

**Name:** Rafik Dammak

**Country of Residence / Citizenship:** Japan / Tunisia

**ICANN SOI:** <https://community.icann.org/display/gnsosoi/Rafik+Dammak+SOI>

My employer has no interest in ICANN policies or activities and my personal involvement in ICANN is separate from my day job.

## **Background**

I am a computer engineer by background and working on Internet infrastructure service for a large company (NTT), in a division providing cloud and data centers services to enterprises, for several years. I did my postgraduate studies for Msc in applied computer engineering at Tokyo University.

I am a long time participant in ICANN and had several roles. I have been involved in ICANN since 2008 as an individual member and joined NCUC at that time. I was appointed as GNSO councilor twice representing NCSG, from 2009 to 2012, then from 2016 to 2020. I was also a member of Nomcom as representative for NCUC in 2012 for one term. I was also chair for NCSG, from 2013 to 2015 and then for NCUC from 2015 to 2016. Being in council and chair for a stakeholder meant working closely with other stakeholders and constituencies in GNSO.

I participated in several GNSO PDP working groups and other GNSO committees such as the GNSO review working party. I was the co-chair of the Joint SO/AC New gTLD Applicant Support Working Group or JAS Working Group. I was the vice-chair and GNSO council liaison for EPDP Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data in phase 1 and phase 2 and acted as last chair for its last stage leading to the publication of the final report in July 2020. I was a member of the GNSO council leadership as vice-chair representing the non-contracted party from 2017 to 2020, taking lead on several efforts or representing the leadership team. I led the work on the continuous improvement process PDP 3.0 for the implementation of the recommendations. I am currently a member of GGP working on applicant support.

I am currently the chair of the ICANN MEAC strategy working group and have been previously in the Program committee for the Middle East DNS Forum, in order to support participation from the region where I come from. In addition, I presented regularly at Japan ICANN meeting readouts and sometimes at APAC readouts to share updates on GNSO activities. I have also participated in several IGF either as speaker or organized workshops or as co-founder or member of steering committee for IGF dynamic coalition. I also participated/organized sessions in Internet conferences related to Online freedom or cybersecurity. such as Rightscon,

Cyberdialogue. I also participated in a working group within Freedom Online Coalition.

I was the co-recipient of ICANN Community Excellence Award for 2021 recognizing my involvement in ICANN and my services for the community

### **Experience/Skills**

I am familiar with ICANN environment, structure, community, ethos and topics being discussed or worked in particular within GNSO and other cross-community efforts which should facilitate the onboarding and understanding what are the hot topics and urgent matters on the ICANN board agenda, and what are the board priorities too.

The 3-years term can be short and challenging for any new board member to comprehend what the board has to work on, decide, oversee the implementation of what was approved by the community, and manage the ICANN org or staff keeping them accountable and responsive.

The prior knowledge will be an accelerator in order to be effective and get involved on board caucuses and committees swiftly, and support other board members on their work. While my background is technical, I got immersed in the policy work in ICANN since joining it, spending years in GNSO and understanding that issues go beyond technical solutions. I also had the chance to work with parts of the community and not just on gTLD policy. Policy development requires consensus building and taking into account other factors such as legal, financial etc. Those factors which can be considered as risks are those to be taken into by board members when making decisions and applying their fiduciary duties.

Having that prior understanding will help me to tackle the issues appropriately and digest the information and input coming from community led processes, staff briefing and stakeholders consultation. The challenge for the board is how to function as a lively group that has to respond to all kinds of requests, inquiries and still be effective in terms of review, considering, approving and implementing what was delivered by the community following the set processes, in a timely manner.

Being a teamplayer, consensus builder, keen to share the workload with other board members are important qualities I do believe I possess based on the experience of having worked in different and diverse environments where such skills were needed and indispensable. The risk for any group is the "groupthink" bias and with my diverse background and experience in ICANN, I believe I can bring an additional perspective to the existing board and complement it. Having been in the position of chair or leadership, I got the experience on how to deal with diverse groups with different and usually opposite interests and work toward building consensus even if it is not satisfactory to all. Coming from the community means also being able to

interact with its different parts, understanding their concerns and reasons behind their positions, which will make it easier for finding common ground and facilitate dialogue between the different SOs and ACs. While I am involved as an individual in civil society, I also come from a corporate environment working in a large company. I am familiar with requirements such as regulation, standards, budgeting, finance, compliance but also project and program management and working with competing interests of different departments. I believe that will be useful when tackling matters with the different ICANN org departments and being able to digest the materials in a useful manner and ask the questions in order to make an educated and informed decision.

I am familiar with NCPH needs, particularities and challenges. I understand the needs for frequent communication, request for input and consulting expected from an appointed board member by NCPH. I commit to work on that, listen to feedback, comments and concerns from NCPH and explain rationale behind decisions. I also bind to be available for dialogue or interaction with NCPH and respond to their questions or concerns. I also commit to remain neutral and objective, as I showed it previously in other occasions and roles.

Acknowledging the time commitment for such a position and understanding that involvement in the ICANN board requires focus and attention, I will take the required actions to be available for ICANN meetings, board retreat and board tele conferences, in addition to volunteering for board committees where I believe I can help effectively. That would be possible by dedicating sufficient blocks of time on a weekly basis and having enough flexibility to adjust to any increase in workload e.g. attending conference calls.