



**Comment on Draft Proposal  
for NextGen@ICANN  
Program Improvements**

Status: FINAL

Version: 1

31-Mar-2020

**Business Constituency Submission**

**GNSO//CSG//BC**

## **Background**

This document is the response of the ICANN Business Constituency (BC), from the perspective of business users and registrants, as defined in our Charter:

The mission of the Business Constituency is to ensure that ICANN policy positions are consistent with the development of an Internet that:

1. promotes end-user confidence because it is a safe place to conduct business
2. is competitive in the supply of registry and registrar and related services
3. is technically stable, secure and reliable.

## **Introduction**

The Business Constituency (BC) would like to congratulate ICANN staff on the attention given to answering community feedback provided during the previous consultation on this subject, as seen on “ICANN NextGen Program Improvements – Community Input Status Report”<sup>1</sup>. We maintain our belief that there is great importance in the preservation and continuous improvement of the program. As pointed out in “NextGen@ICANN Five-Year Survey”, 81% of respondent alumni said the program “Absolutely” helped them leverage their careers, pointing towards the fact that this effort plays a part in the important task of including young people in the Internet Governance environment<sup>2</sup>.

We would like to emphasize, as has been the case in our previous comments related to outreach programs, that the trend of a lack of business-focused participants repeats itself in NextGen, in the same way as it does the Fellowship. On the survey, when “Area of Study” was considered, only 9% of respondents stated that they come from a Business background. We ask that efforts are redoubled in reaching out to academics focused on business and industry, to further strengthen the diversity of ICANN in the future.

## **Feedback**

The BC is overall satisfied with the improvements proposed, and provides specific feedback in relation to certain points.

## **Purpose & Goal**

When it is stated that “The mid and long-term goal is to increase the engagement of NextGeners in ICANN activities after completion of their studies”, this does not necessarily reflect the community’s experience in relation to alumni, seeing as many of them have joined or contributed while still undertaking their studies. The text should be changed to reflect that notion instead of creating a needless exclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/community-input-issue-tracking-11feb20-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/nextgen-five-year-survey-13jun19-en.pdf>

## **Application**

The BC wants to reiterate our feelings that this point should be kept broader, in such a way that anything the candidate is proud of can be evaluated, including source code or blueprints for hardware. In this way, this field should also include something along the lines of “one relevant work from the candidate”. Such a change will allow for more balance between candidates from different sciences.

## **Selection**

We would like to highlight the answer provided to us in “ICANN NextGen Program Improvements – Community Input Status Report” in relation to the composition of the selection committee allowing for multiple members from the same SO: “ICANN Org proposes to have a Selection Committee that is community-nominated and that will be open to GNSO constituencies/groups (unlike Fellowship Selection Committee, which only has one GNSO slot).” This is a very important point that needs to be kept into the plan moving forward.

## **Pre-Meeting Preparation & Support**

The BC strongly approves of the creation of a “NextGen mentoring toolkit”, as well availability of SOIs for consultation. A problem that arises from recent changes implemented due to privacy laws is that there is not formal way to contact interesting selectees other than to search for them in websites outside of the ICANN environment. This is hardly ideal. ICANN org. should look into ways for community leaders to contact selectees ahead of time, even if this requires the creation of an opt-in checkbox during application that allows for limited communication with community members.

## **Post-Meeting**

We are pleased that “ICANN org will create a page on icann.org to link relevant NextGen alumni research, blogs and other publications. NextGen alumni publications will be highlighted in ICANN’s newsletters”, and would like to emphasize the need for strong commitment to this goal, as it is the most viable way to expose the community to the work performed by the NextGeners and establish a virtuous relationship with the program.

## **Metrics**

This data, as well as all Fellowship data, should be produced with an eye towards ODP, so that it can be later studied by independent researchers and incorporated into broader data concerning youth programs in Internet Governance.

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This comment was drafted by Mark Datysgeld.

It was approved in accord with the BC charter.