

## Registries Stakeholder Group Statement

### Issue: **Draft Proposal for NextGen@ICANN Program Improvements**

Date statement submitted: **31 March 2020**

Reference url: <https://www.icann.org/public-comments/draft-proposal-nextgen-2020-02-11-en>

#### Background<sup>1</sup>

ICANN org is seeking comments on [proposed improvements to the NextGen@ICANN Program](#).

The NextGen@ICANN Program aims to broaden participation in ICANN by providing opportunities for university students to better understand ICANN and the Internet ecosystem. It is intended for students who are 18-30 years old and who are from the region where the ICANN Public Meeting is taking place.

The five-year anniversary of the program presented an opportunity to seek community input on progress to date and evaluate how to best anticipate and meet future community needs.

Previous RySG comments on the issue:

- RySG feedback on the NextGen@ICANN Program community consultation - phase 1  
[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ec8e4c\\_f4cfe6d978f942e3b04da0e06ef9a963.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ec8e4c_f4cfe6d978f942e3b04da0e06ef9a963.pdf)

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#### Registries Stakeholder Group comment:

The Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the [Draft Proposal for NextGen@ICANN Program Improvements](#). We also appreciate the detailed status report that breaks down the input received via the community survey and provides feedback and proposed approaches.

The RySG would prefer commenting on an updated NextGen@ICANN Program document, ideally with proposed changes in redline, that covers all aspects in detail. The 'Overview of the Proposal for NextGen@ICANN Program Improvements' is missing context and it is unclear if, where and how suggested improvements affect or replace the existing. For example, are the eligibility and selection

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<sup>1</sup> Background: intended to give a brief context for the comment and to highlight what is most relevant for RO's in the subject document – it is not a summary of the subject document.

criteria currently on the NextGen@ICANN webpage (<https://www.icann.org/public-responsibility-support/nextgen>) unaffected, or to be partially or fully replaced? A detailed Program document would also help the community to better understand the specific goal of the NextGen@Program compared to other initiatives, such as the Fellowship Program.

### *Purpose & Goals*

The NextGen@ICANN Program - as we mentioned in our feedback on the community consultation - has the potential to contribute to improving global awareness and understanding of ICANN's role and to increasing support for the ICANN multistakeholder governance model. We expect that program participants - university students from the region where the Public Meeting takes place - return home with a good understanding of ICANN's role and insight in the working of the ICANN multistakeholder model and pass on this knowledge through their work and local engagement, and as such contribute to the global awareness, understanding and support for ICANN and its multistakeholder model. The latter should be the Program's overarching goal in the mid and long term.

Recruiting and engaging new people is not the main goal of the NextGen@ICANN Program. Participating in the NextGen Program could be the start of a future active involvement in the ICANN community. Therefore it is important to look for synergies and ways to coordinate with initiatives focussed on increasing participation, such as the Fellowship Program.

The bullet point description of the Purpose and Goals is not sufficiently well reflecting the main focus without creating confusion with other initiatives to support those willing to (further) engage in the community. The 'engagement of NextGenners in ICANN activities after completion of their studies' should not be the primary long term goal of the NextGen Program. Moreover, we don't understand why it says that only after graduating one can become actively involved. In addition, we recommend not mixing up purpose and goals with activities that intend to support the goals in the description.

### *Outreach and Recruitment*

We welcome the intention to include post-graduate students in a broad range of fields and reiterate our suggestion that candidates who are further advanced in their studies should be prioritized. We expect the program to be more useful to them than to e.g. first-years, and that they have more opportunities to use and further spread the gained knowledge and insight.

### *Eligibility criteria*

The Overview of the Proposal for Program Improvements does not mention eligibility criteria, as such it is not clear if the current criteria ( university students between the ages of 18 and 30 from the region where the Public Meeting takes place ) remain in place.

In our feedback on the survey we suggested removing the 30-age limit and even tightening the eligibility criteria to focus on graduate or doctoral students for reasons stated above.

We also noted that eligibility criteria as for example the use of hard age limits might not be lawful in some jurisdictions on the basis of age discrimination.

### *Selection*

For transparency reasons, we recommend that as soon as the 'Selection Committee' agrees on selection criteria, these are made public and are available by the opening of the application period.

The document is missing detail on the to be formed Selection Committee appointed by ICANN community Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs), for example ToR, profile and term of the Committee members.

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