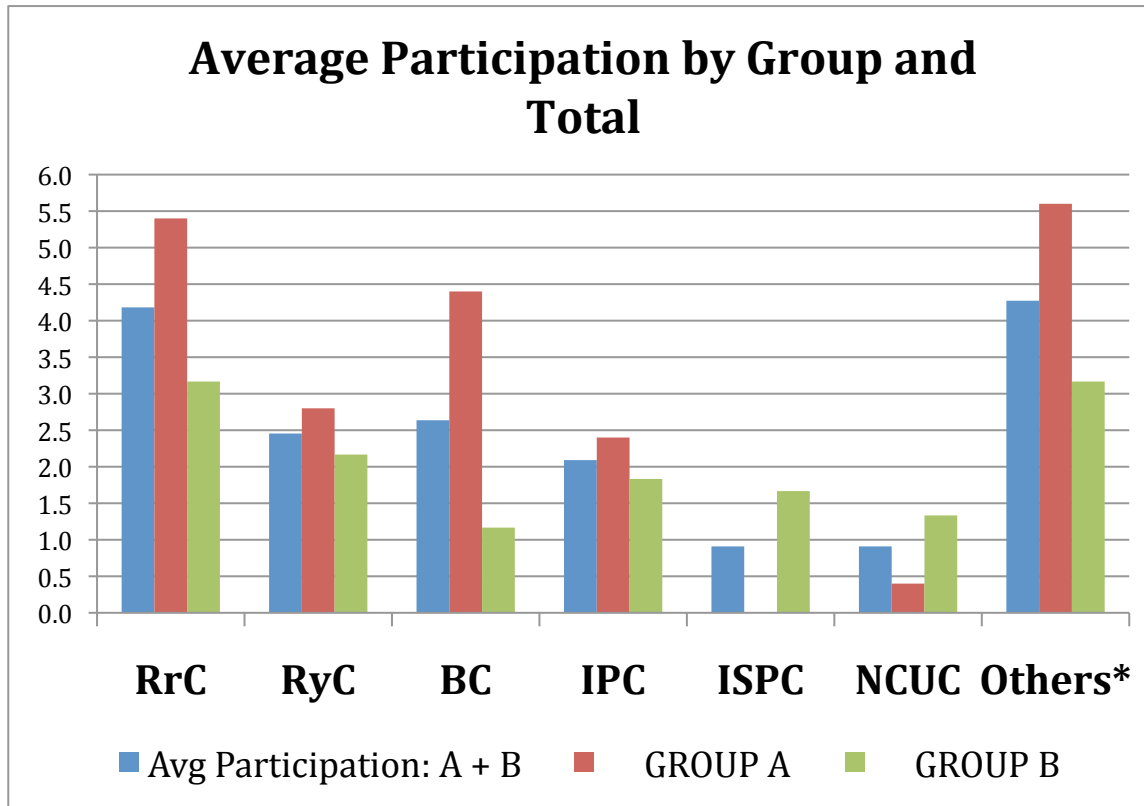
Average Participation by Group and Total

Chart 2

SECTION 2: ATTENDANCE QUESTIONS

Question 3: **How often do participants attend scheduled conference calls and meetings?**

The following Chart 3 examines the percent attendance of each Constituency using the following formula:

Percent Attendane = Actual Attendance / Total Opportunities   …where
Total Opportunities = Number of Participants * Total Number of Meetings

In other words, if a Constituency had 3 participants who attended at least one session (the minimum required to be classified as a group participant) and the group met 15 times, there are 45 maximum opportunities to be present (3 x 15). The actual recorded attendance divided by the total opportunities is the percentage displayed below for Groups A and B as well as the total of both groups.

As is evident from Chart 3, absences exceed 60% in 4 out of 7 Constituencies with the best results being 48% by the RyC and BC.
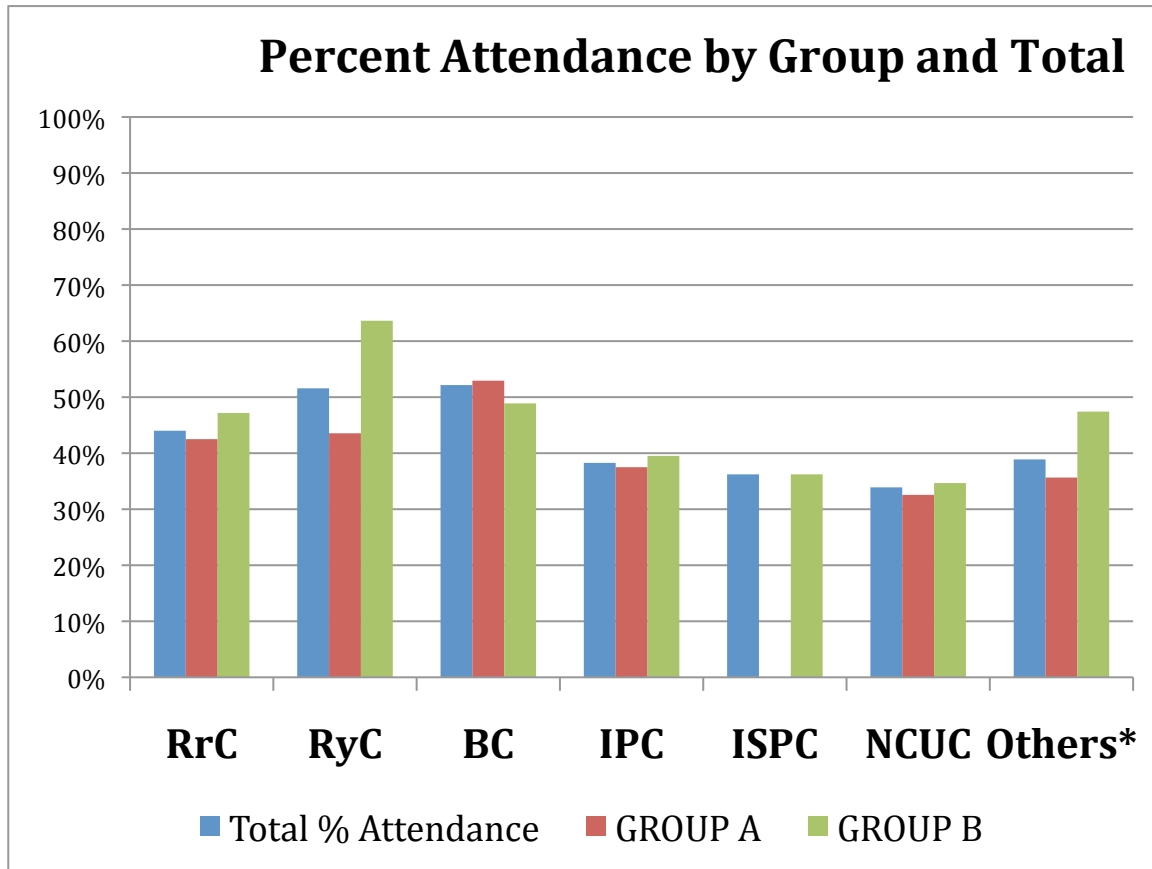
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Percent Attendance by Group and Total

Legend: ■ Total % Attendance ■ GROUP A ■ GROUP B

Chart 3

While it is expected that volunteer participants will be unable to attend all of the scheduled sessions, the average absence level approaches or exceeds 50% in most instances. The following question looks at this data from another perspective.

Question 4: **What is the percentage attendance counting any participant from each Constituency?**

Since it is often possible for groups to continue working productively as long as one representative from each Constituency is present, this question looks at attendance using the best possible record from each Constituency, that is, as long as any participant from that Constituency was present at a session, no absence was counted. Conversely, if no one from that Constituency was present, an absence was recorded. Note: if more than one participant attended a session from a Constituency, the result was counted as 1.

As Chart 4 below shows for all eleven groups, the absence rates for RrC, RyC, and Others achieve a much more acceptable absentee range of 10 and 20% using this counting methodology. For the BC, 30% of the scheduled sessions were not attended by any participant; whereas, for the IPC, ISPC, and NCUC, absence levels are between 40-65% -- very close to the results shown in the prior question. *Note: Group A and B detailed results are shown in data tables following Chart 4.*
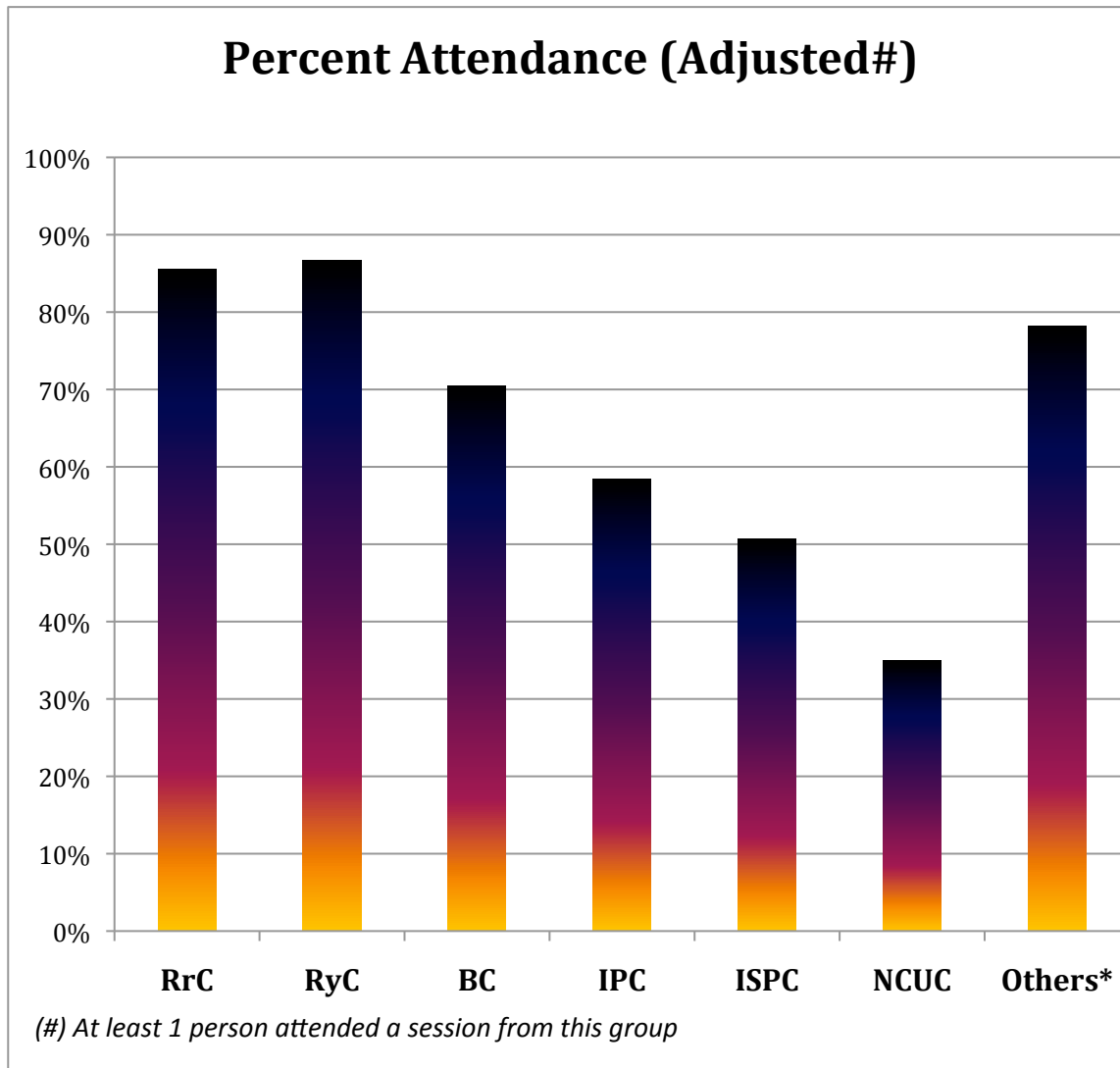
Percent Attendance (Adjusted#)

(#) At least 1 person attended a session from this group

Chart 4

One obvious conclusion that can be drawn from this last chart is that, where Constituencies supply two or more participants to a group, their attendance measures are significantly better than those Constituencies who provide only one (or no) participants.

The following two tables present detailed attendance results by Constituency for each group/team in the study. To remind the reader, Group A represents substantive GNSO Policy Working Groups and Group B includes GNSO Improvement Work Teams. As noted above, an absence was counted only if no participant was recorded as present for a particular Constituency. For this question, multiple participants from any Constituency at a session were counted as 1.

Table 2. Percent attendance for GNSO Working Groups (Group A) where at least 1 participant was present at a conference call or meeting.

GROUP A	RrC	RyC	BC	IPC	ISPC	NCUC	Others*
PEDNR	92%	54%	77%	38%	0%	23%	85%
FF	100%	93%	63%	17%	0%	37%	100%
IRTP-A	100%	79%	93%	82%	0%	0%	61%
RAP	94%	100%	94%	88%	0%	0%	82%
IRTP-B	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%
Group A Avg Attendance…	**98%**	**85%**	**81%**	**56%**	**0%**	**33%**	**82%**

As is evident in the above table, average attendance results for the GNSO Working Groups range from a low of 0% by the ISPC to a high of 98% by the Registrars. The median result is 81%.

Table 3. Percent attendance for GNSO Improvement Work Teams (Group B) where at least 1 participant was present at a conference call or meeting.

GROUP B	RrC	RyC	BC	IPC	ISPC	NCUC	Others*
CCT	73%	93%	100%	20%	7%	0%	0%
CSGT	69%	92%	23%	100%	46%	54%	92%
GCOT	29%	100%	76%	0%	94%	18%	18%
PDPT	100%	100%	53%	47%	67%	27%	87%
WGT	90%	50%	10%	80%	30%	40%	100%
RDT	80%	80%	60%	100%	40%	80%	100%
Group B Avg Attendance…	**71%**	**89%**	**57%**	**62%**	**51%**	**37%**	**72%**

Among the GNSO Improvement Work Teams, the average attendance results range from a low of 37% by NCUC to a high of 89% by the BC. The median results is 62%.

Conclusions:

While this report examines 11 groups over approximately a year and a half, the anecdotal experiences of current Group Chairs, Participants, and Staff appear to be corroborated by the actual attendance figures. There is clear evidence of sporadic attendance and, in some cases, very low participation by some Constituencies and inconsistent participation by others.

This study was undertaken for the sole purpose of determining if anecdotal community impressions were supported by objective facts. Now that the situation is confirmed, possible follow-up questions for community dialogue might include (among others):

- **Is there too much GNSO work and, if so, what might be done to assess the community's total capacity?**

- **How might the GNSO's work be prioritized?**

- **Are Constituencies providing enough recruits to the groups being formed?**

- **What levels of group participation should be targeted for each Constituency?**

The Policy Staff invites the GNSO community to have a dialogue about workload, prioritization, and participation, as well as group effectiveness, and hopes that this report will be informative in stimulating further questions, analyses, and the search for potential solutions.

This Appendix contains various notes pertaining to the charts and diagrams provided above.

1) Definition of "Participant" used in this report. In many cases, groups start by having a list of volunteer participants; however, there are occasions when individuals never attend a single session or, after a few meetings, resign. In order not to exaggerate or otherwise misrepresent the results, individuals and their attendance results were only counted if they attended at least one session and did not formally resign at any point during the group's existence. Thus, if someone registered (or was registered by his/her Constituency) to participate, but never attended a single meeting or conference call, the data was excluded from the analysis. For your information, this data is included in the attached spreadsheet.

2) A participant's recorded information was grouped according to his/her registered Constituency unless it was made clear to the Secretariat that his/her attendance was NOT to be associated with a Constituency in which case the affiliation was shown and counted as an "Individual."

3) The analysis reports on six entities (see below) which will be referred to as "Constituencies" even though the sixth grouping is not, technically, a Constituency:
   a. Registrars Constituency (RrC)
   b. Registries Constituency (RyC)
   c. Business Constituency (BC)
   d. Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC)
   e. Internet Services Providers Constituency (ISPC)
   f. Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC)
   g. Others – Includes At-Large, Nom-Com Appointees, GAC, Unaffiliated Individuals

4) Staff participation and attendance data were not included in the analysis; Board members who occasionally attended sessions were also excluded.

5) There were eight (8) meetings reported as "Cancelled" by the Secretariat (out of 174 total or just under 5%); however, lacking specific reasons for the cancellations, the authors did not include those occurrences in any totals, charts, or analyses.

6) This data was extracted from attendance logs. While the information has been double-checked for accuracy, there may be anomalies in any particular recorded result.