



The GNSO Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the survey on the NextGen@ICANN Program.

*Program Goals and Vision*

*1. In your group's opinion, is this current program goal clear and well understood? What improvements would you suggest?*

Currently the program goal is neither clear nor well understood. NextGen is known broadly as a general onboarding program; few GNSO Stakeholder Groups or Constituencies understand or see the potential benefits of the NextGen Program or link this initiative to the broader objectives of their SG/C. The objective of NextGen needs to be defined more clearly, with direct relevance to and support of the ICANN Strategic Plan. Program goals must then clearly and logically flow from this objective. Metrics should be used to evaluate the return on investment of this and any other outreach initiative.

*2. Does your group believe that the NextGen@ICANN Program is often confused with the Fellowship Program? If so, do you have any suggestions on how to reduce confusion between these two programs?*

There is unquestionably some confusion between the two programs. This could come from the NextGen Program not having a clear objective and then being associated with other onboarding programs. Applicants clearly misunderstand any distinction between the two programs, because overlaps in applications are not uncommon (ie, some applicants apply for both NextGen and Fellowship simultaneously). There are also a number of individuals who move from the NextGen Program into the Fellowship Program, which likely contributes to this conflation. Overall, both NextGen and Fellowship may appear as 'free tickets' to ICANN meetings with minimal or no active participation in ICANN policy development or other work expected in return.

*3. What does your group believe should be the objective of the NextGen@ICANN Program moving forward? What would successful implementation of that objective look like?*

The sole objective of NextGen should be to attract students in relevant fields to becoming active participants in ICANN policy development. Successful implementation of this objective requires broadening the NextGen program content to introduce recipients to active policy development processes, community leaders (including PDP chairs and co-chairs), and substantive SG/C/SO/AC work. The NextGen program should not be a centrally-funded engagement opportunity for one or two SG/C/SO/ACs (in particular GNSO NCSG and ALAC), but should provide much broader exposure to all of the stakeholder groups and interests in the ICANN community. The NextGen Program should effectively onboard new members to actively and meaningfully contribute to ICANN policy development. Implementation of this objective is easily tested by metrics tracking former NextGen members' subsequent involvement in a SG/C/SO/AC and membership in a PDP, IRT, specific review, etc.

*Assessment of Program*

*4. Are you aware of the contributions of NextGeners to the ICANN community? If so, where/how has the community benefited from the contributions of NextGen participants?*

The NextGen program appears to have significant promise if it were used more effectively and aligned more clearly with the ICANN Strategic Plan. At present, contributions are isolated and few in number.

*5. Have NextGeners contributed to the work of your group? If so, please describe.*

The IPC has benefited from a handful of excellent former NextGeners who took it upon themselves to reach out to the IPC. Typically, NextGen organizers channel participants into either ALAC or NCSG, this is reflected in the NextGen Five-Year Survey where the majority of respondents reporting Community affiliation, leaving participants on their own if they wish to get involved outside of these SG/C/SO/ACs.

*6. How could the NextGen@ICANN Program evolve to enhance the future participation of NextGeners in ICANN?*

The IPC would like to see more deliberate community engagement with participants in the NextGen Program. Some examples are as follows:

- A social event with just community leaders and NextGen participants;
- Have SG/C/SO/ACs more involved in the NextGen program (idea: invite SG/C/SO/ACs to relevant NextGen presentations, provide meet & greet opportunities to target particular SG/C/SO/ACs of interest to the student);
- Have current ICANN Community members engage as mentors to NextGen participants;
- Introduce a “shadowing” component to the Program (eg each participant is paired with a Community member for a day to observe what they do at an ICANN meeting);
- Introduce NextGen participants to PDP, IRT, CCWG, review team leaders;
- Provide PDP updates for beginners at NextGen sessions to introduce substantive ICANN work.

In addition to introducing more deliberate community engagement, general sessions, such as outreach sessions for SO/AC/SG/Cs should not be made mandatory sessions for participants. Further, as part of the preparation for the ICANN meeting, participants could engage with a Mentor/Ambassador to determine which sessions will be of most interest to attend, outside of community engagement activities. This would be instead of a fixed schedule for all participants and enable participants to engage in work that is relevant to their field of study.

*Selection Processes*

*The NextGen program manager selects the five-members of the NextGen@ICANN Selection Committee. Each committee member spends approximately 10 hours reviewing applications during an application cycle.*

*7. Should Selection Committee members be appointed by the community, in a manner similar to the Fellowship Program Selection Committee?*

Yes, the Selection Committee members should be selected in a manner similar to the Fellowship Program Selection Committee. For maximum efficiency, ICANN could consider combining these two programs for maximum efficiency, with perhaps a bifurcated Selection Committee. This would help to identify “serial” applicants, overlapping applications, etc.

The rationale for this is that if engagement and onboarding is the goal, we want to ensure that SO/AC/SG/Cs are aware and active in the selection process so that they can evaluate candidates based on their current needs and priorities.

*8. Would your SO/AC group be prepared to nominate a Selection Committee member who would contribute the necessary time?*

Yes, but to ensure representation of the broad range of (at times, conflicting) interests in the GNSO, a representative from each SG and C is needed. The IPC cannot speak on behalf of the entire GNSO as to its willingness to nominate a single representative for the SO, but does not believe that this is appropriate.

*The NextGen@ICANN Program Ambassadors (i.e., mentors) are selected by the NextGen@ICANN Selection Committee. Each Ambassador spends 40 hours to help with activities before, during, and after the meeting.*

*9. Do you think the Ambassador selection process should be kept as is or be replaced by a process that allows the community to identify and nominate mentors?*

The Ambassador selection process should be altered so that the community identifies and nominates mentors with preference for previous NextGen participants who have become active participants in PDP, IRT, review team, etc work.

In addition to Ambassadors, it would be worthwhile to consider seeking 'shadowing' opportunities of PDP, IRT, review team, etc leaders to provide participants with alternative perspectives and additional mentoring. The aim would be to bridge the gap between newcomer and (genuinely!) active participant. Ambassadors are often relative newcomers and finding their feet, so it is not always realistic for them to provide the mentoring active community members could provide.

*10. Would your SO/AC group be prepared to nominate a mentor who would contribute the time required?*

Yes, but to ensure representation of the broad range of (at times, conflicting) interests in the GNSO, a representative from each SG and C is needed. The IPC cannot speak on behalf of the entire GNSO as to its willingness to nominate a single representative for the SO, but does not believe that this is appropriate.

*Synergies*

*11. Given the academic nature of the program, do you have any suggestions on how to improve synergies between NextGeners and the ICANN academic community?*

More work needed to identify academics in the ICANN community as a starting point (ie, there isn't as yet a readily identifiable 'ICANN academic community'). Once this group is identified, more deliberate engagement with community members can occur through mailing list, social events, participation in the NextGen orientation and substantive program.

It is essential that academics from a range of backgrounds and interest areas participate to ensure representativeness across SO/ACs and the full range of ICANN's mission.

*General Questions*

*12. Do you have any other questions or suggestions about the NextGen Program?*

Much more work is needed to differentiate NextGen and Fellowship. Consider rolling these two programs together under shared leadership and ICANN Org portfolios to economise, develop synergies, share data and metrics, etc.

Make current NextGen program of events/schedule available to community as part of this consultation and comment process so that the community has a better sense of what it is commenting upon.