XX January 2021

Dear GNSO Stakeholder Group and Constituency Leaders,

**Call for a new call for EOIs for the Community Representatives Group**

Members of the GNSO Selection Standing Committee (SSC) believe that there should be a renewed call for volunteers to participate on the Community Representatives Group (CRG) to appoint the Independent Review Process (IRP) Standing Panel for candidates seeking GNSO endorsement. First because of the significance of the IRP to the GNSO, and second to ensure that the CRG and ultimately the IRP Standing Panel are both viewed to be legitimate appointments.

Significance of the IRP to the GNSO

The CRG is of particular importance to the GNSO as historically IRPs are resolving gTLD or gTLD policy issues – which is the remit of the GNSO. A renewed call for volunteers is not about appointing two members from the GNSO to the CRG but ensuring that the GNSO has the opportunity to appoint the most qualified candidate(s) to the CRG. The SSC wishes to make clear that our concerns have nothing to do with the suitability of Heather Forrest as a member of the CRG and are recommending her appointment to the CRG. The SSC appreciates that the call for volunteers for the CRG is not just a GNSO issue, but a broader community issue.

Legitimacy of the CRG

We also believe that a second EOI should not interfere with the work and timelines of the CRG. However, the IRP is a critical accountability mechanism for ICANN. As a body that will be appointing the IRP Standing Panel, that is future IRP panellists, it is crucial that the CRG is both a legitimate body and viewed as a legitimate body. Particularly given that members of the IRP Standing Panel will serve for 5-year terms. The following points set out potential threats to the legitimacy of the CRG:

1. The [call [icann.org]](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.icann.org/news/announcement-2020-11-18-en__;!!PtGJab4!syy6u67faUMncrTw70VfM7JXKehYfZey52d81-GEJWsrbb_9ivRm8_4MFNSKYFON5ZzinSmtoA$) for volunteers was only open for 17 days and overlapped with a US public holiday (the reality is that many ICANN volunteers are based in the US or celebrate the holiday), and had the background of the ongoing global pandemic;
2. The initial call for volunteers contained minimal detail about the role, such as the expected time commitment, which likely resulted in a small number of applicants responding to the call;
3. The expected size of the CRG is set out to be between 7 and 15 members, however, only six individuals submitted an expression of interest (EOI). There are less applicants than the anticipated minimum size of the group. There is no guarantee that all six applicants will be appointed, suggesting an even smaller CRG;
4. If comprised of less than 7 members, the CRG may have all the required skills and experience to be able to function, and indeed may function more efficiently than a larger group. We also appreciate that previous discussions favour ensuring a qualified group of members are appointed to the CRG rather than appointing a set number of community members. However, the expected minimum of 7 members was presumably reached on the belief that this would be the minimum number of members to achieve the desired skillset. With less applicants for the CRG than the expected minimum size of the CRG, the question of whether the CRG will have, or be perceived to have, all the required skills and experience is an open one.

Members of the SSC believe that given the importance of the IRP to the GNSO, the need for the CRG to be viewed as a legitimate body and ensuring the most skilled and qualified candidates are appointed to the CRG, the call for EOIs for the CRG should be renewed. If a renewed call for EOIs is not possible, members of the SSC hope that this feedback will be taken into consideration for future calls of EOIs for the CRG.

Kind regards,