

To: Akriti Bopanna on behalf of the Centre for Internet & Society

Date: 12 December 2018

Re: Request No. 20181112-1

This is in response to your request for documentary information (Request), which was submitted on 12 November 2018 through the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' (ICANN org) Documentary Information Disclosure Policy (DIDP) on behalf of the Centre for Internet & Society (CIS). For reference, a copy of your Request is attached to the email forwarding this Response.

Items Requested

Your Request seeks disclosure of the following information related to the ICANN Fellowship Program:

1. Has any individual received the ICANN Fellowship more than the stated maximum limit of 3 times?
2. If so, whose decision and what was the justification given for awarding it the 4th time and any other times after that?
3. What countries did any such individuals belong to?
4. How many times has the limit of 3 been breached while giving fellowships?
5. What recording mechanisms are being used to ensure that awarding of these fellowships is kept track of, stored and updated? Are these public or privately made available anywhere?

Response

I. Background on the ICANN Fellowship Program

The ICANN Fellowship Program (the Program) was created in 2007 with the goal to strengthen the diversity of the multistakeholder model by fostering opportunities for individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities to become active participants in the ICANN community. (See <https://www.icann.org/fellowshipprogram>.) The Program is one example of how ICANN is supporting the next generation of community members and is ICANN's single largest capacity-building program. (See ICANN Fellowship Program 10 Year Survey, <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/icann-fellowship-program-10-year-survey-dprd-28jun17-en.pdf>.) Fellows are exposed to the workings of the ICANN community, are assigned a mentor, and receive training across different areas of knowledge and

skill building before, during, and after an ICANN Public Meeting. (See <https://www.icann.org/fellowshipprogram>.) The Program is open to candidates from all regions and sectors. Since 2007, over 640 people from 133 countries have been awarded a fellowship, representing a wide diversity of gender, background, region, experience, and expertise. (<https://www.icann.org/news/blog/icann-fellowship-program-taking-stock-of-the-past-and-looking-towards-the-future>.)

The Program supports approximately 45 participants per ICANN Public Meeting, inclusive of newcomers, returning alumni, and mentors. The ICANN Policy Forum is open only to Fellowship Program alumni who are actively engaged in ICANN's multistakeholder community. An individual can receive a fellowship up to three times. (See ICANN Fellowship: Process and Terms, Updated as of 15 October 2018, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-process-terms>.)

Information about eligibility requirements, the Program's Terms and Conditions, and the Program's Selection Criteria can be found on the ICANN Fellowship Program website at <https://www.icann.org/fellowshipprogram>.

A. The Application Process

Interested individuals can apply to become an ICANN fellow through the Program's online application system. (See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-process-terms>.) The application process is defined by the Program's Terms and Conditions, which are discussed in further detail below. (See *id.*)

Once an application is submitted, an independent selection committee currently made up of representatives nominated by their Supporting Organization (SO) or Advisory Committee (AC) (Selection Committee) will review all the eligible applications. (See *id.*; see also ICANN Fellowship Selection Committee, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-selection-committee>.) The Selection Committee will assess each application according to the [ICANN Fellowship Applicant Selection Criteria](#). Final selections will be performed based on the scores and qualitative assessments drawn from the Selection Committee's reviews, while considering the need for regionally diverse candidates from a range of sectors, including those from underserved and/or under-represented communities, along with sectors that lack diverse representation within ICANN. (See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-selection-committee>.) As stated in the Fellowship Selection Criteria, "[p]riority is given to candidates currently living in underserved and underrepresented communities around the world, and/or have established financial need. Selection Committee may prioritize those who represent diversity of gender, sector, region, experience, and expertise." (<https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-applicant-criteria-2016-09-08-en>.)

All selected candidates are announced on the ICANN website within approximately eight weeks after the online application period closes. (See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-process-terms>.) At the time of

announcement, selected candidates will also receive a follow-up email and confirmation letter. (See *id.*) The selected candidates must declare their acceptance of the fellowship within a week. (See *id.*) If a candidate does not accept the fellowship within that time period, an already established list of alternates will be used to fill the vacated position. (See *id.*) The finalized lists of fellowship participants since the first fellowship participants in 2007 at ICANN 29 are posted on the ICANN Fellowship Participants page at <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-participants-2016-04-19-en>.

B. The Program's Terms and Conditions

When the Program initially launched in 2007 with ICANN 29, the Program's Terms and Conditions did not place a limit on the number of times an individual can be selected as an ICANN fellow. (See Terms and Conditions, published on 9 July 2014, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-terms-conditions-2014-07-09-en>.)

The Program's Terms and Conditions were updated on 10 September 2015, and beginning with ICANN 53, the Program followed a "3x participation guideline". (See 10 September 2015 Terms and Conditions, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-terms-conditions-2015-09-10-en>.)

The purpose behind the three-time participation guideline was to acknowledge that first time fellows are just beginning to understand the ICANN multistakeholder model and the work of ICANN; while second and third time fellows take the opportunity to further build on their initial experience with the end goal of becoming engaged and participatory in one of the [ICANN communities](#). (See *id.*) Under the 2015 Terms and Conditions, the three-time participation guideline did not apply to Newcomer Coaches for the Program.

Beginning with the ICANN 53 application process, alumni of the Fellowship program, including those who have already used their 3x fellowships, may opt to apply as a Newcomer Coach. This Coach role does not count as a second or third fellowship; it is a separate option. If a Coach applicant is not selected to perform that role, he/she may or may not be selected as a fellowship participant depending on the established terms and criteria for selection by the Fellowship committee and the status of other applicants.

(See 10 September 2015 Terms and Conditions, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-terms-conditions-2015-09-10-en>.)

Additionally, in some circumstances, an individual may be selected as a fellow more than three times based upon a combination of factors that were taken into consideration, including the scores and qualitative assessments drawn from the Selection Committee's reviews and the need for regionally diverse candidates from a range of sectors.

Earlier this year, in March 2018, ICANN org sought community consultation to review the existing Program for areas of improvements. (See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-community-process-review-2018-03-20-en>.) As part of the community consultation process, ICANN org drafted and

distributed a questionnaire to each SO and AC seeking feedback on topics such as the Program goals and vision, selection process, structure, size and general information available about the Program. (See <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/fellowship-community-process-review-20mar18-en.pdf>, Pgs. 4-6.) The feedback received from the SOs and ACs, served as primary source for the “Draft Proposal of the New Fellowship Program Approach”. The proposal for the “New Fellowship Program Approach” included, among other things, the following: “[u]pdate terms and conditions of fellows”; “[s]upport three-time fellowship limit”. (See <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/draft-proposal-new-fellowship-11jun18-en.pdf>, Pg. 3.)

The Draft New Fellowship Program Approach was published for public comment on 11 June 2018. (See <https://www.icann.org/public-comments/fellowship-proposal-2018-06-11-en>.) The public comment period closed on 27 July 2018. (See *id.*) Following the public comment period, ICANN org began implementing the changes to the Program as a result of the community consultation process and has been publishing implementation updates to the Program since. (See [Fellowship Program Review Update, dated 27 August 2018](#); [New Fellowship Program Process Flowchart \(Working Draft as of 27 August 2018\)](#); [Fellowship Program Review: Community Input Status Report \(Working Draft\), dated 27 August 2018](#); and [Fellowship Program Review: Community Input Status Report \(Working Draft\), dated October 2018](#).)

One of the changes to the Program that ICANN org implemented was updating the Program Selection Process to enforce a strict three-time fellowship limit. (See [Fellowship: Process and Terms, updated as of 15 October 2018](#); [Fellowship Program Review Update, dated 27 August 2018](#), at Pg. 7; and [Fellowship Program Review: Community Input Status Report \(Working Draft\), dated 22 October 2018](#), at row 58.) ICANN org clarified in its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section that individuals who previously participated as a coach prior to ICANN65 would not be penalized, and that their participation as a coach would not count towards the three-time limit. (See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-faqs-2015-07-10-en>.)

II. Your Request

As a preliminary matter, the DIDP is a mechanism for the disclosure of *documentary* information about ICANN org’s operations that are appropriate for disclosure but has not be already been published. This Request seeks the disclosure of information, not documents, and is not an appropriate DIDP request. Nevertheless, ICANN org has responded to your requested items below.

Item 1

Item 1 asks “[h]as any individual received the ICANN Fellowship more than the stated maximum limit of 3 times?”

ICANN org has published all finalized lists of fellowship participants since the first fellowship participants in 2007 at ICANN 29 on the ICANN Fellowship Participants page.

Accordingly, the information responsive to this item can be found at page at <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-participants-2016-04-19-en>.

Item 2

Item 2 asks “whose decision and what was the justification given for awarding [the ICANN Fellowship] the 4th time and any other times after that?”

The ICANN Fellowship Selection Committee is responsible for assessing all applications for the Program. (See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-selection-committee>.) The current Selection Committee is made up of one representative from each SO and AC. (See *id.*) A complete list of all past Selection Committee members along with their years of service can be found at [#members](https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/committee-2012-02-25-en).

As discussed above, the Program’s application process is governed by the Program’s Terms and Conditions. When the Program initially launched in 2007, the Program’s Terms and Conditions did not place a limit on the number of times an individual can be selected as an ICANN fellow. (See Terms and Conditions, published on 9 July 2014, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-terms-conditions-2014-07-09-en>.) The Terms and Conditions were updated on 10 September 2015, and beginning with ICANN 53, the Program followed a “3x participation guideline”. (See 10 September 2015 Terms and Conditions, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-terms-conditions-2015-09-10-en>.) Under the 2015 Terms and Conditions, the three-time participation guideline did not apply to Newcomer Coaches for the Program. Additionally, in some circumstances, an individual may be selected as a fellow more than three times based upon a combination of factors that were taken into consideration, including the scores and qualitative assessments drawn from the Selection Committee’s reviews and the need for regionally diverse candidates from a range of sectors.

Pursuant to the Terms and Conditions, the Selection Committee assesses each application based on the following applicant criteria: (1) diversity, (2) experience, (3) ICANN knowledge and engagement, and (4) potential for future engagement. (See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-selection-committee>.) Selection Committee members will review and revise the criteria every two years, as appropriate. (See *id.*) A copy of the current application selection criteria can be found at <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-applicant-criteria>.

Item 3

Item 3 asks “[w]hat countries did any such individuals [awarded a fellowship more than 3 times] belong to?”

ICANN org has published all finalized lists of fellowship participants since the first fellowship participants in 2007 at ICANN 29 on the ICANN Fellowship Participants page. These lists include the name and country affiliation of the fellowship participants.

Accordingly, the information responsive to this item can be found at page at <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-participants-2016-04-19-en>.

Further, as noted above, since the Fellowship Program's inception in 2007, over 640 people from 133 countries have been awarded a fellowship. (See <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/fellowship-community-process-review-20mar18-en.pdf>.) ICANN org regularly updates its website with the latest statistics detailing the total number of Program participants to date along with the number and percentage of participants by ICANN region. (See ICANN Fellowship Program Statistics, <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-statistics-2018-03-02-en>.)

Item 4

Item 4 seeks asks "[h]ow many times has the limit of 3 been breached while giving fellowships?"

As preliminary matter, ICANN org disagrees with the use of the term "breached" as it presumes a violation of some rule or procedure has occurred, which in this case, it has not. The history of the Program's Terms and Conditions, including the number of times an individual may qualify as a fellow, is discussed in great detail above and incorporated herein by reference. As discussed, a strict rule for three-time fellowship limit was not implemented until 15 October 2018, and will take effect for the ICANN65 Fellowship application process. (<https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-process-terms>). Prior to that time, no such rule existed.

Item 5

Item 5 seeks information on "[w]hat recording mechanisms are being used to ensure that awarding of these fellowships is kept track of, stored and updated? Are these public or privately made available anywhere?"

ICANN org tracks fellowship program participants through its published lists of finalized fellows since 2007 on the ICANN Fellowship Participants page. Accordingly, the information responsive to this item can be found at page at <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/fellowship-participants-2016-04-19-en>.

Additionally, ICANN org uses several internal tracking mechanisms to track fellowship applications and participants. Fellowship applications are tracked in the [online application system](#). The online application system can be accessed publicly by anyone interested in submitting an application, but only the fellowship selection committee and a few selected ICANN personnel can view all the applications for applicant review and selection. Once applicants are selected as fellowship participants, their names are posted on the [ICANN Fellowship Participants page](#) and tracked through an internal excel spreadsheet and database. To the extent this item was intended to request the disclosure of such documents, which is not the case as written, these documents are subject to the following DIDP Defined Conditions of Nondisclosure, and are therefore not appropriate for disclosure:

- Internal information that, if disclosed, would or would be likely to compromise the integrity of ICANN's deliberative and decision-making process by inhibiting the candid exchange of ideas and communications, including internal documents, memoranda, and other similar communications to or from ICANN Directors, ICANN Directors' Advisors, ICANN staff, ICANN consultants, ICANN contractors, and ICANN agents.
- Personnel, medical, contractual, remuneration, and similar records relating to an individual's personal information, when the disclosure of such information would or likely would constitute an invasion of personal privacy, as well as proceedings of internal appeal mechanisms and investigations.
- Information exchanged, prepared for, or derived from the deliberative and decision-making process between ICANN, its constituents, and/or other entities with which ICANN cooperates that, if disclosed, would or would be likely to compromise the integrity of the deliberative and decision-making process between and among ICANN, its constituents, and/or other entities with which ICANN cooperates by inhibiting the candid exchange of ideas and communications.

Notwithstanding the applicable Nondisclosure Conditions identified in this Response, ICANN org has considered whether the public interest in disclosure of the information subject to these conditions at this point in time outweighs the harm that may be caused by such disclosure. ICANN org has determined that there are no current circumstances for which the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the harm that may be caused by the requested disclosure.

About DIDP

ICANN's DIDP is limited to requests for documentary information already in existence within ICANN that is not publicly available. In addition, the DIDP sets forth Defined Conditions of Nondisclosure. To review a copy of the DIDP, please see <http://www.icann.org/en/about/transparency/didp>. ICANN makes every effort to be as responsive as possible to the entirety of your Request. As part of its accountability and transparency commitments, ICANN continually strives to provide as much information to the community as is reasonable. We encourage you to sign up for an account at ICANN.org, through which you can receive daily updates regarding postings to the portions of ICANN's website that are of interest. We hope this information is helpful. If you have any further inquiries, please forward them to didp@icann.org.