

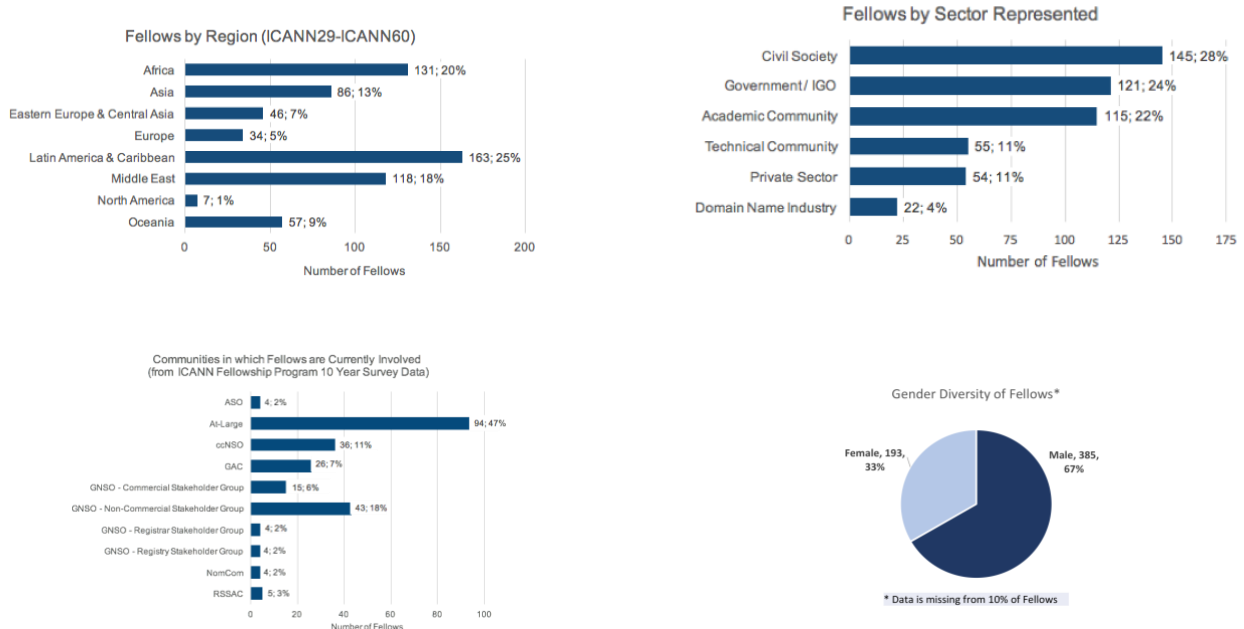
Fellowship Program at ICANN

Community Consultation Process to Review Current Fellowship Program

Background and Rationale

Supporting diverse, global participation in ICANN’s advice and policy-making work is a key part of the [ICANN mission](#). More specifically, one of the Core Values that guides the decisions and actions of ICANN states that “seeking and supporting broad, informed participation reflecting the functional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Internet at all levels of policy development and decision-making” helps ensure that the global public interest is taken into account through a bottom-up, multistakeholder process. The ICANN Fellowship Program was formed over a decade ago with the goal of bringing to ICANN individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities around the world. This works to help achieve ICANN's Strategic Goal 5.3: Empower current and new stakeholders to fully participate in ICANN activities. Since 2007, over 640 people from 133 countries have been awarded a fellowship, representing a wide diversity of gender, background, region, experience, and expertise. After the IANA Functions Stewardship Transition it has become evident that there is a need to strengthen the diversity of ICANN’s multistakeholder model. Though the Fellowship Program has been successful in bringing new people into that model, there is potential for it to be instrumental in helping ICANN achieve greater diversity by supporting participation from those countries and sectors with little to no participation.

Today, many ICANN Fellows are active participants in the ICANN community, serving in a number of leadership positions across ICANN’s community structures, as members of the ICANN Board of Directors, and the ICANN organization. Data from the recent [ICANN Fellowship Program 10-year Survey](#) indicates that nearly 70% of respondents (218 Fellows) are engaged with their respective ICANN’s regional team, and 62% (198 Fellows) are currently involved in one or more ICANN community group. The following graphs provide a snapshot of the gender, regional, and sectoral diversity brought to ICANN through the Fellowship Program:



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ICANN currently supports 180 Fellows annually, with program costs varying from one year to another, depending on ICANN public meeting locations. In FY18, the total program budget is \$557,000. The FY19 budget recommends a 50% reduction in the total number of Fellowship slots (to 90 annually), with a corresponding program budget of \$402,000 for the same period.

The Fellowship Program is designed to meet the needs and priorities of the ICANN community by creating a broader and more diverse base of knowledgeable constituents. Planning for the next decade necessitates a broad community consultation involving a review of existing practices and defining the vision for the future. This will ensure that the program continues to evolve to meet current and anticipated community needs. It will also ensure that the program's mission is focused to meet these needs efficiently and cost consciously.

Potential areas for improvement have been identified by the Fellows themselves. The [ICANN Fellowship Program 10-year Survey](#) indicates that while the program has already achieved a great deal, there is progress to be made towards increasing and strengthening the participation of fellows in most areas of ICANN's work. Facilitating entry into ICANN through the program is one element, but there is also a need to streamline how fellows engage in the community's policy development and advice work subsequent to their fellowship. Although the program has been successful in bringing newcomers into ICANN's multistakeholder work, structures and processes, this review offers the opportunity to revisit methods used to help Fellowship participants to become meaningful contributors to ICANN work. Discussions with the community have also touched on the need to increase efficiency and effectiveness. As ICANN's budget has become tighter, it is necessary to prioritize and make the most of the allocated resources. Reviewing the program will help us to determine these priorities. Improvements must be strategic and considered against ICANN's Budget and Operating Plan.

Overview of Current Processes

- Applications open 6-7 months prior to the relevant ICANN meeting to allow time for the candidates to apply and be selected 4 months in advance of travel dates; this also allows time for Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) checks, substitutions when necessary, and for the final travelers list to be submitted to the ICANN Travel team 90-days prior to travel dates.
- Sixty fellows are supported at each of the ICANN meetings. The ICANN Policy Forum (Meeting B), is restricted to actively engaged Fellowship Alumni due to the nature of the forum: 4-day work session for ICANN communities.
- The Fellowship Program provides a "fast-track" experience at ICANN meetings, including opportunities to network and presentations designed to facilitate understanding of ICANN processes and communities.

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- Fellows are provided with a stipend, economy class airfare, and hotel accommodation. Fellowship recipients are expected to engage with the ICANN Fellowship Office, Program alumni, coaches, and their selected peers prior to, during, and after the ICANN meeting. They are also expected to actively contribute to ICANN processes upon completion of the program.
- Each fellow is required to submit a summary report to ICANN within one month of the end of the Program; these reports outline Fellows' experiences during the program, as well as his or her thoughts on future contributions to the ICANN community.
- The Fellowship Program follows a 3x participation guideline, acknowledging that most first-time fellows are just beginning to understand the ICANN multistakeholder model and the work of ICANN. Second and third-time fellows, however, are expected to build on their initial experience with the end goal of becoming engaged and participating in one of the [ICANN communities](#). The Fellowship Selection Committee can use its discretion when selecting eligible candidates for additional fellowships; one such opportunity is for alumni to serve as coaches.
- Potential fellows are assessed by an [independent selection committee](#) that ensures the criteria are met and ranks each applicant through a [scoring process](#) prioritizing those who also demonstrate the following:
 - Diversity in gender, sector, experience, expertise
 - Member of an underrepresented or underserved community
 - Need for financial support

Applicants' experience and references may also impact final selections.

As noted above, the long-term sustainability of the Fellowship Program requires consideration and consultation with the community. In the spirit of greater accountability and transparency, the ICANN organization will begin strategic conversations with the community about the future of the Fellowship Program. As part of this, the ICANN organization is initiating a community consultation to examine and assess the best approach to review the purpose, value, and resources needed to continue support through this program. The ICANN organization will collect feedback and views from the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees and their constituent groups. This information will guide resource planning for future Operating Plans and Budgets.

Proposed Consultation Plan and Timeline

The Public Responsibility Support (PRS) department has drafted a questionnaire to begin the community consultation. PRS team members are available to speak with community groups about the current Fellowship program and the questionnaire at ICANN61 or remotely. Responses to the questionnaire will be collected through 30 March 2018.

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The answers to the survey questions will inform more targeted future engagements, which may include focus groups at ICANN meetings. PRS will draw from the resulting feedback and questionnaire to revise the current Fellowship program, consulting with relevant ICANN organization departments and community groups, as necessary. The revised Fellowship Program draft will be shared with all community groups for initial feedback. PRS will capture this input and update the draft program processes accordingly. The draft Fellowship program will then be posted for public comment in June – August 2018, allowing for the standard 40-day (minimum) process.

Once all feedback is received from the community groups and the public comment proceeding, PRS will prepare the final draft of the new Fellowship Program in coordination with the relevant ICANN organization departments and recommend a target implementation date. PRS will brief all community groups on the updated Fellowship program at ICANN64.

PRS will then work with the relevant ICANN organization departments to prepare for implementation of the updated Fellowship Program. Note that the Fellowship Program schedule is planned six months in advance, so implementation of the revised program will take effect at least two meetings after the final program processes are published.



Questionnaire

Note: Please send questionnaire responses and any questions to fellowshipconsultation@icann.org by **30 March 2018**.

This questionnaire only refers to the Fellowship Program, the goal of which is to provide access to ICANN meetings to individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities.

Please do not provide feedback on other newcomer programs, such as [NextGen@ICANN](#), the goal of which is to allow access to ICANN meetings to the next generation of individuals who are interested in becoming actively engaged in their regional communities and are between the ages of 18 and 30.

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Program Goals and Vision

1. What does your group believe should be the objective of the Fellowship Program? How would the success of this objective be measured?
2. The Fellowship Program was established to provide access to ICANN meetings to individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities. In your group's opinion, how effective is the Fellowship Program at fulfilling its current goal?
3. In your group's opinion, is this goal still a priority for ICANN, given the new bylaws? If not, what new goals would your group propose for the program?

Assessment of Program Impact on your SO/AC group

4. Have Fellows contributed to the work of your group? If so, where do you think they have added the most value? What might be changed about the Fellowship Program to enhance participation of Fellows in your group?
5. Does your group make efforts to involve, educate, and/or inform Fellows about your work? If so, please describe these efforts.
6. How willing would your group (SO/AC/SG/C) be to participate and take ownership for selecting and developing fellows, including giving them assignments, assigning mentors, etc?

Selection Processes

7. Are you aware of the Fellowship selection process? What changes, if any, would you suggest for the selection process?
8. An individual can be awarded a Fellowship up to three times. Do you suggest retaining or revising this number? Why?
9. For Policy Forum Meetings, currently only Fellowship Alums can apply. Do you support continuing with this approach? If not, what changes would you suggest?

Program Size

10. Considering your responses to previous questions, would you suggest making the program larger, smaller, or maintaining the current size?
11. If the program were to be reduced in size, what would your group deem as the priorities for the program with a smaller cohort?

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Program Structure

12. When you interact with Fellows at an ICANN Meeting, do you find that they are sufficiently knowledgeable about ICANN? If not, what skills or areas of knowledge would you suggest increasing focus on for pre-Meeting preparation?
13. Do you think that Fellows spend sufficient time in working sessions with your group during the course of an ICANN meeting? If not, what changes would your group propose?
14. Do you feel that you have enough time to engage with Fellows at an ICANN meeting?

Information Available on Program

15. Is the information currently available clear and sufficient for your community members to understand the Fellowship Program? If not, which elements could be improved and how?
16. Are your community members aware of the differences between the Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN Programs? If not, please state what type of clarification would be useful.

General Questions

17. The Fellowship Program seeks to engage participants who will go on to participate actively in the ICANN community. What skills, attributes and backgrounds have provided the most successful and active participation in your SO/AC/SG/C? What skillsets and backgrounds would your group see as desirable for candidates for the Fellowship Program?
18. With which elements of the Fellowship Program is your group most satisfied? What changes or improvements would your group most want to see implemented to the program?
19. Do you have any other questions or comments about the Fellowship Program?

You are welcome to append any general comments on the ICANN Fellowship Program community consultation.