

# Staff Report of Public Comment Proceeding

Draft Proposal of the New Fellowship Program Approach			
<b>Publication Date:</b>	10 August 2018		
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<b>Public Comment Proceeding</b>		<b>Important Information Links</b>	
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Close Date:	27 July 2018		
Staff Report Due Date:	10 August 2018		
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<b>Section I: General Overview and Next Steps</b>			
<p>The Fellowship Program was founded in 2007, in order to create a broader and more diverse base of knowledgeable constituents from underserved and underrepresented communities around the world. When discussions with the ICANN community highlighted the need for a review of the program, Public Responsibility Support (PRS) conducted a community consultation (March-April 2018) to help identify community priorities and to define the vision for the future.</p> <p>A summary of the findings from the community consultation, as well as a proposal for the future of the program, was released for public comment in June-July 2018. This process allowed for the standard 40-day period and allocated extra time for the ICANN Public Meeting and international holidays. Twenty-one groups or individuals supplied input during the public comment period, and PRS is taking these comments into consideration as it prepares an implementation plan for the revised Fellowship Program. The changes will be executed in August-September 2018, and materials on final program processes will be made widely available.</p> <p>The community will be briefed on the new approach to the Fellowship Program at ICANN63 (October 2018), and changes will take effect for the Fellows at ICANN65 (June 2019). [Note that the Fellowship Program is planned six months in advance, so implementation of the revised program will take effect at least two meetings after the final program processes are published.] In addition, Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs) will have continued opportunities to offer input into the direction of the program over the upcoming months in the following ways: supplying targets to inform outreach and promotion of the Fellowship Program, appointing Selection Committee nominees, and selecting Fellowship Program mentors.</p>			

## Section II: Contributors

*At the time this report was prepared, a total of twenty-one (21) community submissions had been posted to the forum. The contributors, both individuals and organizations/groups, are listed below in chronological order by posting date with initials noted. To the extent that quotations are used in the foregoing narrative (Section III), such citations will reference the contributor's initials.*

### Organizations and Groups:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Submitted by</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Internet Society	Mark Buell	ISOC
Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group	Chokri Ben Romdhane	MEAC-SWG
North America Regional At-Large Organization	Eduardo Diaz	NARALO
Native Public Media	Loris Taylor	NPM
Registries Stakeholder Group	Samantha Demetriou	RySG
At-Large Advisory Committee	ICANN At-Large Staff	ALAC
Registrar Stakeholder Group	Zoe Bonython	RrSG
Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group	Rafik Dammak	NCSG
Business Constituency	Steve DelBianco	BC

### Individuals:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation (if provided)</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Michael J. Oghia	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	MO
Alfredo Calderon	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	AC
Diep Kong	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	DK
Mark W. Datysgeld	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	MD
Raphael Beauregard-Lacroix		RBL
Michele Marius	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	MM
Sarata Omane	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	SO
Peterking Quaye	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	PQ
Tijani Ben Jemaa		TBJ
Claire Craig	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	CC
Jay Paudyal	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	JP
Alexis Anteliz	[Fellowship Program Alumni]	AA

## Section III: Summary of Comments

*General Disclaimer: This section intends to summarize broadly and comprehensively the comments submitted to this public comment proceeding but does not address every specific position stated by each contributor. The preparer recommends that readers interested in specific aspects of any of the summarized comments, or the full context of others, refer directly to the specific contributions at the link referenced above (View Comments Submitted).*

The public comment forum received twenty-one (21) submissions, generally falling into the following categories:

- Overall comment or overview statement
- Statement of agreement/support or disagreement/opposition to a recommendation
- Suggestions to change or alter recommendations
- New proposals and ideas for improvement of the Fellowship Program

With regard to topics, most public comments concerned the following categories:

- Application Categories
- Selection
- Fellow/Mentor Expectations
  - Pre-Meeting Preparation
  - On-Site Expectations
  - Mentors
  - Post-Meeting Expectations
- Fellowship Program Messaging

An analysis of comments along these topical categories follows below. Those comments which concerned additional topics are addressed in the “Other” category of the analysis section below.

## **Section IV: Analysis of Comments**

*General Disclaimer: This section intends to provide an analysis and evaluation of the comments submitted along with explanations regarding the basis for any recommendations provided within the analysis.*

There is general support for the Draft Proposal of the New Fellowship Program Approach; many comments reiterated support for a focus on selecting fellows who show promise for long-term participation and involvement in ICANN, requiring proof of engagement by returning fellows, providing clearer metrics on fellows’ contributions to SO/AC work, ensuring increased transparency about post-meeting expectations, and providing more detailed selection criteria.

### **Application Categories**

Many comments address the need for the Fellowship Program to have clear definitions of diversity in program materials; the program will use the definition of diversity developed by the Workstream 2 [Diversity Subgroup](#). Aspects of diversity raised in this public comment proceeding relate to gender, disabilities, underserved regions, and stakeholder groups; each of these aspects will be emphasized in future program materials, and SOs/ACs will be encouraged to provide input on suggested diversity targets for the Fellowship Program. Diversity fields will be self-reported on future applications.

ALAC, ISOC, NARALO, and NPM encourage support of indigenous communities; NARALO proposes allocating two fellowships to said communities. Future program materials will strongly encourage applications from indigenous communities.

NCSG expresses concerns about the proposed application category regarding proof of engagement and wants to ensure participation is substantive and tied to ICANN’s remit. The Fellowship Program considers regional engagement within ICANN’s mission and tasks the Selection Committee with evaluating the quality of examples (of public comments, mailing list contributions, etc) provided by returning applicants.

Many recommendations focus on specific sectors, such as prioritizing SMEs (BC); PRS encourages SOs/ACs to include this feedback on the upcoming request for diversity targets for informed outreach. Language diversity and language barriers are mentioned by NPM, AC, and ALAC; SOs and ACs will soon be tasked with providing targets for diversity (including language), and they will also be asked to consider language diversity in selecting mentors. MEAC-SWG proposes that Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) provide input on skills/diversity, in addition to SOs/ACs; PRS will solicit feedback

from SOs/ACs on diversity aspects (including skills) but seeks to establish community-driven program processes. GSE will perform targeted outreach and promotion for the Fellowship Program.

Additional recommendations proposed include: require Statements of Interest (SOI) from all applicants (BC); coordinate with NomCom so that rejected NomCom applicants are encouraged to apply (RrSG); create more specific stakeholder categories on the application (BC); consider interregional diversity (MD); publish application metrics regarding gender and other diversity factors (ALAC). Implementation of these recommendations is being considered by PRS staff.

Some recommendations – such as affirming the importance of long-term participation (RrSG), allowing space for proof of local outreach activities (alumni), adding a self-reporting category for gender diversity (NCSG), and emphasizing equity and inclusion (NPM) – are already in place in new program materials.

### **Selection**

NPM proposes that the Selection Committee include a representative from an indigenous ALS; PRS encourages NPM to communicate with ALAC directly to urge them to consider this recommendation in choosing their Selection Committee nominee.

Additional recommendations proposed include: evaluate processes followed by Selection Committee (MEAC-SWG); ensure selection committee is comprised of those actively engaged with policy (NCSG); reinforce important selection criteria to unsuccessful candidates (ALAC); coordinate vetting (NCSG) and continue vetting (MEAC-SWG) by staff. Evaluation procedures will be considered, SOs/ACs will be responsible for selecting their own nominees, PRS will consider a mechanism to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates, and GSE staff will continue to offer advice and feedback on applications. Some recommendations, such as ensuring a transparent process to appoint committee members (MEAC-SWG) and devising a mechanism for verification of engagement (MEAC-SWG), have already been put in place. CC proposes that the Selection Committee include an independent non-SO/AC member for balance; PRS proposes that balance will be achieved through equal SO/AC representation on the Selection Committee.

### **Fellow/Mentor Expectations**

#### ***Pre-Meeting Preparation***

The following suggestions were proposed: host webinars on ICANN's mission, the Internet ecosystem, and policy development policies [run by GSE, fellowship alumni, RALOs, etc] (MEAC-SWG, NPM, alumni); encourage fellows to engage with existing community capacity-development programs (buddy groups, etc) (NCSG); encourage fellows to follow a path of self-study before meeting: attend a related event, engage with an NRI, RIR, ISOC event, complete research beforehand (BC); encourage fellows to join mailing lists far ahead of time (alumni). Plans for improving pre-meeting ICANN Learn courses already address some of these suggestions; the others will be proposed to incoming fellows and mentors.

#### ***On-Site Expectations***

There is support for the proposal for mentors to provide guidance to fellows on sessions to attend (RySG, MEAC-SWG); RySG and RrSG suggest that there should be guidance on the number of sessions/hours fellows should be expected to attend, and PRS will work to ensure mentors are given

a stipulated minimum number of session hours. In line with additional public comments (alumni, MEAC-SWG), fellows will be encouraged to explore other constituencies, as well as work related to their regions, in addition to their SO/AC specific sessions. RySG suggests that fellows have more exposure to issues affecting contracted parties, and NCSG emphasizes the need for integrating fellows into the community; in the new program approach, SOs and ACs will be tasked with nominating a mentor, and mentors will take into account relevant issues and concerns when suggesting sessions to fellows.

NCSG requests that PRS publish a list of mandatory sessions for fellows, including invited speakers. PRS is no longer hosting daily sessions and will only host Newcomers Day as a means of exposure to community leadership; all other sessions will be break-out sessions with experts in the field for capacity development.

ALAC proposes increased involvement with SOs/ACs on-site and suggests that SO/ACs should formally engage and interact with Fellows, for example, by allocating roles for fellows such as serving as a rapporteur or preparing a summary of a meeting. RrSG suggests that fellows should be tasked with providing brief daily session recaps, sharing key takeaways with other fellows. PRS empowers mentors to assign these types of tasks to their fellows.

### ***Mentors***

There is general support for the enhancements to the mentor role in the Fellowship Program, particularly from RrSG. Many public comments focus on elements which PRS is already working to implement with regards to mentors, including: provide ongoing training to mentors to ensure they have necessary skills (alumni); provide guidance to mentors on time commitment to ensure mentors have necessary time before committing (alumni, NCSG); continue mentoring after the meeting (alumni, MEAC-SWG); ensure early interactions between fellows and mentors follow a uniform structure that can be evaluated for effectiveness from year-to-year (NPM); evaluate mentors regularly (NCSG).

With regards to comments concerning selection of mentors, SOs and ACs are responsible for the selection and will be provided by guidelines and expectations.

RySG suggests that returning fellows should mentor first-year fellows; SO/AC-selected mentors will be provided to all fellows, for reasons of accountability and consistency.

### ***Post-Meeting Expectations***

Multiple Fellowship Program alumni highlighted the difficulties in engaging meaningfully after only one meeting; this will be taken into consideration. In addition, PRS will ensure program messaging emphasizes the importance of regional engagement as well as policy development work (in line with comments by BC, ALAC, MEAC-SWG); staff will put alumni in touch with regional GSE representatives to assist in creating future regional plans. In addition, some groups identify reasonable suggestions for post-meeting engagement: MEAC-SWG proposes that mentors and fellows should identify at least one working group as a starting point for fellow possible contribution; RySG proposes that fellows be asked to explore a topic within ICANN's mission from their local perspective; ALAC proposes that interested fellows be expected to join the relevant RALO after the meeting.

In light of comments received by NCSG and RBL, PRS will adjust program materials to emphasize that metrics on engagement will be gathered from those fellows who seek to apply for subsequent

fellowships; fellows will, of course, be given the option to opt out of future involvement and will not be coerced to participate for the sake of program metrics.

RySG requests information on the fellows' reports, follow-up, and feedback and asks if reports can be published; PRS seeks to maintain confidentiality for the sake of honest and open individual reports but will commence a pilot reporting function following the next ICANN Public Meeting. Subsequently, post-meeting reports will be published annually, offering increased transparency into the program. RySG also requests clarity on how fellows are evaluated and how this assessment influences their chances to be selected for subsequent fellowships; reporting and evaluating processes are currently being developed by PRS.

Additional recommendations under consideration by PRS include: ensure regular check-in processes are in place (RySG) and offer post-meeting webinars on ways to stay engaged (NPM) and how to participate remotely between meetings (alumni).

### **Fellowship Program Messaging**

Multiple comments address the need for changing the messaging surrounding the Fellowship Program in order to adjust and solidify the perception of the program as an important vehicle for furthering diversity and bringing in qualified volunteers to ICANN. PRS is currently updating program materials and will work to ensure that these recommendations are reflected. Suggestions include, but are not limited to: emphasize onboarding into ICANN rather than attending all meetings (BC); update language regarding the Selection Committee (TBJ); highlight the importance of creating informed participants (rather than leaders), with an identified purpose for engaging in ICANN and expectations to become a contributing participant (BC); clearly identify the program objective (TBJ, NCSG); employ more targeted, informed recruitment (BC); highlight the focus on integration into the community (NCSG); announce the number of targets of types of fellows (1st-time, returning, mentors (MEAC-SWG); emphasize that Policy Forums are for alumni only (RySG); explain that alternate fellows are chosen in case of visa issues (JP).

### **Other Suggestions**

Not all of the suggestions proposed in the public comment process are currently feasible. For example, the BC proposes that applications be shared with the relevant stakeholder group; in order to streamline the selection process, the Selection Committee will feature representatives from each SO/AC who can offer input and feedback on relevant applications.

For reasons relating to privacy and data protection, suggestions relating to publishing biographies of selected fellows (BC, JP) and a rank of all consenting applicants (MEAC-SWG) are not currently feasible. PRS is exploring options relating to publishing SOIs of selected fellows (BC).

ALAC and RrSG both propose implementing a set amount of time between returning fellowships; this could undermine momentum in engaging fellows so will not be implemented.

The BC proposes nominating qualified candidates; PRS urges the BC to encourage qualified candidates to apply and to alert their GNSO Selection Committee representative to look out for their applications.

NPM proposes that funding be allocated to Global Indigenous Fellowship Program (GIAP) alumni to speak to the benefits of the Fellowship Program; funding is not available for this purpose, but PRS encourages NPM to alert ALAC to events where they feel the Fellowship Program should be promoted, as PRS will shortly be soliciting advice on diversity targets and events from SOs/ACs.

Remote Fellowships as proposed by RrSG are not currently within the scope of this program, but PRS is considering offering training on remote participation.

Comments from MO, AC, PQ, and the BC address the program size; budgetary decisions are not a part of this process.

NCSG and program alumni emphasize the importance of updating, promoting, and enhancing ICANN Learn materials; PRS reviews ICANN Learn regularly and welcomes any further suggestions directly at [icannlearn@icann.org](mailto:icannlearn@icann.org).

Further analysis will be undertaken by PRS staff and the results will be included in the final Fellowship Program materials, which will be broadly circulated with the community.