

Date: 28 September 2010

To: GNSO Council Members

From: David Olive  
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Subject: GNSO Council Project/Resource Management and GNSO Policy Staff Utilization

After a significant effort to elaborate a procedure for prioritization, the first Work Prioritization (WP) process by the Council took place in Brussels. Several members did find the process lengthy and complex. However, the first exercise was completed and a set of Value Ratings was approved for 14 GNSO Projects by the GNSO Council. Although these ratings and relative priorities are important elements needed to manage the workload, the WPM Drafting Team recognized that they are insufficient, by themselves, to justify decisions about what work to start or stop. What is also needed is an understanding of the management constraints that impact the GNSO's ability to absorb and conduct its work activities, including the availability of community and Staff resources.

As a first step in quantifying the Staff portion of the overall resource equation, my team developed a process to collect project time expenditures and percent utilization data for those Policy Staff members who support the GNSO. The remainder of this report discusses the results of the study and how they might be used by the Council in the context of prioritization and managing the GNSO workload.

### **GNSO Policy Staff Utilization Rates**

During the week of 16 August, we surveyed those GNSO Policy Staff members concerning the amount of time they spend on various projects and activities. Each individual was asked to report average blocks of time spent across a wide range of activities including administrative functions (a.k.a. non-project). To reflect that some Staff resources are not fully dedicated to GNSO, FTE's (or Full-Time-Equivalent) were computed, where applicable. Nine Staff members participated in the study; however, the total GNSO FTE equates to 6.9 resources as shown in Appendix Chart 1a.

After aggregating all of the survey data based on this snapshot time period, the total GNSO Policy Staff is working the equivalent of 362 Hours/Week or a 131% utilization rate, assuming a standard 40 hour work week<sup>1</sup> (see Appendix, Chart 1b).

As is true of ICANN's volunteer community, Staff personnel are dedicated employees willing to devote whatever long hours are required to get the job done. On the other hand, I have received considerable anecdotal evidence of late that Staff's workload has reached capacity and cannot be sustained at this level on a continuing basis. One of the benefits of collecting hard time/project data is that it provides quantitative evidence suggesting that we are quickly approaching a point where project prioritization is warranted – at a minimum where Staff assignments are concerned

The next two sections discuss how Staff resources were found to be apportioned between the 14 Prioritized GNSO Projects and all other GNSO work, so that the Council may focus on those for which Value Ratings were established.

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<sup>1</sup> 6.9 FTE \* 40 hours/week = 276 total hours/week standard.

## **GNSO Prioritized Projects**

Appendix Chart 2 shows the average number of FTE days/week expended for each of the 14 projects identified for GNSO Council Work Prioritization. Note that the Council's approved Value Ratings appear below each project abbreviation along the x-axis.

As of the study snapshot, these Prioritized projects were consuming 138 hours/week or 50% of the total number of Policy Staff FTE hours in a standard work week (276).

## **All Other GNSO Projects/Activities**

Once we began to record how Staff time is being spent, it became clear that there is a significant amount of work being performed in addition to supporting the 14 Prioritized GNSO projects. Appendix Chart 3 groups these projects and activities into four major sub-categories. A legend below the table briefly identifies the components that make up each one.

These projects and activities were consuming 224 hours/week or 81% of the total GNSO Staff FTE hours in a standard work week (276).

## **How This Data Might Be Utilized:**

If we add the Prioritized project utilization rate of 50% to the All Other value of 81%, the result equals the 131% total GNSO Policy Staff utilization reported above. As mentioned above, one conclusion that this survey helps to validate is that the Policy Staff, as currently configured and assigned, is at least nearing, if not already at, workload capacity.

I acknowledge that this analysis captures only one portion of a much larger and complex resource picture; however, I think the Council can begin using the data in these ways:

- 1) Understanding how much available GNSO Staff capacity is being consumed for each current GNSO project.
- 2) Utilizing the Value Ratings to determine if the Staff resource allocation among GNSO projects is consistent with overall priorities.
- 3) In deciding whether and when to initiate a new project:
  - a) Request that Staff estimate the resources needed including whether there is sufficient capacity (as well as the appropriate personnel). For example, if a new project is similar to one for which historical data has been collected, it may provide guidance in gauging the Staff component needed.
  - b) If there is insufficient capacity or personnel availability, determine if there are other alternatives, e.g.
    - contracting supplemental external resources
    - operating without a Staff person assigned (temporarily or permanently)

I recognize that this analysis represents only a beginning and partial step; but it does provide at least some initial quantification of real constraints impacting the GNSO. I am eager to discuss with the Council how we can continue refining the resource estimation process, including how often it should be refreshed, and determining how best to utilize the data in project decision-making.

APPENDIX

Chart 1a.

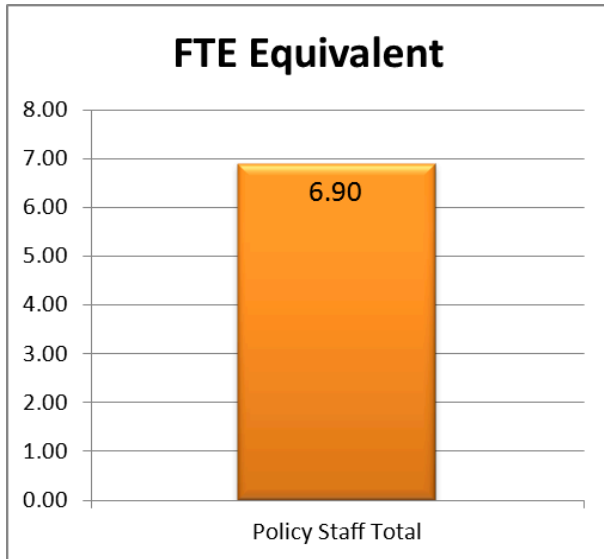


Chart 1b.

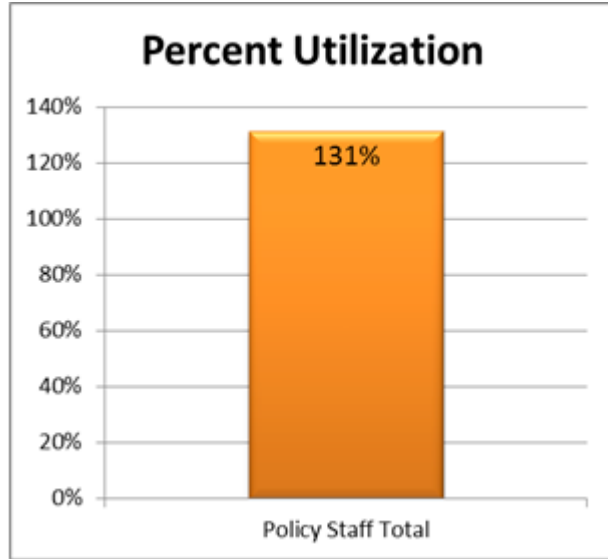


Chart 2.

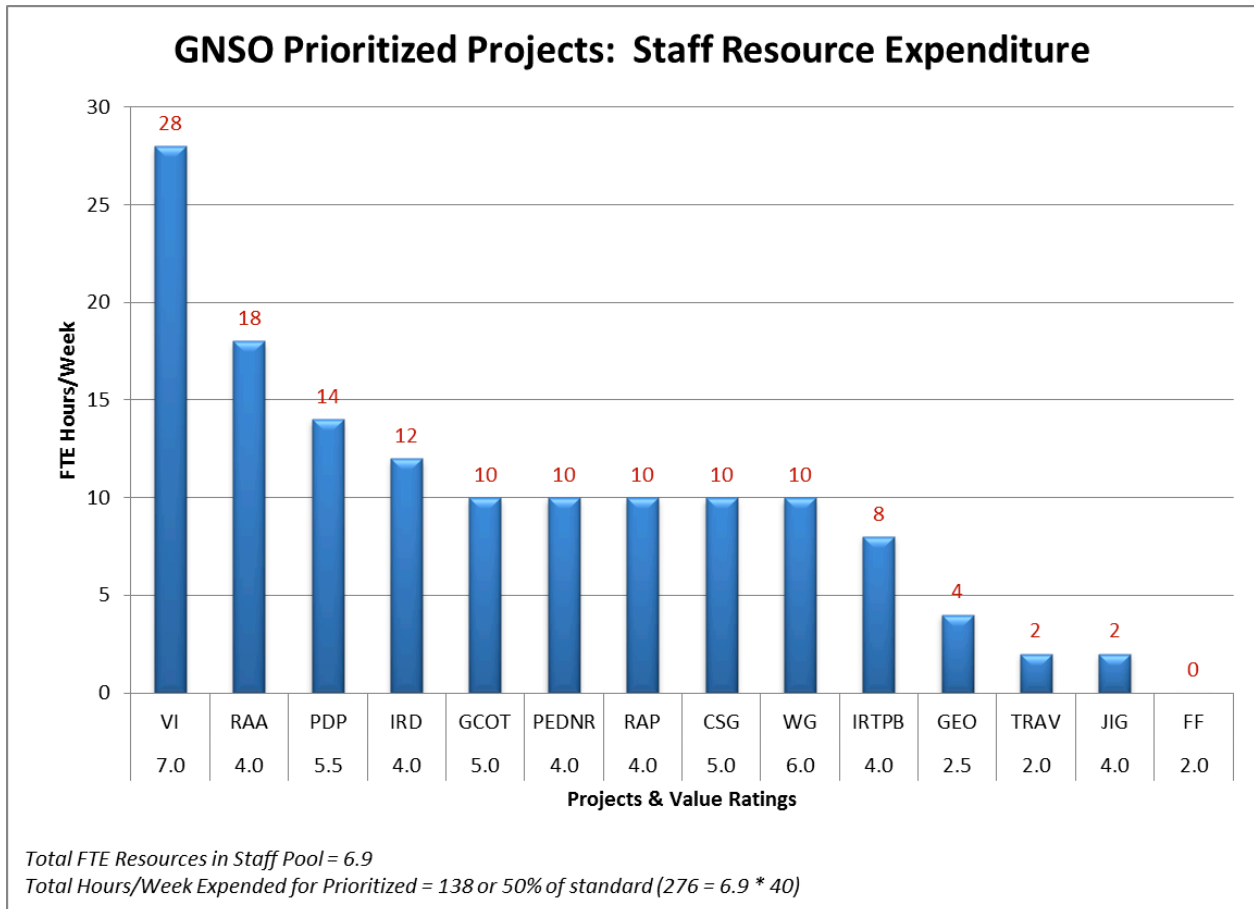
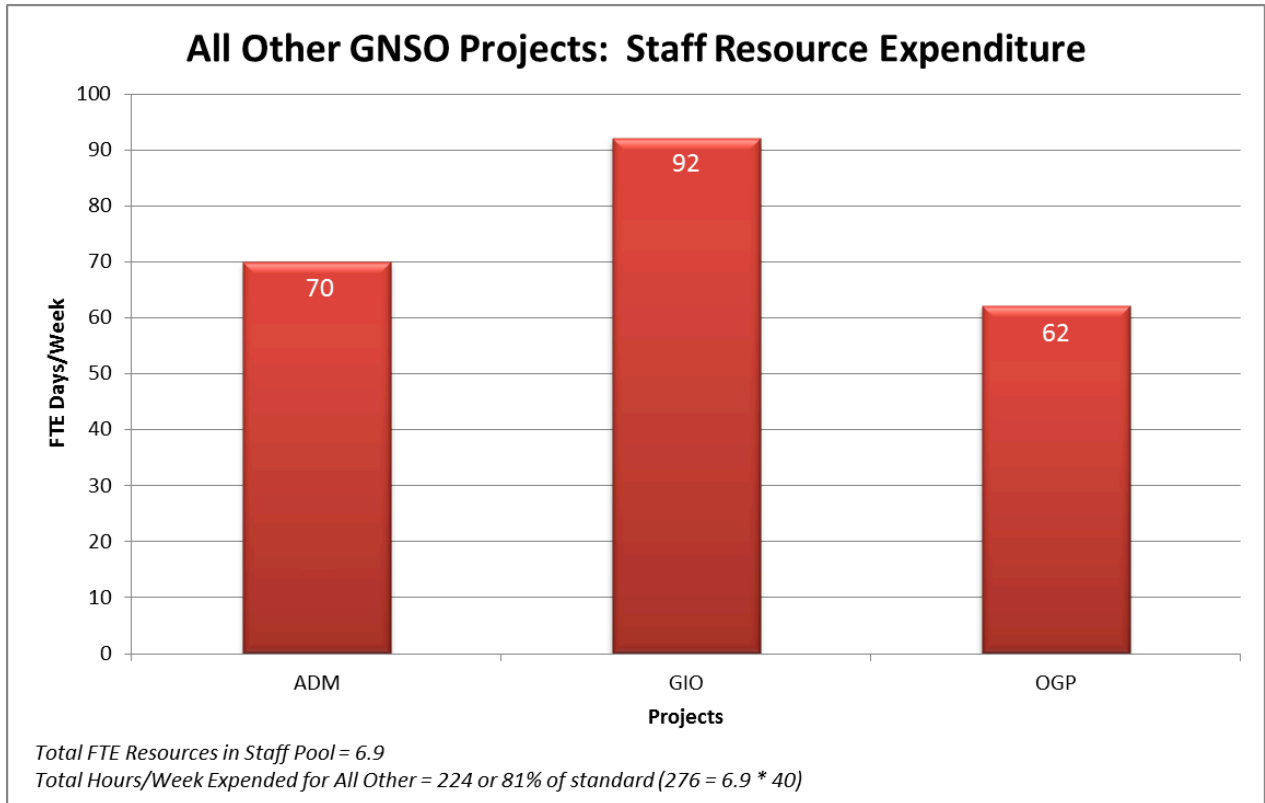


Chart 3.



**Legend:**

ADM = Time spent in activities such as administration, Board support, planning, meetings, training, travel.

GIO = GNSO Improvements Support-Other (e.g. Toolkit, Board/SIC/Council Support, SG/C Support, Website)

OGP = Other GNSO Projects (e.g. WHOIS, STI, IDNF, JAS, WPM, MAPO) & Council Secretariat Support (CSS)