

# GNSO Council Prioritization

## Background

The GNSO Council has relied on its Action Decision Radar (ADR) to help determine which actions or decisions should be addressed next. The ADR can best be described as a sequencing tool which takes into account a number of factors such as past Council decisions, ICANN Bylaws/GNSO Operating Procedures requirements, external dependencies (e.g., Reviews), etc. While it has served the Council well in allowing the Council to understand the action or decision points ahead, including the ability to escalate certain work as necessary (e.g., Latin Diacritics PDP, DNS Abuse Mitigation PDPs), what it has never been is a prioritization tool. The Council decided during its most recent Strategic Planning Session (SPS) in January 2026 that the ADR should continue to be maintained, but the ADR and a, yet to be created, prioritization tool can coexist.

## Options to Consider

**Caveat:** Staff is providing the following options for the Council's consideration but staff are most definitely not experts in the area. Different ideas, suggested changes, and outright criticism are therefore all equally welcome! There are of course any number of other prioritization models that can be considered. Staff suggested the requirements and assumptions below, to help provide some structure to the selection process.

### Requirements and Assumptions:

- The outcome of the prioritization exercise should be advisory in nature to the Council.
- The process should be simple to administer.
- The process should be flexible and easily modified as necessary.
- The process should be conducted on a periodic basis (e.g., around the SPS and around 6 months afterwards) and should not be an ongoing process or otherwise overly burdensome.

### Option 1: Multi Criteria Scoring Model

This model requires the identification of criteria. Purely as an ***example***, the Council could identify the following criteria:

- **[Importance:** The fact or condition of being regarded or treated as more important. A score of 5 being the most important.
- **Urgency:** Importance requiring swift action. A score of 5 being the most swift.
- **Demand:** Level of community attention to the issue. A score of 5 being the highest level of demand.
- **Complexity:** Level of difficulty or challenge to address the policy issue. A score of 5 being the least complex.

- **Resources:** Estimate level of community, staff and financial resources to complete the project. A score of 5 being the least resource intensive.
- **Duration:** Indicator on the length the project may require from initial scoping to Council consideration. A score of 1 would represent 5 or more years. A score of 5 would represent 6 months or less.]

How it works: For a potential project, each of the SG/C & NCAs would each assign a score from 1-5 for every criteria. Those scores would then be added up to reach a total score for each of the groups; an average score could then be easily calculated. This process would be the same for each of the available potential projects. After all average scores for all potential projects are identified, they can then be ranked.

Pros/Cons: This option is customizable to fit the needs of the Council (e.g., identifying different Criteria) and introduces an element of data to the process. The process is relatively easy to administer and the outputs should be easily understood. However, it requires agreement on criteria, which may prove challenging. While it provides an element of data, responses are ultimately still subjective in nature.

### **Option 2: Weighted Scoring Model**

This model is very similar to *Option 1* but it introduces a weighted score element to each of the criteria. Continuing from the example above, see below an example of what the weighted scoring could look like:

- **[Importance: 20%**
- **Urgency: 25%**
- **Demand: 10%**
- **Complexity: 25%**
- **Resources: 20%**
- **Duration: 5%]**

The rationale for adding a weighted score per criteria is that it allows the Council to emphasize the importance of certain criteria. For example, and as an example only, the Council could determine that priority and urgency are more important Criteria than duration, and assign weighted scores accordingly.

How it works: Essentially the same as for Option 1. The key difference is in respect of the up-front agreements on the weighted scoring, which then has a downstream effect of requiring slightly more complicated calculations for determining totals.

Pros/Cons: This option is even more customizable than Option 1, since it allows the Council to determine which of the Criteria should be emphasized/deemphasized. The process, once set up, is still relatively easy to administer and it also provides an element of data. However, it now requires agreement on both criteria and weighted scoring levels, making initial setup that much

more difficult. Lastly, it has the same limitation as Option 1 in that it provides an element of data, but that data remains subjective in nature.

### **Option 3: Ranked Choice Voting by SGs/Cs & NCAs**

This option is as simple as it can get. All of the SGs/Cs/NCAs assign a ranking to the available projects (i.e., projects that the Council has not already committed to), from 1 - xx, indicating most important to least important. The numbers would then be compiled and a result produced, which would inform the Council's decision-making.

Pros/Cons: This option is simple to understand and administer, but it seems to lack any sense of nuance; it merely takes account of preferences from the SGs/Cs and does not take into account any factors that would influence those preferences (i.e. the individual SGs/Cs may have taken factors such as urgency or demand into account in allocating their ranking, but those choices will not be uniform). Past attempts using this mechanism have not worked for past Councils.

### **Option 4: "Prioritized" Ranked Choice Voting by SGs/Cs & NCAs**

This option is a variation of Option 3. The same mechanism of ranking would apply (i.e., ranked choice voting), but an intermediary step would be introduced - the available projects could be put into buckets (e.g., green indicates immediate need, yellow means important but not immediate, and red means not a priority at this time) based upon a survey to the SGs/Cs. The ranked choice voting could then apply to only the projects in the green bucket. The bucketing exercise would require the development of definitions for the different buckets and pertinent details so that the groups can make informed decisions on their bucketing choices.

Pros/Cons: This option is still relatively simple to understand and administer, but it does add a level of nuance that appears lacking in Option 3. However, it requires more initial setup (e.g., defining the buckets and determining what constitutes pertinent information) and the process now requires multiple steps to administer.

### **Additional Options and Considerations**

- Urgent/Important technique, which is used by ICANN Org's Planning team. The model relies upon a 2x2 grid to consider each potential project based upon its Importance and Urgency, which are briefly described below. The model can be reviewed in further detail in the *Planning Prioritization Process Document - Version June 2025* [here](#). In brief, the model is understood to be flexible and applicable to a broad range of circumstances, and is relatively simple to understand and administer.
  - **Importance** of the task to the overall success of the mission
  - **Urgency** with which the task needs to be carried out
- As noted above in the Caveat, there are countless options for prioritization, but not all of them may be suitable for the Council. For instance, many are intended to be used in a corporate environment where profits and losses are key considerations, which does not seem applicable to the Council's work. At the risk of creating choice paralysis for the Council, additional models can be considered!

- The Council came to the general agreement that it wishes to establish a prioritization mechanism to complement the ADR. If the Council is unable to agree on a mechanism, the assumption is that the Council would return to the ADR-only model to guide its action and decision-making.

