

NCSG response to the CCWG diversity subgroup's questionnaire

The CCWG Accountability Work Stream 2 Diversity Sub-Group wishes to gather information from ICANN SO/AC/groups on their current consideration of diversity and any actions they undertake to promote diversity. In this context, the term SO/AC/groups refers to:

SO – ccNSO, GNSO, ASO

AC – ALAC, GAC, RSSAC, SSAC

Groups – ICANN Board, ICANN Staff, NomCom, Stakeholder Group or Constituency, RALO

Other groups and individuals are also welcome to complete this questionnaire and are requested to indicate their special interest and/or affiliation.

The Diversity Sub-Group has identified the following non-exhaustive list of elements of diversity as potentially relevant to ICANN SO/AC/groups:

A. Geographic/regional representation

B. Language

C. Gender

D. Age

E. Physical Disability

F. Diverse Skills

G. Stakeholder group or constituency

Your cooperation is sought to answer the following questions:

1. What relative importance does your SO/AC/group give to these seven dimensions of diversity?

Fostering diversity is incredibly important to the NCSG. We have integrated diversity into all aspects of our work, and seek to create unique experiences for all of our members that take into account their unique characteristics, perspectives, and skills. We are also very reflective and regularly seek to do outreach with communities who are otherwise under-represented in our work.

2. What, if any, additional dimensions of diversity are important to your SO/AC/group?

We consider sexual orientation to be a form of diversity, and one which the ICANN community as a whole needs to do a better job of respecting. Similarly, for those from the least developed countries, we need more representation from those in less urban, more rural communities. Since the NCSG accepts individuals and organizations as members, its membership reflects a vibrant mix of diverse backgrounds, expertise, interests and work experience.

3. How, if at all, does your SO/AC/group measure and track diversity issues related to its work?

The NCSG monitors diversity issues at the stakeholder group and constituency level, because of the varied and different memberships that each attract. The NCSG includes geographical and diversity requirements on its charter for leadership positions, for example NCSG charter provision for the representation of NCSG to GNSO council (6

councillors) requires no more of 2 councillors from the same geographic region and no fewer than 2 councillors of any gender. Membership lists are public and include information such as the member's country of residence. The NCUC takes diversity very seriously, and has an outreach committee tasked with systematically identifying those members who are less engaged in our work to try to understand why. The NCUC also has a mentorship programme which aims to upskill members who may otherwise face structural barriers to participation. We have members in leadership roles who take a keen interest in monitoring regional diversity, and conduct our outreach events and webinars in multiple languages. Diversity of regional leadership at NCUC is by design and it is incorporated in the constituencies' bylaws to have a regionally diverse Executive Committee with an executive committee member from each region as defined by ICANN.

4. How, if at all, does your SO/AC/group seek to promote diversity in its membership, its active participation, and its leadership?

Our leaders make every effort to increase participation from members in geographic regions and communities (both urban and rural) that are otherwise under-represented in our community. We also seek to have, and have achieved, gender parity in leadership roles. Additionally, the vast diversity of age creates a stable balance rich with experience and maturity. We have also a diversity of viewpoints with members from across the ideological spectrum.

5. What, if any, educational and informational initiatives does your SO/AC/group pursue to promote diversity awareness?

We do our outreach and engagement at the constituency-level, for the most part, but where there are mutual benefits we do it at the Stakeholder Group-level as well. We circulate invitations for diversity in relevant community networking events on our mailing list, and our members have both participated in events seeking to boost community diversity and have conducted recruitment sessions at those events to bring new voices into our community. The NCUC has its own travel support programme which is distinct from from the ICANN fellowship programme and made possible by external donors. This allows the NCUC to bring new voices to ICANN meetings.

6. What, if any, formal or informal practices or written or unwritten policies are pursued in your SO/AC/group to promote diversity?

It is the practice of the NCSG to ensure diversity in our appointments to leadership roles, Review teams, and in the allocation of resources, starting by encouraging a more diverse pool of candidates from its membership. There are also unofficial thematic messaging channels conducted by members which helps the quick exchange of ideas and supports newcomers who may have language barriers and less familiarity with ICANN.

You are also welcome to append any additional general comments on the topic of diversity.

Participation throughout ICANN is mediated by the communication platform and tools which are used. These instruments work well in many industrialised countries, but less effectively in those with less stable Internet connections. We have members in Iran unable to participate in calls because of US sanctions against Iran, which results in Iranians being geoblocked from accessing the Adobe Connect platform, and ICANN staff being unable to dial out to Iran. We have members in Ghana and other countries who can participate via the audio bridge (but not through Adobe Connect because of unreliable Internet connections), who are disadvantaged because they cannot see the documents being discussed that everyone else has in front of them. We need, organisation and community-wide, a better platform which everyone can access.

Participation in ICANN from participants outside of the United States can be still improved, and the NCSG seeks to address this by regularly reaching out to venues where Internet policymaking is being discussed in both the Global North and the Global South. Our members participate in capacity building programmes, such as regional schools of Internet governance, national and regional Internet governance forums and their youth pre-events, and conduct parallel outreach events in universities and community centers with a view to bringing new, more diverse voices into ICANN.