

# **ICANN Fellowship Program: Review of Application Process**

## ***Supporting Research***

### **Background information:**

As we near the ten-year anniversary of ICANN’s Fellowship program, the Development and Public Responsibility Department is looking to evaluate and further enhance this successful initiative to ensure that the program will continue to thrive while addressing the needs of the ICANN community. This review is being carried out with the fundamental requirement that the Fellowship selection process remains accountable, transparent, and independent while continuing to strengthen the ICANN Multistakeholder Model.

When the Fellowship program was launched in 2007, the overarching goal was to build capacity within ICANN’s Multistakeholder Model (specifically government and country code top level domains) by bringing more diverse voices into ICANN in order to have more inclusive decision-making, reflective of the ICANN global community. In designing the program, the project team looked at what some other similar organizations had in place for grant programs, and what they were doing in relation to overall application process. Most comparative programs prioritized candidates from developing nations. Additionally, at the time when the Fellowship program started, financial need seemed to dominate all other obstacles that potential fellows faced. Therefore, ICANN has been awarding fellowships to candidates from “low-income”, “lower-middle”, and “upper-middle” economies as [identified](#) by the World Bank to ensure objectivity, transparency, and independence in the assessment process. Later, in 2011, ICANN added the U.N. Small Island Developing States [list](#) as well to account for disadvantages due to geographical locations in addition to economic disadvantages.

The World Bank’s list of [Country and Lending Groups](#) which ICANN uses is [updated](#) on July 1, each year. Over the past several years, many countries that were previously ranked as middle economies have now moved to the high-income country list. In relation to the Fellowship Program, this has become problematic. Despite overall country financial progress, individuals often can still be considered a member of an underserved and/or disadvantaged community in relation to the Internet ecosystem and ICANN. Consequently, ICANN’s Fellowship Program is losing good-potential candidates from these countries that have been eliminated based on current criteria and assessment mechanisms.

This document is a summary of research carried out to shed light on possible opportunities for improvement for ICANN Fellowship program’s applicant eligibility criteria and selection process. It will first look at comparative grant programs’ applicant selection criteria and compare them to ICANN’s approach. It will then revisit the program’s overarching goals and objectives, positioning statement, and other possibilities for improving the selection criteria for the Fellowship program.

## Section 1: Revisiting Comparative Grant Programs’ Selection Criteria

This chart deems to make it easier to compare how various programs (similar to ICANN’s Fellowship program) assess applicants by listing their comparative selection criteria.

### A. Programs within the Internet Ecosystem

Name of Program and Organization	Eligibility or Selection criteria associated with “underserved communities”, “inclusiveness”, etc.	Other Criteria	More Information
Harvard Berkman Center for Internet and Society (Internship Program)	<b>Diversity</b> in background, culture, experience, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, and much more. Preference: people of color, women, the LGBTQIA community, and persons with disabilities, as well as applications from researchers and practitioners from across the spectrum of disciplines and methods.	Have additional requirements to verify skills and individual qualifications (see <a href="#">here</a> )	About the program: <a href="#">here</a>
Geneva Internet Platform (Diplo Foundation) capacity building initiatives	<b>Capacity Building</b> ; young IG professionals <b>from developing countries</b> (list of ‘developing countries’ and age range are not provided)		More <a href="#">here</a>  More on Diplo Foundation’s approach to capacity building: <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a>  Does not provide a definition or list of ‘developing countries’
ITU; Fellowship to attend the "Global Forum on Emergency Telecommunications" ( <a href="#">GET-2016</a> )	Countries with a <b>GDP per capita</b> of less than 2'000 USD  ITU, emphasizes on “digital inclusion” which means to promote ICT accessibility and use for the social and economic development of <b>people with specific needs</b> , including indigenous peoples and people living in rural areas; persons with	In line with <a href="#">Smart Sustainable Development Model (SSDM) Initiative</a> which “seeks to ensure that information and communication technologies are used for	eligibility criteria: <a href="#">here</a>  More on digital inclusion, <a href="#">here</a>  ITU’s list of least developed countries: <a href="#">here</a>  About Special Programme for LDCs and SIDS: <a href="#">here</a>  ITU’s list of SIDS: <a href="#">here</a>

Name of Program and Organization	Eligibility or Selection criteria associated with “underserved communities”, “inclusiveness”, etc.	Other Criteria	More Information
	<p>disabilities; women and girls; and youth and children.</p> <p>ITU also has a Special Program for the <b>Least Developed Countries (LDCs)</b> and <b>Small Island Developing States (SIDS)</b>, <a href="#">Emergency Telecommunications</a> delivers targeted (see <a href="#">here</a>) and highly differentiated assistance to LDCs and SIDS in a number of <b>key priority areas</b>.</p> <p>Countries categorized by ITU as '<a href="#">Countries in Special Need</a>'. These are countries that have gone through periods of armed conflict, civil strife or war and suffered a lot of destruction to their telecommunication infrastructure.</p>	<p>both development and for disaster management with the aim of improving the lives of millions of people across the globe.”</p>	<p>ITU’s definition of LDCs: <a href="#">here</a></p>
<p>Internet Governance Forum (IGF) <a href="#">Ambassadors Programme</a></p>	<p><b>Equal opportunity</b> for developing and developed countries, <b>least developed Countries (LDCs)</b> as defined by the UN), <b>developing countries</b> and <b>transitional economies</b> (No lists provided)</p>		<p>More about IGF, <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria for IGF Ambassadors Programme, <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p>IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (<a href="#">MAG</a>)</p>	<p>MAG members are selected to achieve a balance among all stakeholder groups, while retaining <b>regional</b> and <b>gender representation</b>, according to <a href="#">established</a></p>	<p>Specific required qualifications are listed as well. Examples: have extensive</p>	<p>IGF Eligibility Criteria for funding MAG members can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

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	<p><a href="#">procedures</a>. (more info about the eligibility criteria <a href="#">here</a>)</p>	<p>linkages with their respective stakeholder group; proven ability to work as a team member; active participation in the ongoing IGF process; Experience and expertise in Internet governance issues; willingness to do volunteer work. (listed <a href="#">here</a>)</p>	
<p>Internet Society (ISOC) Fellowship to the IETF</p>	<p><b>Developing countries</b> (No definition provided)</p> <p>The Internet Society Fellowship to the IETF, which is a part of the <a href="#">Next Generation Leaders Programme (NGL)</a> is only open to those who <b>originate from and reside in a developing country</b>, which traditionally have <b>low rates of participation</b> in the IETF. The list of these countries are not provided.</p> <p><b>Emerging or developing economies</b> who have the technical skills and experience to contribute to the work of the IETF and will</p>	<p>Selected key issues:                      Access Country-code Top-Level Domains (<b>ccTLD</b>'s)                      Interconnection and Traffic Exchange (<b>ITE</b>)                      Internet Exchange Points (<b>IXP</b>'s)</p> <p>an individual who has contributed to the data communication community at a local or regional</p>	<p>More on the Internet Society Fellowship to the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) Programme, <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Selection Criteria for Fellowship to the IETF can be found <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>More on the NGL programme, <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

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	<p>increase <b>diversity</b> of inputs. However, for the IETF Fellowship, “attendance by technologists from emerging and developing economies is currently limited” see <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>(No definition of emerging or developing economies is offered. But more information can be found <a href="#">here</a>)</p>	<p>level</p> <p>For the NGL program: young Internet professional aged between *20-40; committed to the Internet Society Mission</p> <p>Diverse expertise: academia, the public sector, industry, and civil society, from all over the world.</p>	
Open Tech Fund		<p><b>Vulnerable individuals</b> or groups usually resulting from a rapid escalation in censorship and surveillance in repressive environments. Vulnerable groups include journalists, human rights defenders, NGOs, activists, bloggers, and others facing digital threats.</p>	<p>More about the Rapid Response Fellowship: <a href="https://www.opentech.fund/fellowships/rrf">https://www.opentech.fund/fellowships/rrf</a>here</p> <p><a href="#">Application form</a></p>

**B. Programs outside of the Internet Ecosystem**

<b>Name of Program and Organization</b>	<b>Eligibility or Selection criteria associated with “underserved communities”, “inclusiveness”, etc.</b>	<b>Other Criteria</b>	<b>More Information</b>
<p>World Trade Organization Internship Initiatives</p>	<p>WTO’s mandate puts an emphasis on <b>Developing Countries</b>. (WTO member states define the status of their country as developing or developed. The list of current developing countries according to WTO cannot be found on their website.)</p> <p>A number of WTO internship initiatives target <b>LDCs</b>, see <a href="#">here</a>. WTO list of LDCs, can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p>Eligibility Criteria for WTO Internship program: Interns are recruited from among nationals of WTO Members and countries and customs territories engaged in accession negotiations. More can be found <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>Eligibility for the WTO Accessions Internship Program to take part in the programme applies to 1) nationals of <b>LDCs or developing countries that are already WTO members</b>; or 2) nationals of countries or customs territories engaged in the WTO accession process. See more <a href="#">here</a></p>	<p>There are no WTO definitions of “developed” or “developing” countries. Developing countries in the WTO are designated on the basis of self-selection although this is not necessarily automatically accepted in all WTO bodies. More information, <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>List of WTO member countries, <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>WTO member states define the status of their country as developing or developed. The list of current developing countries according to WTO cannot be found on their website.</p> <p>A number of WTO internship initiatives target <b>LDCs</b>, see <a href="#">here</a>. WTO list of LDCs is taken from UN’s list and can be found <a href="#">here</a>. And <a href="#">here</a>’s more on how the UN defines LDCs and what indicators it uses in its identification</p>

Name of Program and Organization	Eligibility or Selection criteria associated with “underserved communities”, “inclusiveness”, etc.	Other Criteria	More Information
<p>The Schlumberger Foundation Fellowship for UNESCO-IHE program</p>	<p><b>Women from developing and emerging economies.</b> More <a href="#">here</a>. (<a href="#">UN Human Development Index</a> (HDI) is used to verify eligibility.)</p>		<p>More about the program, <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>“Faculty for the Future focuses on developing and emerging countries. Qualifying a country as advanced, developing or emerging, is a complex and often controversial topic.</p> <p>UNESCO’s <a href="#">SIDS List</a></p> <p>Faculty for the Future does not draw on one single source or list but constitutes its eligible country list from a number of sources which allows incorporation of development status with regard to science, gender and education for example. The most significant source drawn upon is the <a href="#">UN Human Development Index (HDI)</a> including the <b>Gender Development and Gender Empowerment Indexes</b> as well as <b>indicators of adult educational levels</b>. <b><u>Developing countries are defined as countries scoring medium or low in the UN HDI.</u></b> Applications from <u>emerging countries</u> (i.e., countries scoring high in the HDI growth rate) may occasionally be awarded grants if the given country</p>

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			<p>scores low in the UN Gender Inequality Index. The Faculty for the Future country list is reviewed every year and as levels of development fluctuate, a country may be on the list one year and not on the list the following year, and vice versa.”</p> <p><a href="#">UN’s list of developing countries</a></p> <p><a href="#">UNDP Human Development Report 2015</a></p> <p><a href="#">Overall HDI Rankings (Country List) 2014</a></p> <p><a href="#">All HDI 2015 Data by Indicator, Year, and Country</a></p> <p><a href="#">Interactive HDI Map</a></p> <p><a href="#">More on HDI calculations and raw data</a></p>
<p><a href="#">The International Climate Protection Fellowship</a> (Humboldt Foundation)</p>	<p><b>Developing countries and emerging economies.</b> More <a href="#">here</a>. (List of developing countries provided <a href="#">here</a>. No list or definition provided for ‘emerging economies’)</p>		<p>List of “developing countries, <a href="#">here</a>. This list of developing countries is based on the information provided by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. For the International Climate Protection Fellowship Program European threshold and developing countries have been excluded from this list.</p>

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			More information about the Fellowship program, <a href="#">here</a> .
Catholic Academic Exchange Service ( <a href="#">KAAD</a> ) Scholarships in Germany	Developing or emerging country in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, or Latin America. Countries are listed <a href="#">here</a> for each region		The KAAD scholarships are designed for post-graduates and to academics who already gained professional experience and who are interested in postgraduate studies (or research stays) in Germany. More, <a href="#">here</a> .
<a href="#">Aga Khan Foundation-International Scholarship Program</a>		Names specific countries in South Asia, listed <a href="#">here</a> . Accepts applicants under the age of 30. Genuine financial need Strong and relevant CV. See <a href="#">here</a> .  <b>Residency Requirement:</b> The Foundation only accepts applications of eligible nationals (list provided) who are residing in one of the countries where there are local Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Aga Khan Education Services (AKES), or Aga Khan Education Board (AKEB) offices which process applications and interview candidates.	
<a href="#">UN RAF Memorial Fellowship</a> for journalists		Only 35 countries are eligible to apply, but they are not listed on the website. Has age limit of 35. More	The Journalists Fellowship Programme was first established in 1980 by the United Nations General Assembly with the aim of

<b>Name of Program and Organization</b>	<b>Eligibility or Selection criteria associated with “underserved communities”, “inclusiveness”, etc.</b>	<b>Other Criteria</b>	<b>More Information</b>
from developing countries		<a href="#">here</a>	exposing junior and mid-level journalists from developing countries to the work of the organization. More <a href="#">here</a> .

**Research Highlights:**

- In an attempt to increase and maintain diversity of participants in policymaking meetings and to bring the voices of the underserved communities to the table, most organizations in the Internet ecosystem seem to align themselves with generally defined development goals such as UNGA Sustainable Development Goals or the Millennium Development Goals. The indicators used to verify “development” often seem to be economically determined. Perhaps because that is the easiest factor to be measured. The same type of criteria seems to be used for identifying “underserved communities”. Therefore, most organizations choose to support participants from varying lists of “developing countries”, “emerging economies”, and “least-developed countries”. Some organizations also include selection from countries identified as “Small Island Developing States”, or some land-locked countries, these last two groups are mostly added to account for disparities in access to transportation facilities.
- Important to note that the definition/ indices used by various organizations to identify “developing countries” are not always congruent. Some, such as ICANN, use the World Bank’s list. Some others, use raw UN-generated data on country GDPs, and other information, but have their own system of using the data to create their own rule for generating a country list. In some organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, member countries themselves identify their countries as ‘developed’, ‘developing’ or ‘least developed’. The source that most organizations seem to use to identify ‘developing countries’ is UN’s data which can be found, [here](#). The two lists of [Least Developed Countries \(LDCs\)](#) and [Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\)](#) are also commonly used. Some organizations also use UN’s [Human Development Reports](#).
- In all cases, it is apparent that the economically deterministic indices are not enough to verify whether or not a candidate is from an “underserved community”. And even if financial challenges are considered to be the best indicator for identifying underserved communities, going off of only one list of ‘developing countries’ may not be sufficient.

- An easy fix for some organizations seems to be adding the list of ‘emerging economies’. But finding a reliable list of ‘emerging economies’ is also challenging. Some sources that are currently widely used are [International Monetary Fund](#), [FTSE Group](#), [MSCI](#), [Russel Investments](#), [S&P](#), [Dow Jones](#), and Columbia University [Emerging Market Global Players List \(EMGP\)](#). Additionally, average Annual HDI Growth can be used as a good indicator to distinguish between ‘emerging economies’, developing, and developed nations. But even this approach does not solve the challenge of differentiating between an individual and the overall status of their respective country in terms of economic development.
- Multiple Indices can be used to verify a country’s status as a developing nation. Additionally, depending on the aspect of development that is more relevant to the objectives of the organization, how countries rank based on those specific aspects can be an additional useful assessment mechanism. The UN Human Development (HDI) Index seems to include a variety of important [factors](#) such as accounting for a nation’s education, living standards, life expectancy, and can be used to rank countries based on each factor separately. Additionally, other Indices of the [Human Development Report](#), such as Trends in Human Development, [Gender Development](#), [Inequality-Adjustment](#), [Gender Inequality](#), and [Multidimensional Poverty Index](#), can be selectively used.
- HDI’s “Multidimensional Poverty Index” could be a good indicator for identifying countries which are more likely to have “underserved populations”. See Table 6 in [this document](#).
- In 2015, UNESCO's Finance Commission unanimously [supported](#) the call to challenge the development categorization of countries according to Gross Domestic Product: “We are advocating revision of the GDP basis for economic categorization of States into small, medium and large categories promoted by global financial organizations like the World Bank as it does not reflect the tremendous disparities in income, levels of poverty and inequalities within countries.”
- Other than economic and geographic factors, race and gender can contribute to inequality. A few organizations, therefore, give priority to selecting from among minorities, even within developed countries. Minority groups can include people of color, women, and indigenous people, the LGBTQIA community, and persons with disabilities.
- Most organizations also create specific criteria for themselves to make sure that their unique strategic goals are achieved. Examples: selecting from among people with certain professional fields or with specific expertise; people of certain age, selecting from among countries which have low participation rates; defining criteria in line with Sustainable Development Goals, WSIS+10 guidelines, etc. Eligibility could also become more merit-based with specific required qualifications and skills outlined.

- It seems like lack of proficiency in English could be another barrier rendering some applicants as “underrepresented” or “disadvantaged”. It is not clear how various organizations approach this issue.

## Section 2: Revisiting Definitions and Objectives

### ICANN Fellowship programs’ current objectives vs. description as stated on the website:

Program Overarching Goal: Strengthen the **Multistakeholder Model** by bringing more **diverse** voices into ICANN in order to have more **inclusive decision-making**, reflective of the ICANN global community.

The chart below ties specific objectives to respective outputs in order to verify areas of strength and highlight areas that need improvement.

ICANN Fellowship Program Objectives	Current Respective Statements	Current Respective Measures	Opportunities for Improvement
Diversity (in terms of fields of interest and expertise)	“This program seeks to create a broader and more regionally diverse base of knowledgeable constituents” referenced <a href="#">here</a>	Applicants will be ranked based on their responses to a number of questions listed <a href="#">here</a> which reflects on their diversity in terms of interest and expertise	This priority can be more pronounced in the selection criteria. Application form can improve to capture more relevant data.
Diversity (in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, geographical region, etc.)	“This program seeks to create a broader and more regionally diverse base of knowledgeable constituents by reaching out to less developed regions of the world” referenced <a href="#">here</a>	Priority given to women Priority given to applicants from multiple countries  Applicants will be ranked within regions in order of preference ( <a href="#">source</a> ) and based on their responses to a number of questions listed <a href="#">here</a> .  Additional weight given to applicants who live in the region where the ICANN meeting is being held for that fellowship round. ( <a href="#">source</a> )	To avoid inadvertent discrimination against fit candidates and allow for a richer pull of candidates that can better help enhance capacity-building within ICANN’s Multistakeholder Model, the selection cannot exclude candidates whose country is an emerging economy or even developed nation.  Also, to have a more sophisticated, reliable, and evolving approach to vetting candidates, the selection criteria can more strategically be tied to the objectives.
Inclusiveness, “support the participation of	“by reaching out to less developed regions of the	Selecting fellows from Less developed, developing, and SIDS.	Being from a “less developed region” does not automatically include all

<b>ICANN Fellowship Program Objectives</b>	<b>Current Respective Statements</b>	<b>Current Respective Measures</b>	<b>Opportunities for Improvement</b>
historically underrepresented groups” (from <a href="#">this document</a> )	world”. referenced <a href="#">here</a>		underserved and under-represented communities. Therefore, the selection criteria should improve to better identify applicants from underserved communities.
Capacity Building to increase global participation within the ICANN Multistakeholder Model	Build capacity within the ICANN Multistakeholder Model. referenced <a href="#">here</a>  Applicants are selected who: 1. Act as a resource to the ICANN Board and staff by providing information and feedback on the planning, implementation and evaluation of the fellowships programme as needed. 2. Conduct outreach in support of the fellowships program and to create a pool of potential future members of the selection committee.  <a href="#">source</a>	Fellowship Program Agenda, the experience that fellows will gain through the program ( <a href="#">see here</a> )	The return on investment for the Fellowship program lies in the fact that Fellows are meant to remain engaged and give back to the community and hence contribute to the capacity-building efforts. Therefore, the selection mechanism can improve to select candidates who are more likely to remain engaged, active, and give back to the ICANN community.
Legitimate, effective, and evolving (referenced <a href="#">here</a> )	means-tested program through using an outside source to verify	Applicants must either be citizens of eligible countries listed in the World Bank	The program selection criteria can improve to ensure a more sophisticated and inclusive measure for

<b>ICANN Fellowship Program Objectives</b>	<b>Current Respective Statements</b>	<b>Current Respective Measures</b>	<b>Opportunities for Improvement</b>
Transparent  Accountable	country eligibility  periodic changes and updates (example: adding SIDS)	classification as low, lower-middle, and upper-middle economies, or listed in one of the three (3) UN groupings of developing and least developed nations, or from SIDNs	identifying the right candidates. An approach that does not inadvertently discriminate against applicants based on a rather arbitrary list of countries. Also, an approach that is more goal-oriented and merit based.

**Excerpts from ICANN statements highlighting the organization’s mission, vision, and values**

- At the heart of ICANN's policy-making is what is called a "Multistakeholder Model". This is a community-based consensus-driven approach to policy-making and international engagement. The idea is that Internet governance should mimic the structure of the Internet itself- borderless and open to all. [Source](#).
- ICANN approach has to be “legitimate, effective, and evolving.” This means that it has to be “inclusive, smart, transparent, agile & innovative, cost-effective, subsidiarity, and accountable & adjudicatory.” [Source](#).
- Important to “enable a global community to engage in participatory forms of decision-making” [Source](#).
- “ICANN could support the participation of historically underrepresented groups”
- Could “leverage the concentration of diverse interests, groups, individuals and countries to contribute to processes seeking to make ICANN more representative, transparent and accountable.” [Source](#).
- “the Public Forum must accommodate not only a more diverse and greater volume of stakeholders, but also a greater diversity and volume of issues – e.g., those stemming from the new gTLD program and those emerging topics like privacy and data security” [Source](#).
- ICANN has two broad mandates where it comes to engagement: 1) to conduct global outreach and promote awareness of ICANN and its role in the Internet governance ecosystem, and 2) to create participatory mechanisms that leverage and sustain engagement at ICANN [Source](#).
- 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 [source](#).

**Defining “Underserved Communities”:**

The language used to define “underserved communities” by various local and international organizations researched for this report is linked to social, economic and environmental factors that hinder an individual’s ability to develop to its full capacity and benefit from services that they would have otherwise had access to. e.g. Poverty, race, ethnicity, age, gender, physical disabilities, and

factors such as income, hygiene, and absence of a usual source of care or service such as basic education, health services, and public transportation. Underserved population often face barriers to participation in the policy making process.

The definition offered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) includes people who (1) are geographically isolated from service providers; (2) are linguistically isolated from service providers; (3) are culturally and socially isolated from county and state agencies; and/or (4) have limited social and economic resources to access available care.

International projects that aim to serve the underserved regions similar to ICANN's Fellowship program pick the aspect of the definition that best matches their objectives. Many focus on poverty as the major indicator and therefore tie this definition to regions that are identified as least-developed or developing. But as Mike Zupke (ICANN) [points out](#) in his presentation "Supporting the DNS Industry in Underserved Regions" (ICANN #49- Singapore, March 2014), "we use this terminology (underserved regions) because it's not necessarily that it is these challenges that are particular to an economy or to a geography, but that we recognize that there can be challenges for any particular region where we see that the marketplace could be better served."

### **Defining "Capacity Building":**

According to the [At-Large Proposal to Address Capacity Building within ICANN - 2012 Workspace](#), "it is impossible to define the nature of capacity building if one does not examine ICANN's core function where it coordinates the following:

- Allocation and assignment of the three sets of unique identifiers for the internet, which are;
  - Domain names;
  - Internet Protocol addresses and Autonomous System Numbers;
  - Protocol port and parameter numbers;
- Operation and evolution of the DNS Root Name Server System;
- Coordination of policy development reasonably and appropriately related to these technical functions.

There is a clear demand for capacity development within ICANN and also to the global community to enable meaningful participation. Meaningful participation is to be able to understand the issues and engage in constructive and robust dialogue on issues. The Internet Universe by its very construct is complex and for the specific coordination aspects of ICANN it is inherently critical that the methodology of such a capacity development initiative is **properly teased out** to suit the growing needs of ICANN."

ICANN states that it provides "capacity building to support stakeholders to disclose, understand, monitor and act on contractual information." And that it facilitates "funding to support public

participation in public contracting.” In the document, [The Quest for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century ICANN](#), “meaningful participation in ICANN” is stated as the goal of capacity-building initiatives at ICANN.

With regards to the Fellowship program, capacity-building within the ICANN Multistakeholder Model is the overarching goal of the program and it means strengthening the Multistakeholder Model by bringing more diverse voices into ICANN in order to have more inclusive decision-making, reflective of the ICANN global community.

### **Key Takeaways & Opportunities for ICANN**

- Tying Fellowship applicant selection criteria more closely to specific ICANN objectives (program objectives) as opposed to general development goals. One way to do this could be to make the selection criteria more merit-based and in line with the various objectives and needs of the ICANN stakeholders.
- Other than using The World Bank’s list of developing countries, there could be better ways to use reliable outside indices to create a proper objective system for the selection of countries. Examples:
  - ICANN could announce that only people from countries with a GDP per Capita ratio of less than 20,000 USD are eligible to apply for the Fellowship program. U.N. data, such as what can be found [here](#) (unstats.un.org) could be used to verify which countries fall in this category. Another good resource is the [Penn World Table](#). Another option is to also look at the growth rate in addition to GDP to be able to identify and include “emerging markets”.
  - Adding Income Inequality as an additional eligibility verification factor. Reference could be UN data: <http://data.un.org/DocumentData.aspx?q=income+inequality&id=365>. UN’s [Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index](#) could be a strong index to replace the World Bank’s list with.
  - Using a combination of various World Bank lists such as Country Rankings based on ‘Urban Development’, ‘Private Sector’, ‘Social Development’, ‘Science and Technology’, ‘Rural Development’, ‘Gender’, etc. More here: [www.data.worldbank.org/topic](http://www.data.worldbank.org/topic)
  - Accepting applicants from “emerging economies” in addition to countries that are currently on the World Bank list (this will bring back some of the countries that are removed from World Bank’s list of Developing Countries). Sources that could be used for verification: are [International Monetary Fund](#), [FTSE Group](#), [MSCI](#), [Russel Investments](#), [S&P](#), [Dow Jones](#), and Columbia University [Emerging Market Global Players List \(EMGP\)](#).
- Depending on whether or not ICANN has an obligation or sees the need to design the fellowship program in concord with goals set by the U.N. or other similar international organizations, the applicant selection criteria can be modified accordingly.

- Looking at what’s worked in practice in the past. Is there a recurring pattern/ shared characteristics among better Fellows which could inform the future selection approach?
- Most programs researched for this report seem to be tied to a development initiative and this guides their applicant selection criteria design. Assuming that ICANN is not bound as a development agency, it should have the freedom to set selection criteria with priorities given to ICANN’s unique mandates which may or may not align with certain development goals.
- Using [UN’s Human Development Index](#), ICANN could select specific indicators that would help with the selection of countries that best match ICANN’s objectives/ mandates. See all tables in [this document](#).

## **Conclusion**

A core value of ICANN is our commitment to supporting and strengthening the bottom-up decision-making approach within the Multistakeholder Model. This commitment is embodied and broadened by the Development and Public Responsibility Department (DPRD), whose work seeks to build global inclusivity as it seeks out and incorporates stakeholder input on its activities and programs. In order to meet the needs of the changing global landscape, ICANN, and the DPRD in particular, will continue to review and evolve approaches and programs to fulfill the needs of current and future participants.

With the current set of selection criteria which is exclusive to applicants from countries identified as ‘middle’ and ‘low income’ by the World Bank, the Fellowship Program is losing good-potential candidates from countries that get “eliminated” from this list; even though the candidates are still from underserved communities and/or are underrepresented in the Internet ecosystem. Additionally, other than economic and geographic factors, our evolving community is looking at gaps in their composition in regard to minorities. Such underrepresentation can contribute to a lack of inclusion from important sectors of our global Internet community. Therefore, it would be appropriate to also give priority to applicants from among underserved and disadvantaged communities, even within developed countries. Underserved communities may include people of color, women, and indigenous people, the LGBTQIA community, persons with disabilities, etc. To be more specific, priority will be given to those individuals whose ability to develop to their full capacity is hindered by social, economic and environmental factors such as poverty, race, ethnicity, age, gender, physical disabilities, and absence of a usual source of care or service such as basic education, health services, and public transportation. Underserved population often face barriers to participation in the policy making process.

Going forward, the Fellowship program can become an even more valuable and effective capacity building mechanism within the Multistakeholder Model, by turning its focus towards bringing individuals into ICANN through a goal-driven merit based system that prioritizes ICANN’s unique objectives and stakeholders’ needs in terms of inclusion of all desirable, diverse voices. The project team should look to strengthen and tie the selection criteria more strategically to the organization

and community's objectives and values by assessing applications with priority towards candidates who in addition to having financial needs and being from underserved communities : show higher potential to give back to the ICANN community; who have specific expertise or professional insights that have not been previously represented; are from countries or regions with historically lower participation rates and/or represent globally recognized minorities as noted above. We should continue to create gender, sector and nationality balance as well in the selection process.