
Feedback on ICANN Fellowship Program Application Process Review

Firstly I am proud to see ICANN Fellowship reaching its 10 years anniversary. Being a fellow commencing from initial stages of the program in 2008 to my most recent meeting in Helsinki as an alumni; I have seen significant impacts on the individuals, their organizations and ICANN as a whole thru constituency memberships and other leadership roles.

Time is the independent variable by which every physical change adapts to, so it is only necessary that such review of Fellowship Application is deemed timely. The background research paper pretty much captured the issues/discrepancies to review. I have three (3) comments to make on the (3) key changes made in the research paper.

- **Selection Criteria**
- **Selection Committee**
- **Program Description**

1. Fellowship Program reinforces ICANN's mandates and underpins the future of the organization's operational processes and engagement programs. I support the review to maintain the geographical diversity with the inclusion of underserved region and under-represented community in selection criteria. For effective participation at ICANN meetings, and to practically represent ICANN as fellow; I would like to make two suggestions in selection criteria:

- i. **First time fellowship application** - The course "*Beginner's Guide to Participating in ICANN Meetings*" under ICANN LEARN should be made mandatory and serves as an eligibility criteria for new applicants. This can be allowed by extending the application due date so interested applicants can complete the course prior to applying for fellowship. In this way, new fellows would know what to expect at meetings. It also not only makes mentoring/coaching easier but effective. It will help towards accomplishing ICANN's definition of meaningful participation.
- ii. **Returning/Alumni application** – There are over 100 alumni applying for 2nd or 3rd meeting every round; thus the opportunity for global and multistakeholder representation at ICANN meetings is continually increased. So to strengthen the objective of fellowship program, a criteria can be inserted in application process for alumni to show evidence of work done/doing after the first and or second meeting.

It doesn't necessarily have to be massive project or program; an evidence of participation, leadership, collaboration, engagement or similar in the communities or internet ecosystem would be sufficient. Contribution to ICANN processes via public comments, surveys, and other forms of feedback is an evidence also.

2. Selection is tedious task given the diversity and quality of applications at hand; against the selection criteria. To support ICANN's capacity building and multistakeholder model, the value of Fellowship Program could be shared thru regional or local community feedback on selection to give merit on an applicant, while maintaining the transparency and fairness of the selection. Every person who applies for fellowship program is a member of an organization or community and part of an internet ecosystem. To enhance the works of ICANN's Regional Engagement Managers/Officers in fellowship recommendation (if they do??), the shortlisted applicants can be referred to his/her local or regional organizations/community (ALSs could be); that the applicant may claimed to involve/associate, for further endorsements; before final selection is made. This suggestion is based on my retrospective experience and observations. It is desirable to have a fellow that is potentially more productive in a region/country than just mere representation.

3. My suggestion for Fellowship Program description is to add scholarly features to it. The successful completion of 3rd ICANN meeting as a fellow could qualify the individual as an ICANN accredited Fellow. New-comer/NextGen and Ambassador/Coaching Programs maybe integrated; not tightly knitted but in some sort of overlaying program structure to systematically coordinate, manage and progress towards such accreditation appropriately. Such individual accreditation or certification may give meaning and status to take up leadership roles in the communities as well as in ICANN; or provide official recognition in dialogues and collaborative works with other organizations or governments. Current certificate of participation is fine, but I think it lacks vigor to entail the individual's participation, involvement or engagement to official level in third party sanctioned programs/projects or policy dialogues outside ICANN and other i-Organizations.

Making the criteria a bit more stringent won't fundamentally deter the course of fellowship program but makes the pre-meeting and post fellowship engagements more challenging and outcome-based. These are my personal feedback as a Fellowship alumni and not necessarily represent the views of my organization.

Thank you.

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