

Dear PAB Members

When I wrote last week, I said that Iain and I were working on a paper to remind us where we had got to with our deliberations. We have produced this in the form of a draft of the first part of the recommendations to be made to the board following conclusion of our discussions on 11th November. I set it out below, in case any of you are trying to read this on a hand held that does not deal with Word documents.

Recommendations on the 2009 PAB review

DRAFT

Rationale behind the review

It is ten years since the PAB was created. Since then the world of the Internet has developed considerably. Professor Garratt's 2009 Governance Review recommended that the role and processes of the PAB should be reconsidered so that the PAB becomes "*outward facing and sensitive to external stakeholders and the public good*".

Following a discussion at the May meeting, all PAB members agreed that the PAB role needed to be reassessed in the light of the increased expectations of other stakeholders and in the context of Nominet's vision and mission statements.¹ We also recognised the importance of looking at how the PAB was carrying out its role. We have developed our ideas over three meetings to determine collectively the essential next steps in this evolutionary process.

At the start of this process, no PAB member was entirely satisfied with the way that the PAB operated and all agreed that significant reform was needed. The ideas outlined below represent consensus among PAB members about how to move forward.

Principles established by the review

We considered a series of key questions, the responses to which subsequently lead to the principles we used to enhance the PAB processes to best match the environment within which the Internet and Nominet now operate. These included:

- How does the PAB add value to Nominet's Vision and Mission?
- How should the PAB be changed to address perceived shortcomings?
- Who are the stakeholders whose needs should be addressed?
- What alternative structures are available to the PAB to make it more outward facing and more sensitive to the needs of external stakeholders and the public good?
- How should the PAB be structured to meet the needs of those stakeholders now and into the future?
- How can we better engage with the wider stakeholder community?
- How can we better capture their views when they are relevant to Nominet's role?

¹ Nominet's Vision - A world where the Internet is a trusted space, which everyone can be part of and has a positive impact on people's lives. Nominet's Mission - To make a positive difference to UK Internet users and to shape the development of the Internet. We will do this by delivering excellence and innovation in our products and services, driven by the needs of our stakeholders, and creating a company where our people love coming to work.

We agreed that change was necessary for the PAB to engage effectively with and capture the views of the much wider stakeholder community now involved with the Internet. Maintaining the status quo was not seen by anyone as an acceptable option.

We also reached agreement on a number of principles that needed to be part of the mix in any revised structure and process. These included the:

- Desirability of using an “issues based” approach to managing stakeholder concerns;
- Need to be accessible by different stakeholder groupings, including special interest groups;
- Need to improve communication channels between members and a larger and more diverse range of interested stakeholders;
- Identification of the different approaches and mechanisms to engage and capture the views of different groups of stakeholders;
- Definition of criteria which could be used to determine whether issues were relevant to .uk policy;
- Need to better manage stakeholder expectations during the process.

We agreed on a practical structure and process to enable the identification of issues and to facilitate the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders in exploring their views on these issues. We saw this as an open, transparent and accountable policy advisory process that enabled discussion and encouraged the development of a shared understanding of the issues and develop this into consensus advice to the Board. Discussions needed to bring together interested parties into issues-based discussion groups.

We also considered the role and resource implications of introducing such an approach.

Recommendations

(To be completed at the November meeting)

Eric Ramage
PAB Chair