

Comments on ICANN Fellowship Program Application Process Review - Agustina Callegari
and Adela Goberna

To Development and Public Responsibility Department:

We are submitting our comments on the ICANN Fellowship Program Application Process Review.

In the first place, we would like to highlight that both of us have started our path in ICANN thanks to initiatives driven by the Development and Public Responsibility Department: the NextGen ICANN program and the ICANN Fellowships (Honorary fellow).

Agustina was part of the NextGen during ICANN53 held in our own country Argentina and since then she has been engaged in different internet governance forums and spaces in a national, regional and international level. She also participated at ICANN54 as an NextGen Ambassador. Adela was part of the ICANN Fellowship as an Honorary fellow during ICANN 53 in Buenos Aires and currently she is especially involved in bringing more young people to the internet governance debates.

After these experiences, both of us wanted to apply as a fellow for ICANN55. However, we found out that Argentina felt off the fellowship list and argentinean, along with other nationalities, such as uruguayans, chileans and also venezuelans, were not able to apply anymore for the program, due to their category within the applicable ranking.

We would like to highlight that many well-known members made their ways in using the fellowship program as a kickstart, empowering them as to be part of this ICANN family. Nevertheless, the number of participants of Latin Americans is still low compared with other countries and also has a small rate of attendees compared with other regions.

In the second place, regarding the draft, we underline the following issues:

- We do support the proposal of extending the possibility to participate in the Fellowship programme to all nationalities. However, we believe that sometimes due to the location and planification of following venues, some regions are less available to participate. For example, the next meeting in our region will be in 2018, leaving a two years gap between the last Latam venue (ICANN53) and the next one (ICANN62). We see that the fellowship is usually a way to promote local and regional participation. Nonetheless, we understand that the Fellowship could be a great vehicle to shorten the gap between regions, allowing all of them to balance their participation, not only by bringing fellows from other regions different from the venue's one, but by balancing the geographical variety. Therefore, we think that it would be important to re consider the following statement: *"Additional weight is given to eligible, well prepared candidates who meet the minimum requirements of the program and live in the region where the ICANN meeting is being held for that fellowship round"*

- In addition, we believe that we need to find a criteria to define a country as a “poor government” as its states in the draft because the term could lead to problems in their interpretation.
- We support the elimination of reference to World Bank for eligible countries for the fellowship program as this report is not always accurate in showing the real possibilities of these countries population to count with resources to actually participate with certain regularity in the ICANN meetings.
- We would like to make a suggestion to the Development and Public Responsibility Department regarding the stipend. We strongly believe that the stipend is far important to guarantee the participation of many of the fellows as ICANN meetings, since the meetings are usually held in countries with high prices for mobility and food. However, because of this, we think that the NextGen program should also count with a stipend too -even if it is lower- since the NextGen are thought to be starters in this ecosystem. We are aware of the difficulties for fundies but it will be important to find or even balance the current funds in order to make easier the participation of the youngsters in the meeting.