

1. The fellowship program is very useful and we welcome its continuation.
2. It is important for the fellowship committee to maintain their neutrality. Nevertheless, they should comprise of various stakeholder groups representatives. At the moment we do not see such representation. <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/committee-2012-02-25-en>
3. The fellowship committee members (in charge of selection of fellows) should be selected through a transparent process. We would welcome further clarity around how the selection committee is appointed, along with what responsibilities this role entails and what benefits are conferred upon the committee members.
4. The term limit for the members of the fellowship committee should be less than 3 years. Three year term limit allows the members to decide on 10 rounds fellowship. Deciding on 10 rounds of fellowship might generate partiality. We suggest having a term limit of 2 years which is similar to other leadership roles term limits at ICANN.
5. We support the elimination of reference to World Bank for eligible countries for the fellowship program. Currently the new text indicates “with priority given to candidates currently living in underserved and underrepresented communities”. A footnote explains what it means by “underserved and underrepresented”. It stipulates:

“In this case, based on the research carried out by the project team, underserved and underrepresented communities are identified based on 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.”

While the footnote explains what underrepresented is and is reasonably detailed, it is not sufficiently comprehensive (it does not note that, on the basis of one’s sexual orientation, for instance, one’s ability to develop can be hindered). In addition, we believe it is open to interpretation and cannot be used to objectively choose the candidates. More objective criteria should be stipulated for deciding which fellow from which underrepresented or underserved community should be prioritized.

6. The document states that :

*“Priority given to: participants living in regions/countries that are less present in ICANN **Gov’t or ccTLD** representatives who did not receive travel funding from respective ICANN community and express financial need”.*

We believe prioritizing Gov't or ccTLD representative over other stakeholder groups and constituencies is discriminatory. All the communities should be treated equally.

7. We strongly support not judging the applicant's application based on the likelihood of receiving visa and appreciate the step that was taken to remove it. We also encourage earlier initiation of call for fellowship applications to give everyone sufficient time to prepare.
8. In the revised fellowship selection criteria, engagement with specific communities has been mentioned as a criterion for selection. This includes members and representatives of At Large, ccNSO and GAC. No other constituency or stakeholder group has been mentioned. We do see this as discriminatory and we either request removing At Large, ccNSO and GAC from the list and say ICANN communities in general or add other constituencies such as NCSG, NPOC and NCUC to the list. We also encourage verifying whether the applicants are members of the groups they claim they belong to.
9. "Well prepared Applicant lives in the same region where the ICANN meeting is being held". We find this criterion unnecessary and we believe it defeats the purpose of fellowship. ICANN meetings are regularly not held in different regions and might be held in one region several times which will cause other people from other regions not to be able to receive fellowship.
10. There should be a module with little funding within the fellowship program that should engage fellows in their communities after going through the fellowship program for the third consecutive time, to embark on an ICANN project in engaging the community on ICANN related issues. There should be more objective assessment of the fellows' involvement in various communities and there should be some criteria to hold them accountable.
11. Some of the evaluation questions the FC uses are rather subjective and difficult to grade, questions such as the type of experience gained and how they are utilized. FC needs to state the types of experience they expect fellows to gain in order to be objective. Also the measures to verify the actual impact of the fellows not their claimed impact in their country should be substantiated.

Thank you for inviting our comment on these proposed changes. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our perspective.