As guiding principles for this comment, the GNSO Council believes that:

1. ICANN needs to develop clear objectives and verifiable metrics to demonstrate the Return On Investment (ROI), if any, from the Fellowship and other similar programs in consultation with the community; and
2. ICANN needs to reconsider its expenditure on the Fellowship and other programs to reflect this ROI and assess that on an ongoing basis.

Fellowship Program at ICANN Community Consultation Process

Program Goals and Vision
1. What does your group believe should be the objective of the Fellowship Program? How would the success of this objective be measured?

As a matter of setting realistic expectations, the GNSO Council would like the fellows, especially the returning fellows and fellowship alumni, who have indicated their interest in policy in their application to demonstrate that they are active in GNSO Policy Development Process Working Groups ('WGs') on a regular basis.

As there is no definition of being 'active' in this regard yet, we propose to establish a set of metrics that will help to objectively monitor such participation and serve as evidence thereof:
- Regular participation in working groups conference calls (e.g. minimum attendance rate of 75%) taking into account reasonable constraints inhibiting participation.
- Participation in discussions and deliberations, such as on WGs mailing lists (e.g. as a part of his or her application, a fellow can provide URLs linking to some of their substantive interventions).
- Participation in drafting and/or reviewing WG deliverables (e.g. a fellow could indicate where he or she was a document penholder).
- Reporting the WG's activities to the fellow's respective Stakeholder Group/Constituency/Community (e.g. a fellow can share examples of such reports).
- Participation in public comments as a penholder or a reviewer (a fellow can provide evidence of the documents of substantive interventions on the mailing lists).

The GNSO Council understand that getting involved in the WGs requires knowledge that is developed over time, and the ability to sustain prolonged mental effort. Acknowledging the challenges of being involved in the WGs and the associated learning curves, we believe the metrics indicated above can give guidance, set realistic expectations, and help alumni to plan their participation, and also monitor and highlight their progress. The proposals on indicators of participation can help ICANN in its efforts to start developing a more substantive list of policy-centered metrics. Those metrics may not necessarily be relevant for fellows who have expressed interest in areas different from GNSO policy development processes. Therefore, we suggest that other ACs and SOs be tasked with developing their

own metrics that correspond to the general idea of active participation and tracked deliverables.

The GNSO Council would be happy to help facilitate the participation of fellows, to the extent that this is possible, by leveraging existing material and resources.

2. The Fellowship Program was established to provide access to ICANN meetings to individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities. In your group's opinion, how effective is the Fellowship Program at fulfilling its current goal?

We acknowledge the increase in the number of returning fellows and the wide regional diversity of those chosen, and this effort is noted. Further follow-up and monitoring of fellows, especially returning fellows, is needed in order to determine whether and how alumni have become involved in the GNSO's policy development work and the extent to which we have obtained and maintained the diversity balance. We note that the GNSO council currently has two members who benefitted from the fellowship program, but we are not inferring any causation. As indicated above, better metrics and follow-up would permit us to evaluate success in achieving this goal.

3. In your group's opinion, is this goal still a priority for ICANN, given the new bylaws? If not, what new goals would your group propose for the program?

It is still valid, however the Cross-Community Working Group Work Stream 2 Subgroup on Diversity identified additional elements, in particular, skills, that should be considered more closely during the selection of fellows.

Assessment of Program Impact on your SO/AC group
4. Have Fellows contributed to the work of your group? If so, where do you think they have added the most value? What might be changed about the Fellowship Program to enhance participation of Fellows in your group?

While there has been some evidence of former fellows becoming GNSO Councillors, in order to comprehensively evaluate the participation and contributions of fellows, and where appropriate offer suggestions for improvement, we need objective metrics, more reliable data, and documentation which is not currently available.

5. Does your group make efforts to involve, educate, and/or inform Fellows about your work? If so, please describe these efforts.

The GNSO Council does not conduct outreach or educational activities, per se, targeting fellows. Such activities are a part of the outreach and education strategies of our respective Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies. However, GNSO policy support staff have developed material for the ICANN Learn platform, and routinely provide policy briefing updates that inform fellows and other interested persons on the status of the working groups which the GNSO Council manages. The GNSO policy support staff also periodically run

tutorials and webinars, and are engaged in other activities which keep the community, including fellows and other newcomers, informed about the work of GNSO.

6. How willing would your group (SO/AC/SG/C) be to participate and take ownership for selecting and developing fellows, including giving them assignments, assigning mentors, etc?

It would valuable for the GNSO Council to participate directly in the selection of fellows by having a representative on the selection panel, and we would welcome such involvement provided there was further clarity around how much influence our participant would have in the evaluation of candidates. Perhaps a visit at a GNSO meeting with the staff responsible for curriculum development and fellowship program activities might be beneficial.

Selection Processes
7. Are you aware of the Fellowship selection process? What changes, if any, would you suggest for the selection process?

The GNSO Council does not currently participate in the fellowship selection process. The Council would like to suggest that proposed metrics are added as part of selection criteria for the subset of returning fellows affiliated to the GNSO. There must also be a 'fact check' of the statements made by candidates in their applications to confirm that they are actually affiliated to the GNSO. Such changes would give more objective evidence for their selection as they can then be supported by concrete evidence. This would help eliminate the possibility of subjective judgements or preferences tainting the selection process.

8. An individual can be awarded a Fellowship up to three times. Do you suggest retaining or revising this number? Why?

We feel that the development and implementation of objective KPIs and metrics are the key to answering this question in an evidence-informed manner. We also believe that the program would benefit from well-stated goals or objectives in order to develop meaningful KPIs in collaboration with interested groups within ICANN community. Without agreed metrics or other methods of tracking a fellow's activity and participation, it is difficult to comment on whether the fellows should be allocated travel resources for three times or more. More clarity and objectivity regarding the conditions for granting travel to returning fellows is required.

9. For Policy Forum Meetings, currently only Fellowship Alums can apply. Do you support continuing with this approach? If not, what changes would you suggest?

The GNSO Council has a great interest in the Policy Forum as it focuses on our core activities. We therefore support the continuation of the proposed approach. The Council proposes that selection by the panel take into consideration the proposed metrics to evaluate objectively the returning fellows; that is, those fellows who are attending the Policy Forum should have provided evidence that they are involved in policy work.

Program Size
10. Considering your responses to previous questions, would you suggest making the program larger, smaller, or maintaining the current size?

The program is targeted to bring new, engaged diverse members to participate in the community, and this is a goal that the GNSO Council heartily endorses. It is difficult for the GNSO Council to respond to this question however, given the lack of established metrics. Any change should be subject to community consideration and review. We would encourage the establishment of mechanisms for regular reviews of the program to confirm that the KPIs are matching its stated goals. There should be no increase in the program without such metrics and evaluation.

11. If the program were to be reduced in size, what would your group deem as the priorities for the program with a smaller cohort?

If reduced in size, the GNSO Council suggests focusing resources on a small group of first-time fellows with the potential to become active community members with minimal hand holding, and supporting the participation of returning fellows with close support and mentorship to ensure they are meaningfully participating in Policy Development Process Working Groups.

Program Structure
12. When you interact with Fellows at an ICANN Meeting, do you find that they are sufficiently knowledgeable about ICANN? If not, what skills or areas of knowledge would you suggest increasing focus on for pre-Meeting preparation?

Many of the first-time fellows we interact with are not sufficiently knowledgeable regarding ICANN-related issues and in particular GNSO topics. This is understandable because it is their first time participating in an ICANN meeting. However, we expect a greater understanding of ICANN-related issues from returning fellows. Many of them are interested in broader Internet governance issues that fall outside of ICANN's remit and efforts should be made by both staff and SOs/ACs to involve them in ICANN matters. This is why metrics are very important for the selection of returning fellows; performance measurement would encourage the fellows to participate actively and provide those who are contributing to ICANN, and have knowledge of the issues, to receive resources.

13. Do you think that Fellows spend sufficient time in working sessions with your group during the course of an ICANN meeting? If not, what would changes would your group propose?

It is impossible for us to monitor the fellows' attendance of GNSO Council meetings as there is no record taken of attendance (e.g. attendance sheets). One issue we have observed is that the Sunday newcomer session clashes with the GNSO Working Session. We believe it would be beneficial to avoid such an overlap and to allow newcomers to attend this session as there are usually important updates being shared by community leaders on the various policy issues that the GNSO manages.

14. Do you feel that you have enough time to engage with Fellows at an ICANN meeting?

It would be beneficial and effective to have fellows attending the GNSO Working Session. This would seem a useful avenue for fellows to receive an update on issues and even ask us appropriate questions.

Information Available on Program

15. Is the information currently available clear and sufficient for your community members to understand the Fellowship Program? If not, which elements could be improved and how?

More information would be useful as to how returning fellows are selected. We have proposed some conditions that we believe would be useful in evaluating the profiles of returning fellows.

16. Are your community members aware of the differences between the Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN Programs? If not, please state what type of clarification would be useful.

Some members of Council have a good understanding of the differences, while others do not. There is some confusion in our group about the differences in the various programs, and how individuals can continue participating and obtaining travel support to attend meetings.

General Questions
17. The Fellowship Program seeks to engage participants who will go on to participate actively in the ICANN community. What skills, attributes and backgrounds have provided the most successful and active participation in your SO/AC/SG/C? What skillsets and backgrounds would your group see as desirable for candidates for the Fellowship Program?

There is no one answer here. Skill sets and backgrounds depend on the needs of the various Policy Development Process Working Groups. These are identified during the formation of the working group, and may need to be reassessed with the passage of time to identify any gaps that have arisen as a result of membership turnover. These needs evolve and, for this reason, they should be updated. With direct participation in the selection panel, as we have proposed above, the Council can input this information and adjust the criteria.

19. Do you have any other questions or comments about the Fellowship Program?

The GNSO Council is responsible for the management of the Policy Development Process for generic top level domains, and we are currently in the process of evaluating how to optimise resources and improve the effectiveness for the working groups that are currently underway. We are also looking for longer term improvements. We acknowledge that participation in a working group can be challenging because of the time commitment, one's time zone, difficulty in understanding the subject matter, language barriers, and the potentially intimidating environment. While it is vitally important to bring in new participants to ICANN, it would seem that the community as a whole should have a more fulsome conversation regarding the skills, attributes, and time commitments we expect from new volunteers, and which indeed have proven to be necessary for success at ICANN, which is growing in complexity as an organization.

As our comments suggest, we believe the fellowship program has the potential to bring newcomers to contribute to our policy work, and we would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the administrators of the program to explore possibilities for the GNSO Council to assist in bringing newcomers into these activities. We understand there are some initiatives underway that might address some of the potential barriers we have identified, and we welcome this development.