Independent Review of the ICANN Nominating Committee: Assessment Report

Report Prepared for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

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Executive Summary

Since 2002, the ICANN Bylaws have required the formation of an ICANN Nominating Committee (NomCom) to recruit and select members of the ICANN Board of Directors, Supporting Organizations (SOs), and Advisory Committees (ACs).[2] The ICANN Bylaws require that the NomCom be independently reviewed at least once every five years.[3] This report is the first stage of our independent review of the NomCom: an assessment of the NomCom's performance since 2011. A final report, which will be published later this year, will also include our recommendations to increase the NomCom's effectiveness.

The findings of our review are based on observations of NomCom meetings at ICANN60, a large number of individual interviews conducted among members of the ICANN community both in person and remotely, an online survey provided to members of the ICANN community, consideration of the practices of similar nominating committees, and a comprehensive review of materials published by the NomCom and ICANN more generally. Our interview and survey processes were designed to capture a wide variety of perspectives on the role of the NomCom, its strengths and weaknesses, and its relationship with the ICANN community.

Our principal findings include:

- The extent to which NomCom appointees and members are independent and prioritize the interests of the global internet community in their decision-making is an area of some concern within ICANN.

- While NomCom members devote tremendous effort and time to their responsibilities and possess deep technical and policy knowledge, some do not have sufficient experience with recruiting and selecting candidates, especially Board candidates, for an organization the size and complexity of ICANN. This is compounded by insufficient levels of communication between the NomCom and other ICANN bodies regarding the desired characteristics of appointees and whether current appointees should be re-appointed.

- While the NomCom has made progress in increasing the extent to which it preserves policies and procedures from year to year, it still exhibits a lack of continuity on many processes and issues. Similarly, the NomCom is not always consistent in its processes for determining a short list of candidates to interview and its evaluation of those candidates.

- There is a lack of understanding around the role of, and consensus regarding the effectiveness of, both the professional recruitment firm, OB Brussels, and the professional evaluation firm, OB Frankfurt. The NomCom does not publish information that would

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[2] NomCom 2012 FAQs, p. 20 available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/faqs-74-2013-11-12-en, accessed on November 6, 2017; ICANN Bylaws Article 8, Section 1, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en#VII-1, accessed on December 1, 2017.
[3] ICANN Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en#VII-1, accessed on December 1, 2017.

provide the ICANN community insight into the role and effectiveness of OB Brussels and OB Frankfurt.

- The NomCom itself is not seen as sufficiently diverse, particularly with respect to gender. The candidate pool for individuals to be appointed to the Board, SOs, and ACs has become more diverse in recent years, but the NomCom could likely continue to increase the diversity of the candidate pool.

- There is some concern that the NomCom term length of one year, even if often renewed for a second year, may not allow for sufficient learning and engagement of members.

This assessment report has been published to solicit feedback from the ICANN community. Between January and early February of 2018, there will be a public consultation period to include a webinar, open calls, and a public participation mailing list. The webinar is set to take place on January 18, with open calls scheduled for January 25 and February 1. To participate in the webinar and/or the public calls, please contact mssi-secretariat@icann.org.

We will incorporate feedback into a final report, which will contain both our assessment of the NomCom and our recommendations for improving the operation of the NomCom. A draft final report will be published for public comments on March 19, 2018. The public comment period will last 40 days and close on April 30, 2018. After incorporating comments from the ICANN community, the final report will be published on June 1, 2018.

I.   Introduction

A. ICANN

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is an international non-profit organization in charge of running the global Domain Name System and coordinating Internet policy, among other responsibilities.[4] Appointing qualified volunteers to serve on ICANN's Board of Directors, Supporting Organizations (SOs), Advisory Committees (ACs), and the Public Technical Identifiers (PTI) is crucial to ICANN's mission to represent the interests of the international Internet community.

ICANN's "multi-stakeholder model" is structured to ensure that ICANN represents the interests of industries, non-commercial organizations, individual Internet users, and national governments. While final decisions on Internet policy recommendations rest with the Board of Directors, the SOs and ACs also develop policy recommendations and advise the Board.[5]

B. ICANN's Nominating Committee

Since 2002, the ICANN Bylaws have required the formation of an ICANN Nominating Committee (NomCom) to recruit and select members of the ICANN Board of Directors, SOs, and ACs.[6] While the members of the NomCom are appointed by the ICANN Board and other ICANN bodies, the NomCom was designed to be independent from the ICANN Board of Directors, SOs, and ACs.

The NomCom is responsible for selecting, in total, eight voting members of the Board of Directors, two directors of the PTI, three members of the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council (two voting and one non-voting), three voting councilors of the Council of the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), and five voting/non-voting members of the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC).[7] Within a given year, the NomCom will typically nominate three ICANN Board directors, two PTI directors, one or two GNSO Council members, one ccNSO councilor, and two or three ALAC members.

The NomCom schedule has five phases: preparatory, recruitment, assessment, selection, and reporting, which are summarized below in Figure 1. Each year, the NomCom is convened in October, conducts outreach and evaluation through early July, and announces selections in September.

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[4] Beginner's Guide to Participating in ICANN, 2013, p. 2, available at
https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/beginners-guides-2012-03-06-en, accessed on November 15, 2017.
[5] Beginner's Guide to Participating in ICANN, p. 2, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/beginners-guides-2012-03-06-en, accessed on November 15, 2017.
[6] NomCom 2012 FAQs, p. 20 available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/faqs-74-2013-11-12-en, accessed on November 6, 2017; ICANN Bylaws Article 8, Section 1, available at
https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en#VII-1, accessed on December 1, 2017.
[7] ICANN Bylaws Article 8, Section 2, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en#VII-1, accessed on December 1, 2017.

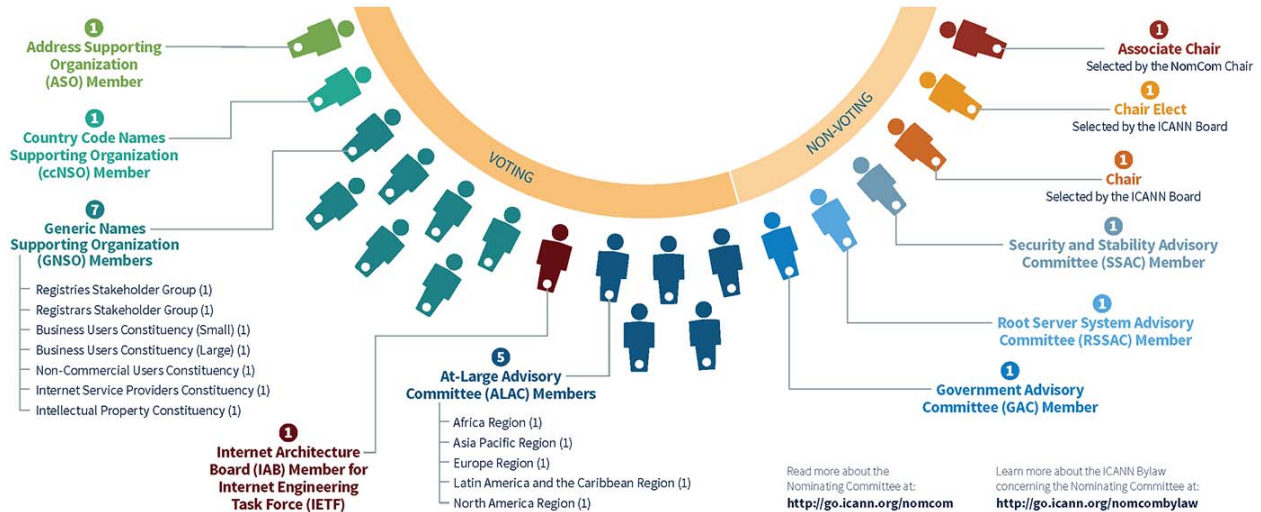**Figure 1: ICANN Nominating Committee Cycle[8]**
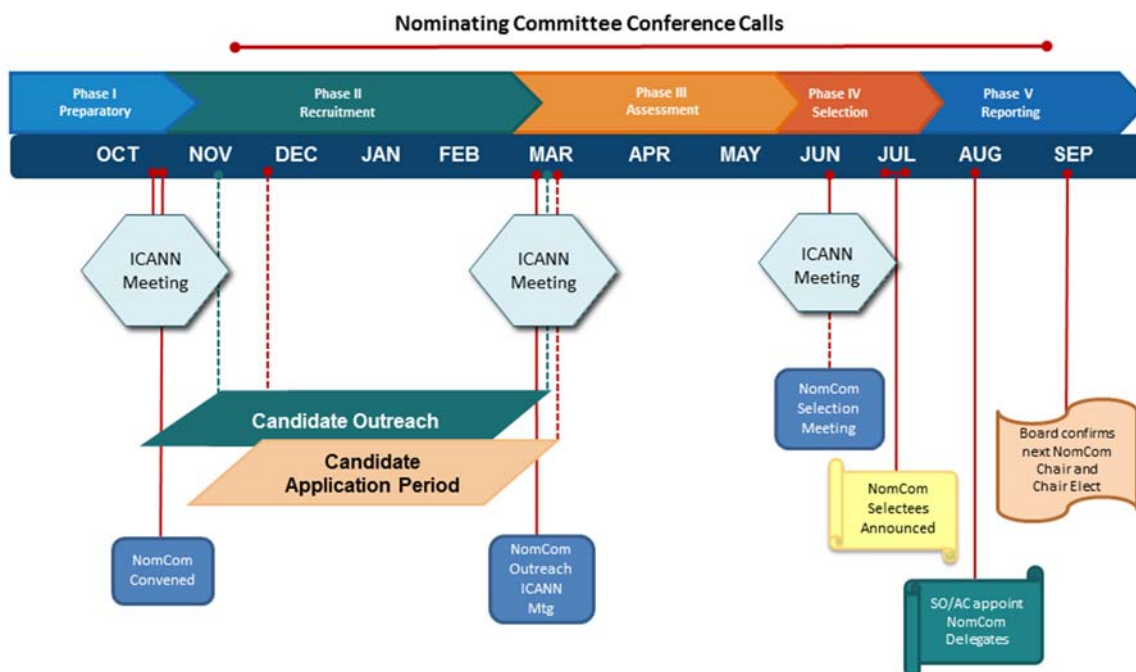
The NomCom has a maximum of 15 voting members and six non-voting members, each of whom serves a one-year term. Voting members can serve two consecutive terms, after which they must wait two years to serve on the NomCom again.[9] The NomCom Chair and Chair-Elect (selected by the ICANN Board) and the Associate Chair (selected by the NomCom Chair) lead the committee and are non-voting members. The other NomCom members are appointed by Constituencies within the SO/ACs. Although the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) can appoint one member, it has historically not done so. The structure of the NomCom is summarized in Figure 2.

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[8] NomCom 2017 Webpage, available at https://www.icann.org/nomcom2017, accessed on December 1, 2017.
[9] ICANN Bylaws Article 8, Section 3, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en#VII-1, accessed on December 1, 2017.

Figure 2: Structure of the 2017 Nominating Committee[10]

1 Address Supporting
Organization
(ASO) Member

1 Country Code Names
Supporting Organization
(ccNSO) Member

7 Generic Names
Supporting Organization
(GNSO) Members
- Registries Stakeholder Group (1)
- Registrars Stakeholder Group (1)
- Business Users Constituency (Small) (1)
- Business Users Constituency (Large) (1)
- Non-Commercial Users Constituency (1)
- Internet Service Providers Constituency (1)
- Intellectual Property Constituency (1)

1 Internet Architecture
Board (IAB) Member for
Internet Engineering
Task Force (IETF)

VOTING   NON-VOTING

5 At-Large Advisory
Committee (ALAC) Members
- Africa Region (1)
- Asia Pacific Region (1)
- Europe Region (1)
- Latin America and the Caribbean Region (1)
- North America Region (1)

1 Associate Chair
Selected by the NomCom Chair

1 Chair Elect
Selected by the ICANN Board

1 Chair
Selected by the ICANN Board

1 Security and Stability Advisory
Committee (SSAC) Member

1 Root Server System Advisory
Committee (RSSAC) Member

1 Government Advisory
Committee (GAC) Member

Read more about the
Nominating Committee at:
http://go.icann.org/nomcom

Learn more about the ICANN Bylaw
concerning the Nominating Committee at:
http://go.icann.org/nomcombylaw

C. Independent Review of the NomCom

The ICANN Bylaws require that the NomCom be independently reviewed at least once every five years.[11] In accordance with this requirement, our review includes:

- An assessment of whether the NomCom has a continuing purpose within the ICANN structure.

- An assessment of how effectively the NomCom fulfills its purpose and whether any change in structure or operations is needed to improve effectiveness, in accordance with the ICANN-provided objective and quantifiable criteria.

  o An assessment of NomCom nominating cycles from 2011 onwards with regard to the effectiveness of the appointments by the NomCom selection process, without conducting performance assessments of individual NomCom appointees.

  o An assessment of the composition and size of NomCom.

- An assessment of the extent to which the NomCom as a whole is accountable to the wider ICANN community, its organizations, committees, constituencies, and stakeholder groups to make effective selections.[12]

Our independent review of the ICANN NomCom is divided into two stages: (1) assessment of the NomCom's performance and (2) recommendations to improve the NomCom's effectiveness. ***This report only reflects Stage 1 above.*** As such, it focuses on assessing the ICANN NomCom based

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[10] NomCom 2017 Webpage, available at https://www.icann.org/nomcom2017, accessed on December 1, 2017.

[11] ICANN Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en#VII-1, accessed on December 1, 2017.

[12] ICANN NomCom Review RFP - Project Overview, available at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/rfp-nomcom-review-19jan17-en.pdf, accessed on November 3, 2017.

on individual interviews, an online survey, and consideration of ICANN documents, previous reviews, research into the structure and processes of similar nominating committees, and auditing the NomCom meetings at ICANN60. The final report will also include recommendations to improve the functioning of the NomCom, based on our review findings.

We conducted over 60 individual interviews with current and former members of the NomCom and ICANN Board, members of ICANN bodies that send delegates to the NomCom, other members of the ICANN community, and ICANN staff. These interviews were conducted in-person at ICANN59 and ICANN60, and remotely. They were intended to capture a wide variety of individuals' views on the role of the NomCom, the strengths and weaknesses of the NomCom, and the relationship between the NomCom and the ICANN community.

To ensure we spoke with individuals that possessed a variety of perspectives, interviewees came to our attention and were selected through a variety of channels. We spoke with some people as a result of their direct involvement with the NomCom. We reached out to others based on recommendations from within the community. We also interviewed people who contacted us directly and expressed an interest in sharing their feedback on the NomCom. And, we contacted others to ensure more diverse representation across gender and geographic regions.

Figures 3, 4, and 5 show the composition of interviewees in terms of their affiliations within ICANN, their gender, and the global region in which they currently reside.

Figure 3: Current/Former ICANN Roles and Affiliations[13]
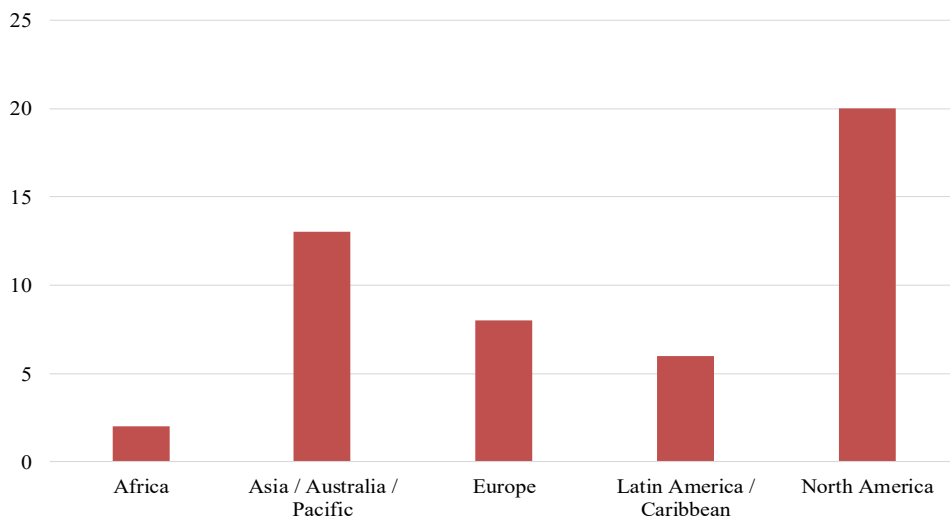
Number of Interviewees

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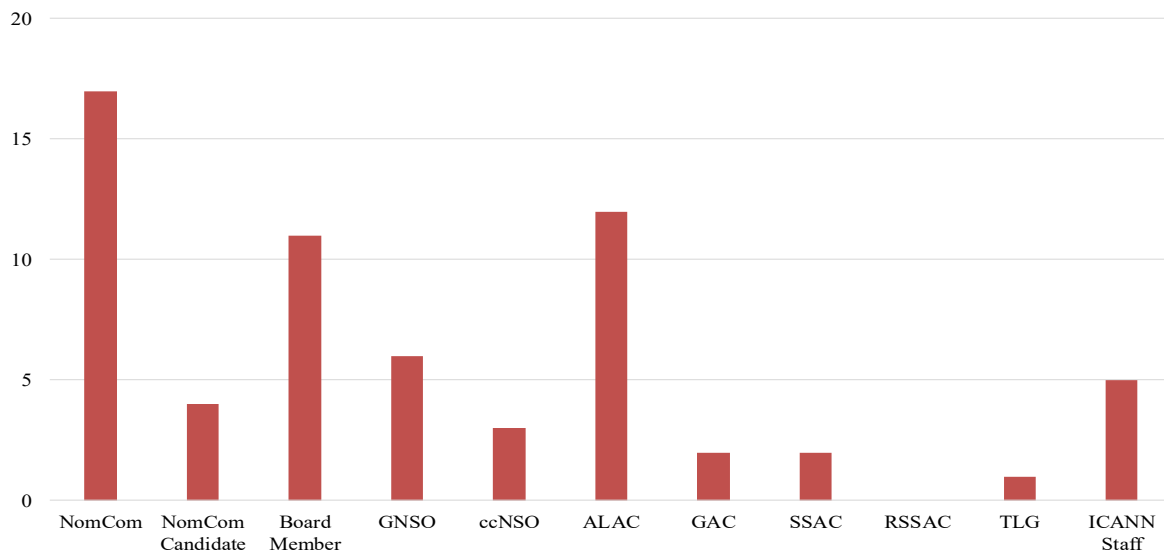
[13] The number of interviewees in each category does not sum to the total number of interviewees because there is some overlap in organizational affiliation.

Figure 4: Gender Composition
Number of Interviewees
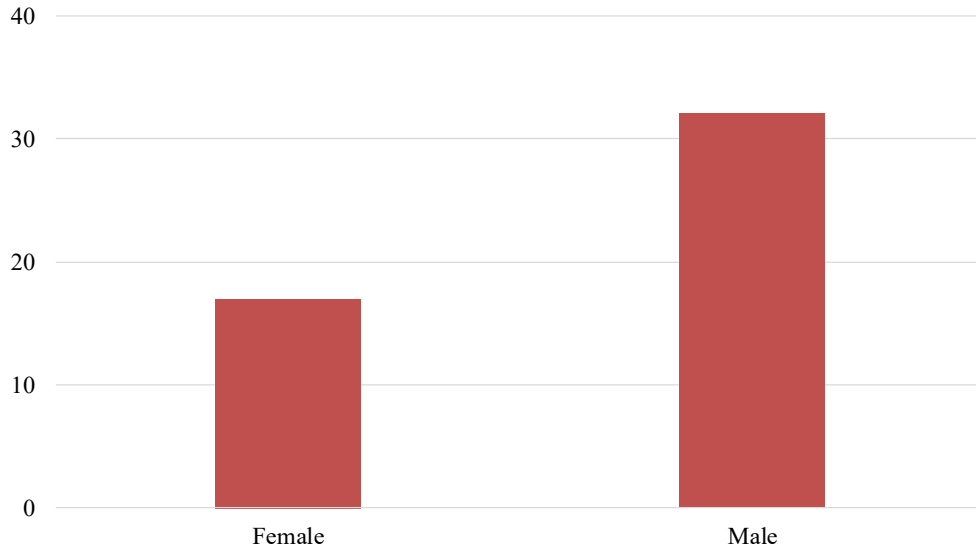
Figure 5: Region in which Interviewees Reside
*Number of Interviewees*

We also received input from the community through an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback from a wider set of respondents across the ICANN community and serve as a means for people who were not interviewed to provide feedback on the NomCom. The survey was informed by our interviews and was refined in collaboration with the NomCom Review Working Party (RWP). The survey was publicized widely, used best practices in survey design, and helped us determine the extent to which additional interviews would be necessary.

The online survey collected feedback from current and former members of the NomCom, the ICANN Board of Directors, and SO/ACs, as well as ICANN staff and other individual members of the ICANN community. The survey had 85 total respondents. Figures 6, 7, and 8 show the makeup of the group of survey respondents in terms of their affiliations within ICANN, their gender, and the global region in which they currently reside, respectively.

Figure 6: Current/Former ICANN Roles and Affiliations[14]

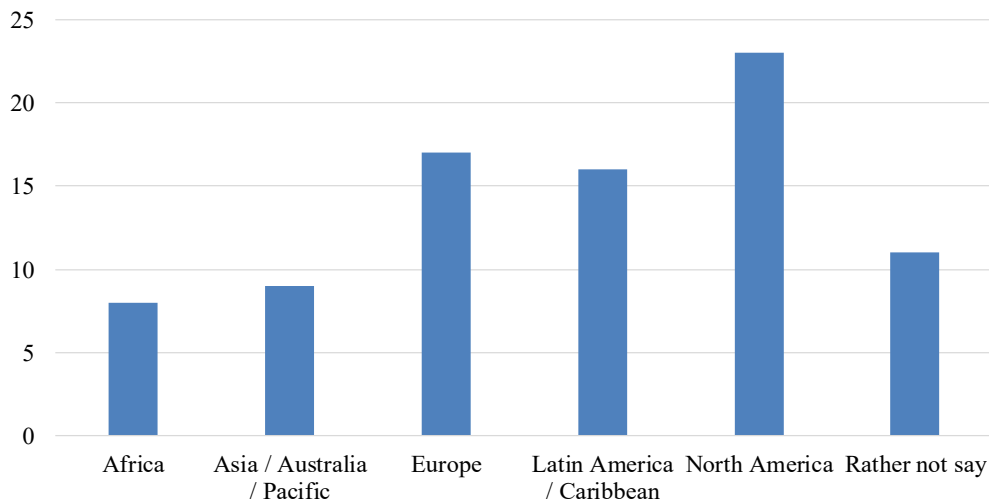*Number of Survey Respondents*

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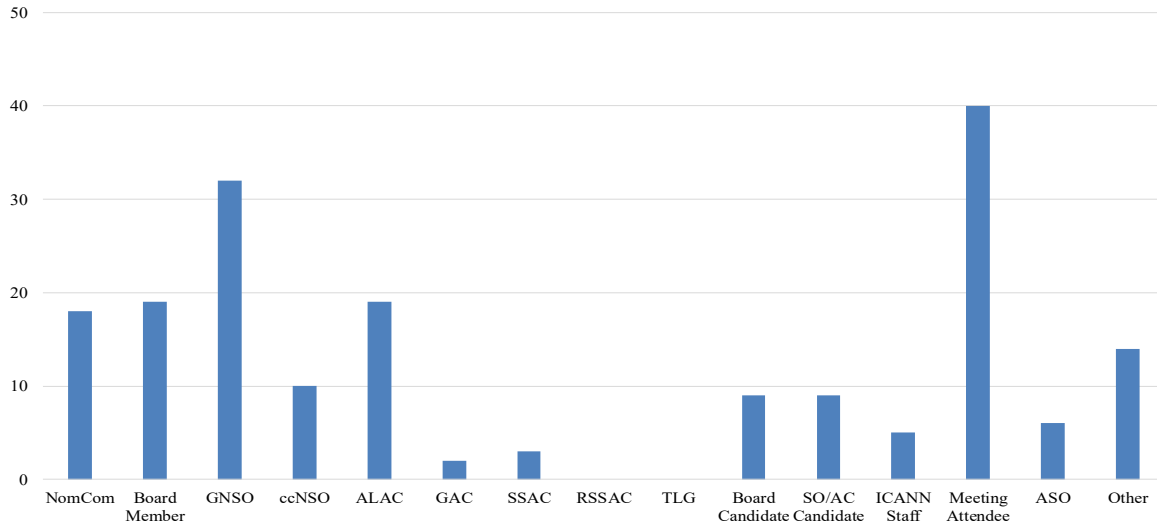
[14] The number of survey respondents in each category does not sum to the total number of respondents because there is some overlap in organizational affiliation.

Figure 7: Gender Composition

Number of Survey Respondents
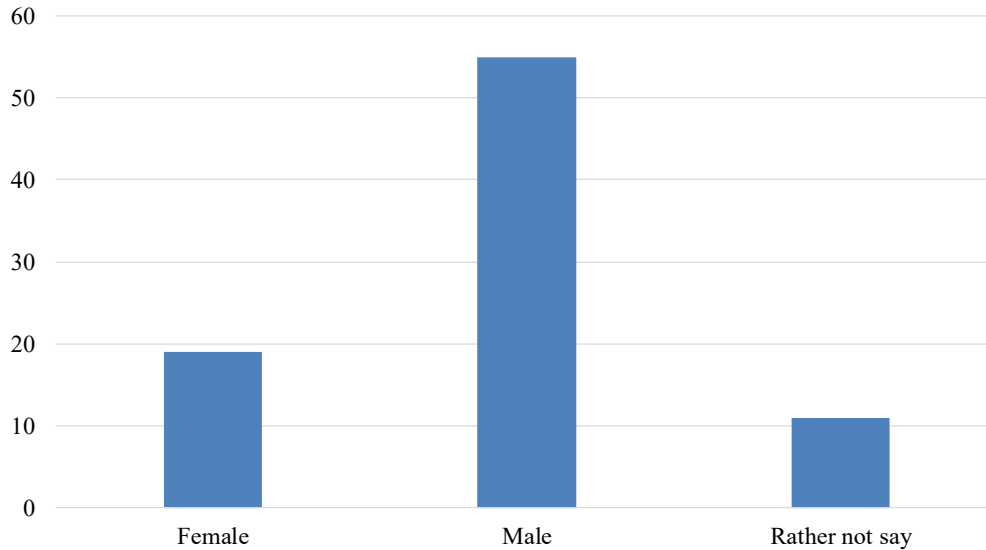
Figure 8: Region in which Survey Respondents Reside

Number of Survey Respondents

The information collected through the interviews, online survey, and the other methods used in this review are the basis of the findings outlined in this assessment report. Once this report is published and we have discussed our findings with the ICANN community, we will publish a final report that will include our assessment and our recommendations for improving the operation and effectiveness of the NomCom.

It is important to emphasize that our approach to this assessment report, and to the final report, does not require perfect representation across the ICANN community from either those

interviewed or those surveyed. We have not, for example, drawn conclusions based principally on the frequency with which we heard a particular opinion during our interviews and through the survey instrument. Rather, the interviews and online survey were methods for gathering diverse perspectives across ICANN with the goal of ensuring we have heard and considered many diverse opinions before making our assessment and our recommendations.

D. Summary of Findings

Our findings are summarized below, and are grouped into two broad categories: people who are involved and serve on the NomCom and processes of the NomCom, including how it gathers information, analyzes candidates, and decides on priorities.

People

- *NomCom members have significant technical and policy-related experience in their fields but have difficulty fully understanding the role of Board members and the skills and attributes needed to be a successful Board member at ICANN.*

- *NomCom members have exerted, and continue to exert, tremendous effort and time to the activities of the committee. On average, NomCom members lack substantive recruiting and selection experience for an organization the size and complexity of ICANN.*

- *The extent to which NomCom appointees and members are independent and prioritize the interests of the global internet community in their decision-making is an area of concern within ICANN.*

Processes

- *The NomCom is generally seen as performing its role effectively, but there is room to improve the functioning of the NomCom.*

- *The NomCom has made progress in increasing the extent to which it preserves policies and procedures from year to year, however, it still "reinvents the wheel" on many process issues and exhibits a lack of continuity.*

- *There is a lack of communication between the NomCom and SO/ACs regarding the desired skills and qualities of potential candidates. In addition, the Board and SO/ACs sometimes struggle to reach consensus on what they need and do not have an effective way to communicate to the NomCom if current appointees should be re-appointed.*

- *NomCom's recruiting processes are generally effective, especially in recent years, but there is room for improvement. The NomCom should continue to increase the diversity of the candidate pool.*

- *There is a lack of understanding around the role of, and consensus regarding, the effectiveness of the professional recruitment firm OB Brussels.*

- *The NomCom's interactions with candidates has improved significantly over the past five years and is generally viewed positively. However, several candidates expressed negative experiences regarding their interactions.*

- *The NomCom does not always evaluate candidates in a consistent manner.*

- *The role and effectiveness of the professional evaluation firm, OB Frankfurt, generates some disagreement within the ICANN community.*

- *The NomCom has made significant progress in becoming more transparent, but transparency of its processes is still a concern within parts of the ICANN community.*

- *Diversity requirements for NomCom appointees are currently appropriate.*

- *The NomCom itself is not seen as sufficiently diverse, particularly with respect to gender.*

- *The current size of the NomCom is appropriate.*

- *There is concern that the NomCom may not accurately represent constituencies (both across organizations and within organizations) and over the role and participation of non-voting members.*

- *The NomCom term length of one year, even if often renewed for a second year, may not allow for sufficient learning and engagement of members.*

- *The leadership structure of the NomCom generally works well, although the effectiveness of the NomCom depends heavily on the effectiveness of the Chair.*

- *The NomCom is highly dependent on ICANN Staff support. There is concern that the NomCom Staff is under-resourced, which has affected the functioning of the NomCom.*

The remainder of our report is structured as follows. In Section II, we provide details regarding our assessment as it relates to people. Section III then provides our assessment of the NomCom's processes, and Section IV concludes.

II.   Assessment: People

A. Needs Assessment and Skills Gap

1. Role of Board Members

NomCom members have significant technical and policy-related experience in their fields but have difficulty fully understanding the role of Board members and the skills and attributes needed to be a successful Board member at ICANN.

Appointing directors to ICANN's Board is one of the NomCom's key roles, and some interviewees indicated that appointing Board members should be a higher priority for the NomCom than

appointing members of other ICANN bodies. However, the interviews suggest that, given ICANN's growth in recent years, the skills needed to be a Board director are significantly different than they were ten or even five years ago, and the NomCom needs to be aware of these changes when appointing Board directors. NomCom members often have significant technical and policy knowledge in their fields but do not have Board experience at an organization the size and complexity of NomCom. As one interviewee put it, "I'm worried, because in the next 10 years, if we think we've had challenges so far, we've not seen anything yet." The skills needed to be a Board member are also different than those needed on the GNSO Council, Council of the ccNSO, and member of the ALAC.

Most people thought that there was room to improve the communication between the NomCom and the Board about the competencies needed for Board directors, and many thought the NomCom is not sufficiently aware of the competencies needed by the Board. Some said that the Board should communicate their feedback to the NomCom more clearly so that the NomCom does not receive conflicting information, while others thought the NomCom should focus on certain personality traits to identify competent Board director candidates, such as a commitment to team work, volunteerism, or being a "self-starter."

Figure 9 shows how survey respondents ranked the most important skills for NomCom appointees to the Board. Knowledge of boards was ranked first (most important), followed by teamwork or time commitment, and then policy, business, and/or technical knowledge.

Figure 9: Ranking of Most Important Skills for NomCom Appointees to the ICANN Board

Number of Survey Respondents
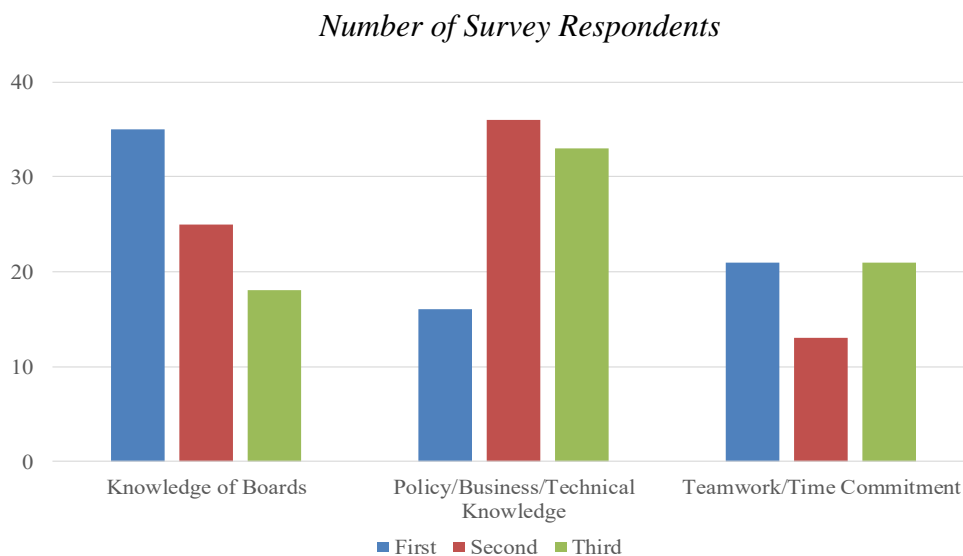
2. NomCom Members

NomCom members have exerted, and continue to exert, tremendous effort and time to the activities of the committee. On average, NomCom members lack substantive recruiting and selection experience for an organization the size and complexity of ICANN.

Overall, interviewees and survey respondents thought that while the NomCom has improved significantly in recruiting and evaluating candidates, there is still room for improvement. Interviewees and survey respondents frequently expressed the viewpoint that NomCom members need more experience with, and a better understanding of, recruiting and selecting individuals for an organization the size of ICANN. Multiple people expressed a similar sentiment: that the fundamental problem is that candidates are recruited by people who do not fully understand what the Board/SOs/ACs do or what competencies are necessary to be effective. Another frequent comment was that NomCom members needed more interview experience and/or training in order to make the interview process more professional, consistent, and effective.

A few people expressed an interest in the NomCom receiving 360 reviews for those individuals appointed by the NomCom, though some noted these reviews should be used primarily to help people become more effective and were therefore concerned about their use by the NomCom when considering reappointments.

B. Independence

The extent to which NomCom appointees and members are independent and prioritize the interests of the global internet community in their decision-making is an area of concern within ICANN.

1. Independence of NomCom Appointees

NomCom appointees are expected to act in the public interest of the global internet community and not on behalf of a narrower set of interests. The majority of survey respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that the NomCom should prioritize appointees that act independently. Some people expressed in the interviews that the NomCom's primary role is to appoint individuals who are not affiliated with ICANN at all (not "ICANN insiders") and can therefore bring new ideas to the Board and the SO/ACs.

When asked what one or two changes they would make to the NomCom, a number of individuals cited increasing the independence of NomCom appointees in order to reduce the chance that people vote in blocs based on narrow interests rather than the interest of the broader ICANN community. A few interviewees were unclear as to whether Board members appointed by the NomCom should act independently, and as to what acting independently means in practice.

Many people viewed the concept of independence as going beyond the requirement that appointees are free from conflicts of interest, which is covered by policies of the bodies to which the NomCom appoints people, and instead encompasses a more general view that the NomCom should appoint people that address issues without strong personal bias in favor of a particular viewpoint even if such a person did not stand to gain from that viewpoint financially.

2. Independence of NomCom Members

NomCom members are expected to act as individuals on behalf of the interests of the global internet community, and should not be beholden to the constituencies that appointed them to the

NomCom, or to other organizations or corporations.[15] NomCom selections are final and do not need the approval of any other body or individuals within ICANN.

A common concern raised by both interviewees and survey respondents was that NomCom members too often voted as blocs based on the organization that sent them to the NomCom or some other common interest. As a result, these people felt that sending delegates to the NomCom was seen as a way for those organizations to advance an agenda instead of appointing people that acted in the best interest of the broader ICANN community.

Some individuals said that the NomCom interview process was unfair due to conflicts of interest, either in terms of NomCom members appointing people they do business with, or in terms of ICANN organizations appointing NomCom members who will select candidates that more closely align with their interests.

A few people thought that the Board is too involved in the NomCom and that there should be a stronger wall between the Board and the NomCom.

III.   Assessment: Processes

A. The NomCom's Role within ICANN

The NomCom is generally seen as performing its role effectively, but there is room to improve the functioning of the NomCom.

The NomCom "seeks to ensure that ICANN benefits from individuals who place the public interest of the global Internet community ahead of any particular special interests, but who nevertheless are, or commit themselves to becoming, knowledgeable about the environment in which ICANN operates."[16]

A majority of people identified success for the NomCom as appointing high-quality, effective individuals to the Board and other SO/ACs, often using words such as "well qualified," "good contributors," and the "right match for the role." A few others, often in addition to describing the role of NomCom as that of appointing high-quality and effective individuals, included in NomCom's role the purpose of appointing individuals with diverse perspectives, preserving its independence, and appointing candidates with consensus.

As shown in Figure 10, when asked whether the NomCom is or is not effective in performing its role, the most frequent answer was "Effective." The distribution of responses in Figure 10 was common in questions related to the effectiveness of the NomCom, such as effectiveness in performing its role, effectiveness in candidate recruiting, and effectiveness in candidate evaluation. In all, roughly 60 percent of respondents rated the NomCom as "Effective" or "Very Effective"

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[15] ICANN Bylaws Article 8, Section 4, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en#VII-1, accessed on December 1, 2017.

[16] NomCom 2017 Operating Procedures, available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/nomcom2017-procedures-2017-02-07-en, accessed on November 27, 2017.

while 40 percent of survey respondents described the NomCom as "Neutral," "Ineffective," or "Very Ineffective."

Figure 10: How Effective is the NomCom in Performing its Role?
Number of Survey Respondents
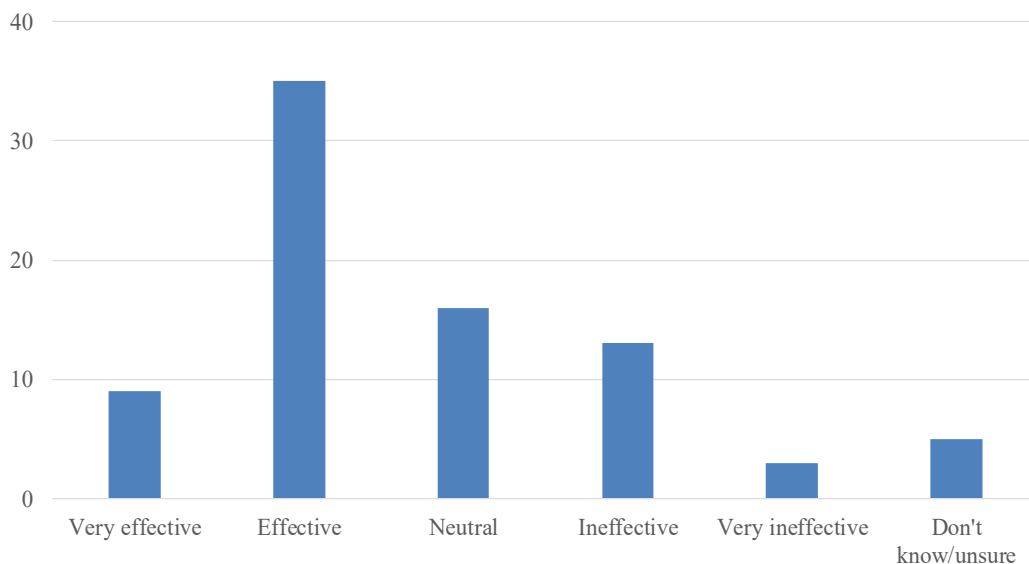
Overall, interviewees were less likely than survey respondents to think that the NomCom was effective, and nearly all interviewees thought the NomCom has room for improvement.

Survey respondents and interviewees acknowledge the difficult role of the NomCom given the complexity of ICANN and its multi-stakeholder model. Some people noted that while the NomCom was imperfect, it was the best method currently for preventing the Board from being "self-perpetuating." Others expressed the general concern that the NomCom was created to replace direct election and that the importance of that purpose seems to have been forgotten or diminished.

The majority of people indicated that the NomCom should continue to appoint members to both the Board and SO/ACs. A few people thought the NomCom may not need to appoint people to ALAC because ALAC already has a function for appointing ALAC members, while a few others thought the NomCom should appoint all Board members.

B. Continuity of Policies and Procedures

The NomCom has made progress in increasing the extent to which it preserves policies and procedures from year to year, however, it still "reinvents the wheel" on many process issues and exhibits a lack of continuity.

The NomCom has adopted the motto that process if open but (personal) data is confidential. Since 2013, the NomCom shares processes (policies and procedures) from one NomCom to the next, allowing the subsequent NomCom to adopt and enhance the processes of the previous NomCom. Those who had an opinion on this document felt that it was an improvement over prior years.

When asked whether the NomCom is effective or ineffective at preserving processes across years, survey respondents were roughly split, with half suggesting it was effective and the other half ineffective. Nearly one quarter of all respondents, and half of the ineffective responses, rated the NomCom as "very ineffective" at preserving processes.

Based on our audit of the NomCom meeting at ICANN60, a lack of continuity was apparent. A number of processes and operating rules are discussed each year, requiring an extensive amount of time. This is consistent with feedback we received in response to interview and survey questions, including from current and former NomCom members. For example, when asked what one or two changes one would make to the NomCom, the most common answer for both survey respondents and interviewees was increasing the continuity of processes from year to year. People often described the NomCom as having to "reinvent the wheel" each year and said that the initial meetings are too focused on creating or tweaking procedures.

C. NomCom's Recruitment Processes

As shown in Figure 2, the NomCom recruitment phase begins in November and ends in March. During this period, NomCom members engage in outreach and the NomCom accepts applications. The main steps of the Recruitment Phase for the 2017 NomCom are as follows:[17]

November 8-9, 2016: The 2017 NomCom convened to discuss and plan outreach opportunities.

January 11 - March 21, 2017: The application period is open.[18] The application process involves the following steps:

- Interested individuals submit the online Application Request Form, and receive an acknowledgement email from NomCom Staff.

- Individual applications are created on the NomCom wiki platform. Candidates are notified of the application and sent information about the application process. The applications are restricted (confidential).

- NomCom Staff monitor applications and review completed applications. NomCom Staff either acknowledge that forms are complete or inform candidate if information is missing. Towards the end of the application period, NomCom Staff remind candidates who have not completed their applications.

- The application form is disabled at the end of March 21, prohibiting new applications. There is, however, a nine-day grace period to allow candidates to complete an application if they have started one. Any incomplete applications after the grace period are not considered.

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[17] More details on the recruitment of candidates can be found on the NomCom 2017 Webpage, available at https://www.icann.org/nomcom2017, accessed on December 1, 2017.
[18] The PTI Board application period starts February 7 and ends March 21. See NomCom 2017 Webpage, available at https://www.icann.org/nomcom2017, accessed on December 1, 2017.

1. NomCom Recruiting Processes

NomCom's recruiting processes are generally effective, especially in recent years, but there is room for improvement. The NomCom should continue to increase the diversity of the candidate pool.

NomCom members are expected to publicize the call for applications and do their best to identify and recruit outstanding candidates. Each NomCom member is asked to share and present action plans for identifying candidates. Outreach activities by NomCom members may include attending meetings and conferences hosted by ICANN or other relevant organizations, and those activities may vary from year to year depending on the needs of and geographic requirements for appointees.

Figure 11 presents the responses to the question of whether the NomCom recruiting processes are effective or not effective.

Figure 11: How Effective is the NomCom's Candidate Recruiting Process?
Number of Survey Respondents
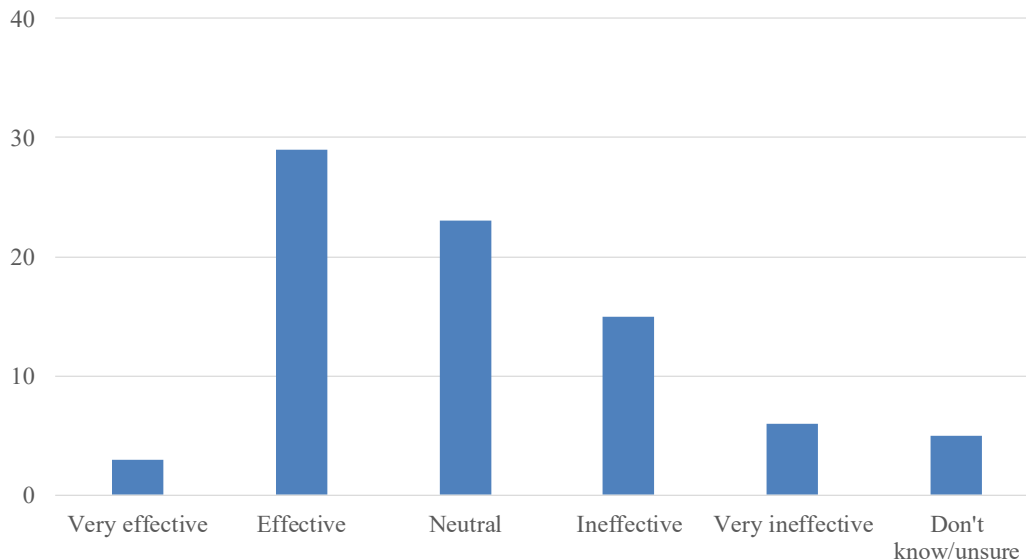
People did express several areas of concern regarding the recruitment process. When asked about the diversity of the candidate pool, people thought diversity had increased significantly in recent years, particularly along gender lines, although many people thought the NomCom should do more, sometimes much more, to increase the diversity of the candidate pool, including additional outreach to underrepresented groups (particularly women and certain geographies such as those in the Southern hemisphere). Others noted that the NomCom was doing more to recruit women and that this was reflected in more diverse candidate pools in recent years. For example, it was noted that having the NomCom present at a women's event is a good way of getting more women candidates.

Opinions tended to diverge on the extent to which the NomCom should recruit candidates who are associated with ICANN versus looking for and prioritizing candidates who are less familiar with

ICANN. For example, some people thought that outreach (as well as evaluation) of candidates tended to be too concentrated in the constituencies already associated with ICANN, including the constituencies of NomCom members, and as a result not enough was being done to attract and appoint others less familiar with ICANN. Others thought that the recruiting efforts of NomCom members tended to be very effective because the individuals reached by NomCom members had a good understanding of ICANN and especially the needs of SO/ACs.

We also heard from the community that the recruitment process could be longer, perhaps extending to a year-round basis, and that the Global Stakeholder Engagement department within ICANN could be more involved in identifying potential candidates.

2. Use of Professional Firms in Recruiting

There is a lack of understanding around the role of, and consensus regarding, the effectiveness of the professional recruitment firm OB Brussels.

The NomCom is assisted in candidate recruiting for Board positions by OB Brussels. It is a sister company of OB Frankfurt, which assists the NomCom during the evaluation of Board candidates. OB Brussels and OB Frankfurt are prohibited from communicating or sharing information to avoid conflicts of interest and to ensure each assists the NomCom without influencing the other.

Opinions diverged on the role of professional recruiting firms. A common view was that a professional recruiting firm should have primary responsibility for identifying candidates and retaining institutional memory regarding the candidate pool. As a result, outreach efforts by NomCom members would become unnecessary or of secondary importance and therefore incremental to the efforts of OB Brussels. Several people thought OB Brussels was important because it was better at finding people outside the ICANN community, or that a firm was needed with additional international reach. A few others had a very different perspective, believing a recruiting firm was not needed given outreach by NomCom members.

A number of people thought the NomCom needed to do a better job working with the recruiting firm to communicate the needs and the unique challenges associated with ICANN and the positions the NomCom is looking to fill. A few people wondered if a specialist recruiting firm might help (for example, more specialized firms to recruit within corporate vs. nonprofit), or if a recruitment firm should place greater emphasis on whether candidates had conflicts of interest or were more likely to vote on behalf of a narrow interest.

Some survey respondents and interviewees thought the effectiveness of OB Brussels should be evaluated in light of alternative firms and/or outreach methods. The 2016 NomCom recommended that future NomComs establish a Sub-Committee to research alternative recruitment partners but also recommended the processes be maintained for the current cycle.[19]

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[19] ICANN 2016 Nominating Committee Final Report, pp. 16, 25, available at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/nomcom2016-report-12oct16-en.pdf, accessed on November 28, 2017.

Lastly, several people thought the role of the recruiting firm was not transparent and suggested that basic statistics on candidates from the recruiting firm should be collected and published each year (e.g., statistics on the number of candidates recruited by and the number of NomCom appointees that came through OB Brussels).

3. NomCom's Interactions with Candidates

The NomCom's interactions with candidates has improved significantly over the past five years and is generally viewed positively. However, several candidates expressed negative experiences regarding their interactions.

The NomCom's interactions with candidates was generally seen as being effective or neutral, with few describing the interactions very effective or very ineffective. There were, however, a number of candidates who had negative interactions with the NomCom. Those with negative experiences tended to focus on the interviews, though a few had negative reactions during recruiting efforts. Feedback generally centered on the NomCom being unprofessional during the interview, although talking with candidates and NomCom members indicates the level of professionalism has increased recently and we spoke with candidates who were not selected and yet thought the process was fair and professional.

While making generalizations about candidate experiences across years is difficult, those who had an opinion generally thought the NomCom had made improvements in this area, even if they thought additional improvements needed to be made. Some people thought the processes could be clearer and that some of the procedures during the application processes discouraged qualified candidates from applying. Others thought that having published job descriptions and criteria when recruiting would be helpful in outreach efforts. Currently, the NomCom publishes a high-level (and relatively generic) set of criteria when it announces open leadership positions.[20]

A few people thought that the NomCom could use more resources and an improved application system, reducing the workload for both candidates and NomCom Staff. The current application system, described previously, is a confidential wiki that is used to store candidate application information. The current system was described as "not ideal" and as a "band-aid" solution, with several people wondering if a dedicated tool would be easier to manage and also improve security.

D. NomCom's Candidate Evaluation Processes

The NomCom evaluation of candidates has two phases: an Assessment Phase and a Selection Phase.[21]

During the Assessment Phase, which begins in April and ends in early June, the NomCom reviews candidate materials (the Statement of Interests, or SOIs) and identifies a shortlist of candidates. Roughly 20 to 25 Board candidates are selected to be interviewed by the assessment consultant,

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[20] See, for example, Open Leadership Position 2017, available at
https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/nomcom2017-positions, accessed on November 28, 2017.
[21] More details on the evaluation of candidates can be found on the NomCom 2017 Webpage, available at
https://www.icann.org/nomcom2017, accessed on December 1, 2017.

OB Frankfurt, which conducts phone interviews and reports back to the NomCom with an assessment of the candidates. The NomCom then forms "deep dive" teams, composed of two NomCom members, which assess candidates in more detail, leading to a selection of approximately ten shortlisted Board candidates for in-person interviews at the ICANN meeting in June.

To narrow the list of candidates for OB Frankfurt, the NomCom typically sorts candidates into green, yellow, and red "buckets" based on candidate quality. The NomCom shortlist is typically limited to approximately 20 candidates across all positions and 10 candidates for in-person interviews. In prior years, the average (mean) value of NomCom members' scores was used to rank candidates; more recently the NomCom has taken into account variation of scores and moved to using the median.

During the Selection Phase, the NomCom deliberates over the final candidates and makes its selections. In early July, the candidates are notified if they are selected or not, and those who are not selected are asked if they would like to be considered for the following year. Selected candidates undergo additional due diligence and are confirmed if due diligence is positive. NomCom appointees are announced publicly in September.

1. Evaluation of Candidates

The NomCom does not always evaluate candidates in a consistent manner.

Survey responses to the question of whether the NomCom evaluation process was effective or ineffective are shown below in Figure 12.

Figure 12: How Effective is the NomCom's Candidate Evaluation Process?
Number of Survey Respondents
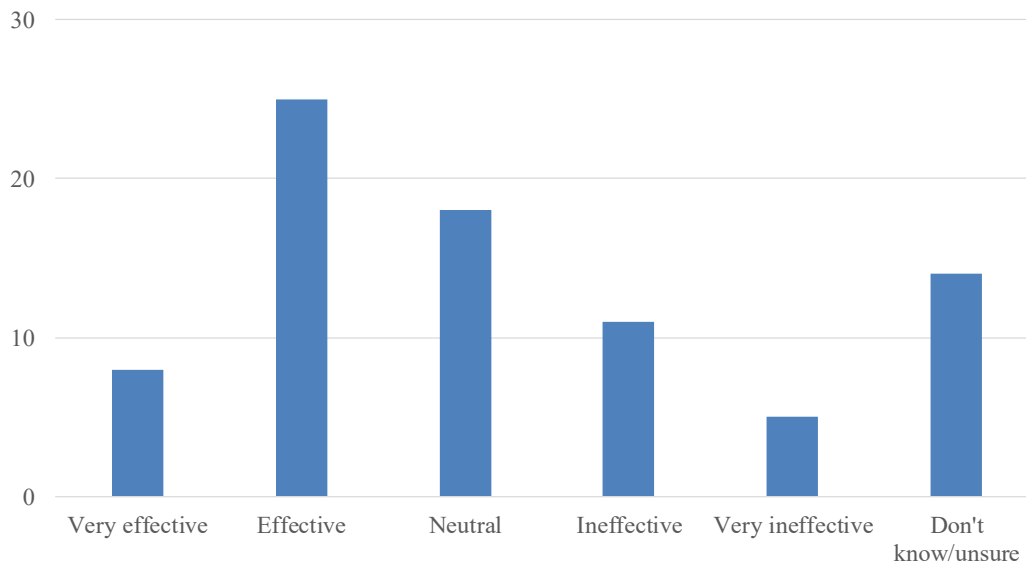
The majority of people we spoke with thought the processes used to narrow down the candidate pool to the shortlist and then select candidates from that shortlist had improved over the last five or six years. However, a common viewpoint was that while there were a number of decision-making processes the NomCom followed during the evaluation phase, they were not well documented and should be (1) institutionalized and (2) shared with the community to increase transparency. People often thought that additional details on the processes used to evaluate candidates would decrease the extent to which evaluations of candidates were seen by the community as a "black box" and reduce the likelihood that NomCom selections would be seen as "arbitrary." Others thought each candidate needed to be more consistently evaluated relative to a set of criteria specific to the position they were applying for, and our conversations with NomCom members has indicated the NomCom is considering doing so.[22]

One of the most common views expressed by survey respondents and interviewees, including current/former NomCom members, was that NomCom members could use more interview training. Many of those who did go through some NomCom interview training thought it was helpful. Indeed, when asked what one or two changes one would make to the NomCom, increasing interview training was one of the most common responses received.

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[22] These sentiments were echoed in previous reviews. For example, the Accountability and Transparency Review Team 2 Report noted the following: "The issue of Board composition and selection had been the subject to two intendent reviews that predated ATRT1. ATRT1 found that the greatest relevance to its review process was the recommendation for ICANN to recruit and select based upon clear skill set requirements. This included the establishment of a formal procedure by which the Nominating Committee (NomCom) would discover and understand the requirements of each body to which it makes appointments. ATRT1 found that, '[a]s such, codifying the processes for identifying, defining and reviewing these skills requirements, as well as the mechanisms by which stakeholders are consulted, could assist in improving the Board's overall performance." Accountability and Transparency Review Team 2, Report and Recommendations, December 31, 2013, pp. 16-17.

Some people thought the evaluation of candidates was not always consistent because it depended too much on the person conducting the deep dive, citing differences in, for example, effort and style, and also the fact that NomCom members may be positively or negatively biased towards the candidate. Consistent with this, people thought a more standardized process, questions, criteria, and training would produce more replicable results across deep dive teams. Others noted that interview questions from 20 NomCom members lack coherence and that interviewing with time constraints is difficult because the NomCom cannot spend more time on subjects that turn out to be especially important.

A few people indicated that candidates associated with ICANN could receive either favorable or unfavorable treatment (for example, someone associated with ICANN being passed over for outsiders who were less well known but ultimately less effective), while others thought the process made it too difficult to return to candidates who had been put in the "yellow" bucket if the small group of finalists turned out not to be as strong as originally thought. Some interviewees expressed concern that, in practice, once the "green" bucket had been filled with 20 candidates there is pressure to stop discussion of additional candidates.

Finally, the NomCom generally spends more time on evaluating candidates for the Board compared to other positions. People felt the SO/AC selections tended to be of lower quality compared to Board selections.

2. Use of Professional Recruiting Firm in Evaluating Candidates

The role and effectiveness of the professional evaluation firm, OB Frankfurt, generates some disagreement within the ICANN community.

Opinions diverged on the role of professional recruiting firm during the candidate evaluation processes. The evaluation consultant, OB Frankfurt, gives a detailed assessment on Board member candidates. Some people thought OB Frankfurt's input on candidates was not useful because it was not specific enough, while others thought its input was useful and brought a much-needed "HR perspective" on candidates that was sometimes lacking among NomCom members.

Others thought that OB Frankfurt should be more involved in the evaluation phase, particularly when it comes to early screening of Board member candidates. They thought this would reduce the workload on the NomCom members by decreasing the time spent on narrowing the pool of candidates, and perhaps allow NomCom members to devote more time to evaluating more candidates in depth.

We note that the number of completed applications has increased significantly in recent years. The 2014, 2015, and 2016 NomComs received 58, 81, and 105 completed applications.[23] Given that the NomCom reviews each of these applications, this increases the workload for the NomCom to identify a shortlist of candidates.

[23] ICANN 2016 Nominating Committee Final Report, p. 22.

E. Communication with Other ICANN Organizations.

There is a lack of communication between the NomCom and SO/ACs regarding the desired skills and qualities of potential candidates. In addition, the Board and SO/ACs sometimes struggle to reach consensus on what they need and do not have an effective way to communicate to the NomCom if current appointees should be re-appointed.

A majority of survey respondents and interviewees thought the NomCom needed more dialogue with ICANN organizations and committees; very few thought the NomCom needed less dialogue.

Board advice given to the NomCom was rated by the majority of survey respondents as being "extremely important" or "very important" as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: How Important is ICANN Board Advice when Recruiting, Evaluating, and Selecting Board Candidates?

Number of Survey Respondents
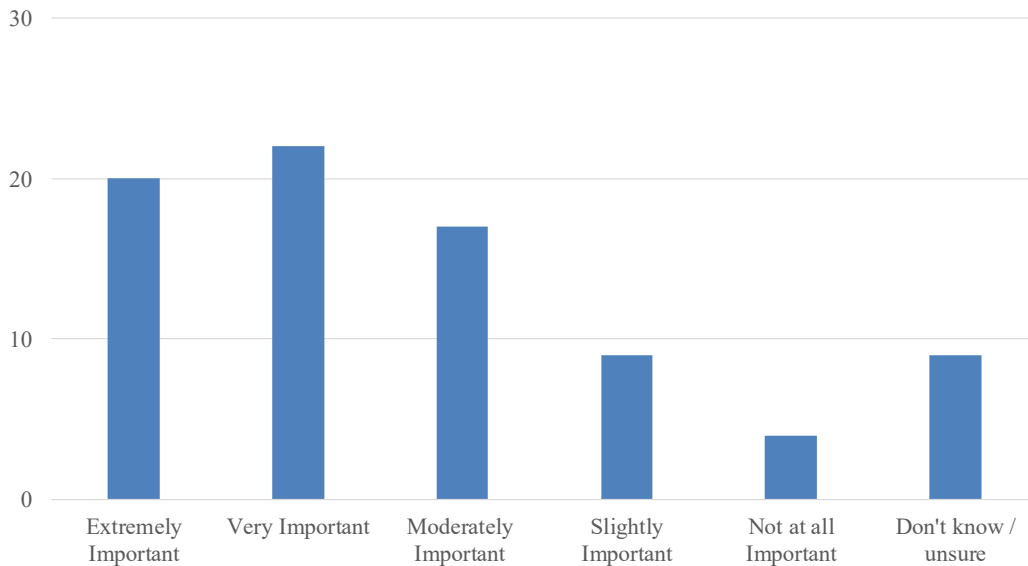
In interviews, we received various responses related to the nature of communications between the NomCom and other ICANN organizations, which is indicative of processes that are not well defined or known, and can change year to year.

Overall, respondents thought the Board advice was accurate, though some suggested the Board tended to focus on specific skill sets needed rather than general qualities that make a good Board members.[24] We note that general qualities desired in NomCom appointees are described in the

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[24] Board advice is posted to the NomCom website. The Board letter to the 2017 NomCom is dated March 9, 2017 is available at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/icann-board-nomcom-guidance-09mar17.pdf, accessed on November 14, 2017.

ICANN Bylaws and in the NomCom Operating Procedures.[25] Others noted it was not always easy for the Board to come to a consensus on the skills or attributes needed by the Board. The Board was seen as providing more useful and frequent advice compared to the SO/AC bodies to which the NomCom appoints people. People associated with the SO/ACs, however, sometimes thought the NomCom did not ask for advice. For example, it was said that the NomCom should either ask the ALAC directly or rely on the ALAC strategic plan, which lays out who ALAC needs going forward. Others thought the ALAC NomCom members do a great job of letting the NomCom know what ALAC needs.

People also suggested that NomCom members need a better understanding of the roles of ICANN Board and ALAC/GNSO Council/ccNSO Council/PTI Board members, as well as the skills needed to succeed in those roles. Increased dialogue between those bodies and the NomCom, particularly when informing the NomCom of needed skills and criteria, was a common answer given by individuals when asked what one or two changes they would make to the NomCom.

A lack of communication (and continuity of processes) was apparent in September 2017 when the NomCom appointee to the ccNSO violated the ccNSO's policy that the NomCom not appoint anyone that belonged to ccTLD management.[26] The appointee also was on the Board of the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), which was already represented on the ccNSO. The ccNSO had given instructions to the 2012 NomCom but at no point during the recent cycle were any ccNSO requirements discussed among NomCom members. The NomCom that made the selection asked for but did not receive any advice from the ccNSO. We note that the NomCom's Operating Procedures do not mention any specific requirements or considerations for ccNSO Council positions.

A number of individuals (including both current/former Board members and current/former NomCom members) noted that it would be helpful to obtain performance assessments from the Board of the NomCom's appointees, especially for Board appointees, since otherwise the NomCom has no idea how their appointees performed when they are being considered for reappointment. This sentiment was echoed by others who indicated it was sometimes hard to trust the NomCom when competent appointees were not reappointed and incompetent appointees were reappointed. Some people suggested making Board 360 reviews available to NomCom members,[27] although others thought they should be used for development rather than external consumption.

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[25] See NomCom 2017 Operating Procedures, "Criteria for Selection for ICANN Directors, PTI Directors, GNSO Council Members, ALAC Members, and ccNSO Council Members," available at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/nomcom2017-procedures-2017-02-07-en, accessed on November 27, 2017.
[26] See ccNSO letter to Nominating Committee, September 29, 2017, available at https://ccnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/field-attached/sataki-to-nomcomm-29sep17-en.pdf, accessed on December 6, 2017. See also, Kevin Murphy, "In harsh tones, ccNSO rejects NomCom appointee," Domain Incite, October 2, 2017, available at http://domainincite.com/22188-in-harsh-tones-ccnso-rejects-nomcom-appointee, accessed on December 6, 2017.
[27] This suggestion was also made during a 2016 360 Review of the NomCom leadership team.

F. Transparency

The NomCom has made significant progress in becoming more transparent, but transparency of its processes is still a concern within parts of the ICANN community.

The NomCom follows the principle that "process is transparent and data (i.e., information related to candidates) is kept confidential." Thus, the NomCom is allowed to publish the processes that the NomCom agrees to implement and follow, as well as statistical information on the candidate pool as long as that information does not identify individual candidates.

The NomCom has increased the extent to which it publishes such information. In particular, the NomCom undertook a series of steps designed to increase transparency following a previous NomCom review initiated in 2007 and "Accountability and Transparency" review reports published in 2010 and 2013.[28] These improvements include: holding regular open NomCom sessions at ICANN meetings, publishing the NomCom cycle and statistics on the candidate pool, which more recently has taken the form of monthly report cards, and explaining the selections made. The NomCom also publishes a report at the end of each cycle with recommendations for the next NomCom, and makes available 360 reviews for NomCom members.[29] Those who commented on these steps thought they were an improvement.

When asked directly whether the NomCom needed to be more or less transparent, survey respondents and interviewees were often split, with some indicating it was sufficiently transparent and others indicating it needed to be more transparent. However, when asked other questions about the processes of the NomCom, survey respondents and interviewees frequently raised the issue of transparency and suggested people did not have a good understanding of NomCom processes, especially processes related to the evaluation of candidates. Overall, when survey respondents were asked what one or two changes they would make to the NomCom, an increase in transparency was the most common answer. There was, however, a discrepancy in the extent to which NomCom members thought the NomCom needed to be more transparent, with very few NomCom members mentioning transparency in the top one or two things they would change about the NomCom.

G. Diversity

1. Diversity Requirement of NomCom Appointees

Diversity requirements for NomCom appointees are currently appropriate.

The NomCom is currently required to meet geographic diversity requirements for its selections to the Board. The NomCom's appointments to the Board must ensure that each geographic region

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[28] Interisle Consulting Group, Independent Review of the ICANN Nominating Committee, October 23, 2007, available at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/report-23oct07-en.pdf, accessed on November 3, 2017; Final Recommendations of the Accountability and Transparency Review Team, December 21, 2010, available at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/final-recommendations-31dec10-en.pdf, accessed on November 8, 2017; Accountability and Transparency Review Team 2, Report and Recommendations, December 31, 2013, available at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/final-recommendations-31dec13-en.pdf, accessed on November 8, 2017.
[29] NomCom 2017 360 Reviews, available at https://www.icann.org/nomcom2017/#360reviews, accessed on November 17, 2017.

(Europe, Asia/Australia/Pacific Islands; Latin America/Caribbean Islands; Africa; and North America) has at least one and no more than five directors on the ICANN Board. The NomCom must also ensure that the five members appointed to ALAC include one person from each geographic region. The PTI Board, GNSO Council, and ccNSO Council do not have geographic requirements.

Although many people thought diversity was important, very few thought it was more important than selecting high-quality candidates. Survey respondents were split on whether the NomCom should have other diversity requirements for its appointees other than geographical diversity requirements for appointees to the Board and ALAC. Some people thought ICANN should consider having more diversity for its appointees from developing countries due to the fact that their needs differed from developed countries even within the same geographic region.

Others thought the NomCom should not be the only entity within ICANN responsible for "patching" a lack of diversity on the Board or SO/ACs.

2. Diversity of the NomCom Itself

The NomCom itself is not seen as sufficiently diverse, particularly with respect to gender.

People frequently gave the NomCom poor marks for diversity, especially gender. There have been four or five women on the NomCom since 2014 with the exception of the 2016 NomCom. There were only two women on the NomCom in 2016.

A number of people thought organizations that send delegates to the NomCom should focus more on diversity, with some suggesting diversity should be a goal during the processes to select NomCom delegates. Many people, however, including those who thought the NomCom needed to be more diverse, thought competency on the NomCom was more important than diversity and that diversity on the NomCom was less important than diversity on other bodies, especially the Board.

Others noted that diversity may be difficult to achieve in practice given that NomCom members are appointed by different bodies, some of whom only appoint one person to the NomCom. We note that from 2011-2017, only ALAC, GNSO, and SSAC appointed a woman to the NomCom.[30]

H. Structure

Currently, the NomCom is made up of 15 voting members and five non-voting members, each of whom serves a one-year term. The NomCom Chair and Chair-Elect (selected by the ICANN Board) and the Associate Chair (selected by the NomCom Chair) lead the committee. The other NomCom members are appointed by ICANN organizations such that the NomCom represents the structure of ICANN as a whole. The structure of the NomCom is presented in Figure 2 and described in Section II.

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[30] Between 2011 and 2017, the rates at which ALAC, GNSO, and SSAC appointed women to the NomCom were 8 out of 35, 6 out of 49, and 1 out of 7, respectively.

1. Size

The current size of the NomCom is appropriate.

Many people indicated that a balance needed to be struck when considering the size of the NomCom; more members may help handle the large work load of the NomCom and make it easier to have fair representation across the ICANN organizations that send delegates to the NomCom, while fewer members may increase the efficiency of NomCom processes. Overall, a few people thought the NomCom would operate more efficiently if there were fewer individuals, while very few people thought the NomCom should include more members.

2. Representation and Non-Voting Members

There is concern that the NomCom may not accurately represent constituencies (both across organizations and within organizations) and over the role and participation of non-voting members.

As shown in Figure 2, the NomCom may have up to six non-voting members. In addition to the three leadership positions that are non-voting, the three non-voting members are SSAC, RSSAC, and GAC, though traditionally the GAC has not appointed a person to the NomCom. A GAC working group is currently evaluating if, and how, the GAC can participate in the NomCom.[31]

Representation on the NomCom was generally seen as sufficient for each ICANN organization that sends delegates to the NomCom. Some people questioned why the GAC was not represented, and others thought ALAC and GNSO were overrepresented. Still others thought that non-commercial stakeholders were generally underrepresented.

A number of people thought the NomCom needed to be rebalanced, both across ICANN organizations and within ICANN organizations. Regarding the latter, for example, more than one person thought the GNSO should consider rebalancing their NomCom appointees to match the structure of the GNSO. Currently, the GNSO sends a delegate to the NomCom for "large" business users and another for "small" business users but this structure is not part of the current GNSO Council.

Under the current system, non-voting members can participate in straw polls but do not participate in final votes. Survey respondents were evenly split on whether non-voting members should be given full voting-rights or if the current system should stay in place, although people frequently questioned the purpose of having non-voting members at all. Very few people thought non-voting members should participate less (*e.g.*, be removed from the NomCom or be prohibited from participating in straw polls). A few people noted that non-voting members provide valuable and influential perspectives.

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[31] GAC Working Group on GAC Participation in NomCom, available at https://gac.icann.org/working-group/gac-working-group-on-gac-participation-in-nomcom#meetings, accessed on December 3, 2017.

3. Term Length and Limits

The NomCom term length of one year, even if often renewed for a second year, may not allow for sufficient learning and engagement of members.

As outlined in the ICANN Bylaws, each voting member of the NomCom serves a one-year term and may at most serve two successive one-year terms. After serving, a person must be off the NomCom for at least two years before that person is eligible to serve another term. Non-voting members serve terms designated by the organization that appointed them to the NomCom.

When asked whether any changes should be made to the term length of NomCom members, the majority of respondents suggested a two-year term length, although a few people wondered if two-year terms would make it more difficult to attract delegates to the NomCom. Sixty percent of survey respondents thought terms should be two years, with 19 and 15 percent preferring one- and three-year terms, respectively. Interviewees also preferred two years, as roughly 75 percent suggested terms should be two years. Increasing term limits to two years was also one of the most common answers when interviewees and survey respondents were asked what one or two changes they would make to the NomCom.

Reasons given for increasing the term length to two years include:

Two-year terms would allow the NomCom to stagger terms so that roughly half the NomCom is new and half is returning. Given the large learning curve associated with being a NomCom member, a fact noted by many NomCom members, this would increase effectiveness of the NomCom and allow terms to be staggered, allowing for a more consistent onboarding process each year.

Two-year terms strike a balance between preserving continuity across years and injecting the NomCom with new people, though some people expressed a concern that terms over two years might have a deterrent effect on people participating in the NomCom.

Two years was also seen as good amount of time for NomCom members to conduct outreach through their networks. Terms longer than two years might result in NomCom members outreach in later years being less productive since they would have already exhausted much of their network.

When asked if NomCom members should serve more than one term and if so how many, most respondents thought serving two terms over a lifetime was appropriate, though preference for one and three terms were also common. A few people expressed concern at having individuals serve many times on the NomCom, with NomCom members saying that hearing about what happened on the NomCom several years ago was not helpful.

4. Leadership

The leadership structure of the NomCom generally works well, although the effectiveness of the NomCom depends heavily on the effectiveness of the Chair.

The NomCom leadership is composed of a Chair and a Chair-Elect, both of whom are appointed by the Board. In addition to being non-voting, the Chair-Elect is not meant to fulfill an advisory

role but instead benefits from training. It is anticipated that the Board will appoint the Chair-Elect as the Chair of the next NomCom, though the Board retains the right to appoint any other person as Chair. At the Chair's discretion, the Chair may then appoint a non-voting Associate Chair. In recent years, the Associate Chair has been the Chair from the previous NomCom.

Most respondents (including the vast majority of NomCom members) thought the current NomCom leadership structure was effective as-is, though a few thought it was highly ineffective. A few people noted that having the previous year's Chair advise the new NomCom was valuable to the Chair, Chair-Elect, and the entire NomCom as it helped preserve processes from year to year. In general, those we spoke with said it was very valuable for the Chair to have previous NomCom experience. A few others took a different view of having the previous Chair advise the new Chair, as they thought it gave too much influence to the processes of a previous NomCom. Others thought the NomCom leadership structure was not sufficiently insulated from variation in the performance of the Chair. A minority (approximately 15 percent) of current or former NomCom members thought the leadership structure was ineffective.

A few people were concerned by the fact that the Board selects the Chair and Chair-Elect, and thought the NomCom should select its own leadership or that the Chair should be involved in selecting the Chair-Elect.

I.   Staff Support

The NomCom is highly dependent on ICANN Staff support. There is concern that the NomCom Staff is under-resourced, which has affected the functioning of the NomCom.

There are two staff members who support the NomCom. Staff support all activities of the NomCom by supporting but not participating in the activities of the NomCom. They assist NomCom members with outreach efforts and handle candidate applications. Staff also receive feedback from candidates and NomCom members to improve processes, and handle and mediate requests for further assistance from other departments within ICANN (such as Legal or IT).

Two relatively common remarks on the role of NomCom Staff were (1) that the NomCom was heavily dependent on staff support and (2) that NomCom was under-staffed and under-resourced. As a result, this reduced the effectiveness of NomCom leadership and the NomCom as a whole, and sometimes made it difficult for the NomCom to effectively inform candidates of changes in schedules or deadlines.

There was also concern raised about a lack of integration of the NomCom Staff members within the ICANN staff structure.

IV.   Next Steps

This assessment report has been published to solicit feedback from the ICANN community. Between January and early February of 2018, there will be a public consultation period to include a webinar, open calls, and a public participation mailing list. The webinar is set to take place on

January 18, with open calls scheduled for January 25 and February 1. To participate in the webinar and/or the public calls, please contact mssi-secretariat@icann.org.

We will incorporate feedback into a final report, which will contain both our assessment of the NomCom and our recommendations for improving the operation of the NomCom. A draft final report will be published for public comments on March 19, 2018. The public comment period will last 40 days and close on April 30, 2018. After incorporating comments from the ICANN community, the final report will be published on June 1, 2018.