Project Overview for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Consulting Services RFP

Request for Proposal

14 January 2022

ICANN

1 Introduction

1.1 About this Document

This document provides an overview of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Consulting Services. It provides background and pertinent information regarding the requirements for prospective respondents. The RFP itself comprises this as well as other documents that are hosted in the ICANN sourcing tool (SciQuest/Jaggaer). Indications of interest are to be received by emailing DEI.Consulting.Services-RFP@icann.org. Proposals should be electronically submitted by 23:59 UTC on 11 February 2022 using ICANN's sourcing tool, access to which may be requested via the same email address as above.

1.2 About the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' (ICANN's) mission is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. To reach another person on the Internet, you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world.

See www.icann.org for more information.

2 Scope

2.1 Project Objective

ICANN is soliciting proposals to identify a provider of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) consulting services to help with the implementation of specific recommendations developed by the ICANN community regarding increasing, measuring, and reporting upon the diversity of the constituent groups of the ICANN community.

The goal of this project is to:

1. Assist ICANN org to support ICANN groups in the development of uniform definitions of seven diversity elements (geographic/regional representation, language, gender, age, physical disability, diverse skills, stakeholder group/constituency), and provide guidance regarding best practices and appropriate vocabulary during this process.

2. Draft a practical diversity toolkit to help ICANN community groups in the assessment and elaboration of diversity strategies/objectives and associated reviews.
3. Assist ICANN org to support the ICANN community in developing a process for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues for community groups.

2.2 Background

Enhancing ICANN Accountability - Work Stream 2

Formed in 1998, ICANN grew out of a U.S. Government commitment to transfer the policy and technical management of the Internet's Domain Name System to a non-profit corporation based in the U.S. with diverse and global participation. As such, ICANN has always made an effort to ensure global diversity at various levels in its staff, community, and Board.

On 14 March 2014 the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced its intent to transition its stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions and related root zone management to the global multistakeholder community. NTIA asked ICANN to convene a multistakeholder process to develop a proposal for the transition.

As initial discussions of the IANA Stewardship Transition were taking place, the ICANN community raised the broader topic of the impact of the transition on how to hold ICANN accountable. From this dialogue, the Enhancing ICANN Accountability process was developed to provide assurance that ICANN remains accountable in the absence of its historical contractual relationship with the U.S. Government, which has been perceived, since 1998, as a backstop with regard to ICANN's organization-wide accountability.

The ICANN community divided the work of the Cross Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability (CCWG-ACCT) into two phases:

- The first work stream (WS1) concluded in 2016 and developed consensus recommendations on accountability enhancements required for the IANA Stewardship Transition.
- The community also agreed to conduct a work stream (Work Stream 2, or WS2) through which the CCWG-ACCT would remain in place and develop recommendations for accountability topics for which a timeline for developing solutions and full implementation was not required for the successful IANA Stewardship Transition.

In July 2018, the CCWG-ACCT WS2 submitted its Final Report containing consensus recommendations to the Chartering Organizations. Upon approval by the Chartering Organizations, the CCWG-ACCT Co-Chairs submitted the WS2 Final Report to the ICANN Board in November 2018. The ICANN Board approved the WS2 Final Report, inclusive of implementation guidance, in November 2019.

The WS2 Final Report Appendix 1 includes eight diversity-related recommendations. Their objective is to ensure there is comprehensive representation of the global Internet community, and an extensive range of perspectives in skills and experience, throughout all levels of ICANN.

This RFP relates to the implementation of the following recommendations:

> **Recommendation 1.1:** Supporting Organization(SO)/Advisory Committee(AC)/Groups should agree that the following seven key elements of diversity should be used as a common starting point for all diversity considerations within ICANN: Geographic/Regional Representation, Language, Gender, Age, Physical Disability, Diverse Skills, Stakeholder Group/Constituency.

> **Recommendation 1.6:** ICANN staff should provide support and tools for the SO/AC/Groups to assist them in assessing their diversity in an appropriate manner. ICANN should also identify staff or community resources that can assist SO/ACs or other components of the community with diversity-related activities and strategies.

> **Recommendation 1.7:** ICANN staff should support SO/AC/Groups in developing and publishing a process for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues

The ICANN organization has developed a plan to implement the WS2 recommendation and, in November 2021, published a summary that offers a high-level description of the plans.

WS2 Community Coordination Group

The WS2 Community Coordination Group is being created to serve as a forum for ICANN community structures to exchange information on best practices and lessons learned, as well as for sharing information on progress related to the community's implementation of WS2 recommendations. The Coordination Group will also be where the WS2 recommendations or topics that can benefit from a uniform, community-wide approach will be identified and addressed, including implementation of Recommendations 1.1 and 1.7.

In addressing community-wide implementation of Recommendations 1.1 and 1.7, the WS2 Community Coordination Group is expected to discuss:
● The relevant priority of these recommendations in the context of other WS2 recommendations implementation and overall community workload.
● The scope of and opportune timing for additional community consultations (as needed).
● How to reach broad community agreement on these recommendations.
● What each individual community group will need to carry out in regard to any agreed implementation.

The selected DEI provider will be expected to provide subject matter guidance to the ICANN org staff that will lead and facilitate the discussions of the WS2 Community Coordination Group. The Group is currently expected to begin work in February 2022, and one of its first tasks will be to establish a cadence and timeline for its work.

2.3 Scope of Work

The scope of work includes the following components:

1. Assist ICANN org to support the development of uniform definitions of the seven diversity elements as stated in Recommendation 1.1.
    a. The diversity elements are: geographic/regional representation, language, gender, age, physical disability, diverse skills, stakeholder group/constituency. They will be used to measure and track diversity data across ICANN.
    b. Attend WS2 Community Coordination Group meetings remotely.
    c. Provide input to the Group regarding DEI best practices and appropriate vocabulary.
    d. Provide subject matter guidance to ICANN org staff that will be facilitating and leading the WS2 Community Coordination Group discussions, reflective of the multistakeholder bottom-up model, to draw on the diversity elements.
    e. Draft a document of shared understanding based on input from the Coordination Group.

2. Draft a practical toolkit that will contain best practices and case studies to support the ICANN community in the assessment and elaboration of diversity strategies/objectives and associated reviews (The toolkit is part of the implementation of WS2 Recommendation 1.6).
    a. With input from ICANN org, determine the content and resources that will be included in the toolkit.
        i. Toolkit will support ICANN community groups in the implementation of Recommendations 1.3 - 1.5 related to measuring and promoting diversity (see Annex 1 WS2 Final Report).
        ii. Toolkit should include: diversity survey templates, guidance on how to collect data in an inclusive way, examples of strategies to increase diversity and inclusion, and relevant case studies.
    b. With input from ICANN org, identify and document case studies from different geographic regions of successful DEI strategies that can be used by ICANN community groups.
    c. Ensure feedback from ICANN org is incorporated into the deliverables.
    d. Submit preliminary version of toolkit, which may be done prior to the completion of Recommendation 1.1
    e. Submit final version of the toolkit, which will reflect agreed diversity elements in Recommendation 1.1.

3. Assist ICANN org to support the ICANN community in developing a process for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues for community groups (see Recommendation 1.7).
    a. Produce a report that compiles existing methods in ICANN that could be used to lodge a complaint to inform the community in its determination of whether existing tools can be leveraged.
    b. Attend WS2 Community Coordination Group meetings remotely.

c. Provide subject matter guidance to ICANN org staff that will be facilitating the Group discussions to establish a process for SO/AC or other community groups for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues.
d. Leveraging existing mechanisms in ICANN to the extent possible, create an initial draft proposal for a process for community groups for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues.

3 High Level Selection Criteria

The decision to select a provider as an outcome of this RFP will be based on, but not limited to, the following selection criteria:

1. Financial Health
2. Capability and experience, including qualifications and expertise in:
    a. Diversity, equity, and inclusion
    b. Internet governance ecosystem
    c. Global experience
    d. Consensus building
3. Understanding of assignment and proposed implementation approach
4. Responsiveness and flexibility
5. Business continuity/availability of key personnel
6. Financial value / pricing
7. Quality of similar past work
8. Value added services
9. Mitigation of any conflicts of interest

4 High Level Business Requirements

The provider must be able to demonstrate their ability to meet the following business requirements:

1. Must have prior experience in defining relevant diversity elements and developing successful DEI strategies.
2. Must have experience working with globally diverse communities.
3. Knowledge and familiarity with Internet governance issues preferred.
4. Ability to attend meetings outside of regular business hours in order to accommodate different time zones.
5. Ability to meet tight timelines and provide periodic status updates, frequency to be determined.
6. Ability to communicate effectively (verbally and in writing) in English.
7. Ability to meet the following project activity and deliverable milestones (Note: the ICANN organization reserves the right to modify the timeline at any time as necessary):

Activity / Deliverable	Estimated Dates
1. Uniform definitions of the seven diversity elements	
a. Kick off meeting with ICANN org	April 2022
b. Initiate subject-matter expertise guidance to ICANN staff that will be facilitating implementation of Recommendation 1.1	**April 2022**
c. Initial draft of uniform definitions	**July 2022**
d. Final document with uniform definitions	**TBD**
2. Diversity Toolkit	
a. Toolkit tools and resources defined (table of content)	**May 2022**
b. Preliminary draft of diversity toolkit	December 2022
c. Final version of diversity toolkit, incorporating any feedback	TBD
3. Process for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues	
a. Produce report that compiles existing methods in ICANN that could be used to lodge a complaint	January 2023
b. Initial draft of process for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues	TBD
c. Final process for dealing with diversity-related complaints and issues	TBD

5 Project Timeline

The following dates have been established as milestones for this RFP. ICANN reserves the right to modify or change this timeline at any time as necessary.

Activity	Estimated Dates
RFP published	14 January 2022
Participants to indicate interest in submitting RFP proposal	**26 January 2022 by 23:59 UTC**
Participants submit any questions to ICANN	**26 January 2022 by 23:59 UTC**
ICANN responds to participant questions	**2 February 2022**
Participant proposals due by	**11 February 2022 by 23:59 UTC**
Evaluation of responses	25 March 2022
Final evaluations, contracting and award	15 April 2022

6 Terms and Conditions

General Terms and Conditions

1. Submission of a proposal shall constitute each respondent's acknowledgment and acceptance of all the specifications, requirements and terms and conditions in this RFP.

2. All costs of preparing and submitting its proposal, responding to or providing any other assistance to ICANN in connection with this RFP will be borne by the respondent.

3. All submitted proposals including any supporting materials or documentation will become the property of ICANN. If the respondent's proposal contains any proprietary information that should not be disclosed or used by ICANN other than for the purposes of evaluating the proposal, that information should be marked with appropriate confidentiality markings.

Discrepancies, Omissions and Additional Information

1. Respondent is responsible for examining this RFP and all addenda. Failure to do so will be at the sole risk of the respondent. Should respondent find discrepancies, omissions, unclear or ambiguous intent or meaning, or should any question arise concerning this RFP, respondent must notify ICANN of such findings immediately in writing via e-mail no later than ten (10) days prior to the deadline for bid submissions. Should such matters remain unresolved by ICANN, in writing, prior to respondent's preparation of its proposal, such matters must be addressed in respondent's proposal.

2. ICANN is not responsible for oral statements made by its employees, agents, or representatives concerning this RFP. If respondent requires additional information, respondent must request that the issuer of this RFP furnish such information in writing.

3. A respondent's proposal is presumed to represent its best efforts to respond to the RFP. Any significant inconsistency, if unexplained, raises a fundamental issue of the respondent's understanding of the nature and scope of the work required and of its ability to perform the contract as proposed and may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The burden of proof as to cost credibility rests with the respondent.

4. If necessary, supplemental information to this RFP will be provided to all prospective respondents receiving this RFP. All supplemental information issued by ICANN will form part of this RFP. ICANN is not responsible for any failure by prospective respondents to receive supplemental information.

Assessment and Award

1. ICANN reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw this RFP, make no award, to waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity and to disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.

2. ICANN may request a respondent to provide further information or documentation to support respondent's proposal and its ability to provide the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP.

3. ICANN is not obliged to accept the lowest priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.

4. ICANN will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in this RFP, responses to questions related to those requirements, any further issued clarifications (if any) and consideration of any other issues or evidence relevant to the respondent's ability to successfully provide and implement the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP and in the best interests of ICANN.

5. ICANN reserves the right to enter into contractual negotiations and if necessary, modify any terms and conditions of a final contract with the respondent whose proposal offers the best value to ICANN.