

ISPCP INPUT TO THE ICANN NOMINATING COMMITTEE — 2027

Community Input on the Selection Process and Candidate Qualifications

ISPCP's central message: The 2027 NomCom should strengthen transparency and accountability while identifying candidates whose capabilities collectively meet ICANN's governance needs. Particular attention should be given to practical Internet infrastructure and operational expertise, sound governance judgment, diverse perspectives and readiness for emerging challenges. The process should be demonstrably fair, consistent and evidence-based while fully protecting candidate confidentiality.

1. Input on the NomCom Selection Process

1.1 Greater transparency in the selection process

ISPCP supports a clear distinction between confidential candidate information and transparent process information. The community should be able to understand how the NomCom conducts its work, what stages candidates pass through, what broad competencies are assessed, and how the Committee assures consistency and fairness.

- Publish a clear end-to-end process map covering outreach, application review, shortlisting, interviews, due diligence, evaluation and final selection.
- Publish the key milestones and expected decision points, with timely updates when the process or timetable changes.
- Establish and publish a firm deadline for all written inputs from ICANN bodies and community groups concerning role requirements and candidate qualifications. These inputs should be considered before the relevant position requirements are finalised and published. Any exceptional post-deadline changes should be documented, justified, communicated transparently and applied consistently, without disadvantaging candidates or creating the perception of undue influence.
- Publish the adjusted 2027 timeline at the beginning of the cycle, ensuring that community groups have adequate time to provide input before position requirements are finalised and recruitment begins.
- Publish a concise description of the evaluation framework, including the principal competency categories and how role-specific needs are considered. For each position, distinguish mandatory eligibility requirements, essential role-specific competencies and desirable complementary skills. Explain how these categories inform assessment, while preserving the NomCom's independent judgment and the confidentiality of individual evaluations.
- Provide aggregate, non-identifying information after the cycle, such as application volumes, geographic and professional diversity of the pool, interview volumes and broad outreach results.
- Publish a post-cycle, position-by-position recruitment report showing the total number of applications received, the number meeting published eligibility prerequisites, the number assessed as meeting the stated qualifications, and the number progressing to interview. Report results in a non-identifying format, with clear definitions of each stage, to help the community assess recruitment effectiveness and the adequacy of the qualified candidate pool. Protect candidate confidentiality where numbers are small.

- Publish a short post-cycle process report identifying what worked well, what changed during the cycle and what improvements should be considered for the next cycle. The report should identify priority process improvements, indicate which recommendations will be carried forward and explain how implementation will be reviewed in the next cycle.

The published eligibility requirements and role-specific assessment criteria should be applied consistently throughout the selection cycle. Any material changes should be documented and communicated transparently, with appropriate safeguards to ensure fairness to all candidates.

1.2 Greater transparency around interviews and candidate evaluation

ISPCP recognizes that candidate identities, individual assessments, references and deliberations must remain confidential. However, confidentiality should not prevent the community from understanding how interviews and evaluations are designed.

- Publish the interview competency framework in advance, covering areas such as strategic judgment, governance, technical literacy, independence, communication, consensus-building, understanding of ICANN's multistakeholder model and community dynamics, and future readiness.
- Use structured, role-specific interview questions or scenarios so candidates are assessed against comparable dimensions.
- Ensure each candidate receives a consistent core assessment, supplemented by role-specific questions where appropriate.
- Publish, after the cycle, an anonymized description of the interview methodology and evaluation dimensions, without revealing candidate identities, scores or deliberations.
- Where practical, provide candidates with clear information before interviews about the format, approximate duration, assessment areas and expected preparation, and the significant and sustained time commitment required for the role, particularly for Board positions.
- Consider an independent or documented quality-assurance mechanism to confirm that interview and evaluation practices are applied consistently across candidates.

This approach would improve confidence in the process without converting the NomCom into an election or compromising the confidentiality necessary for candid assessment.

2. Candidate Qualifications and Skills

Priority	ISPCP Recommendation
Role-specific expertise	Before recruitment, establish a current skills-and-experience profile for each receiving body, considering the strategic value of diverse skills, professional backgrounds and perspectives in enhancing that body's overall effectiveness and decision-making. Distinguish essential qualifications from complementary skills and assess candidates against the needs of the body as a whole.
Internet infrastructure & resilience	Value practical understanding of the Internet namespace and its addressing systems, global DNS, connectivity, network resilience, cybersecurity, incident response, cloud/edge infrastructure and the operational management of critical Internet services and their operational continuity.

UA, IDNs, EAI & multilingual Internet	Treat Universal Acceptance, Internationalized Domain Names, Email Address Internationalization and multilingual Internet readiness as strategic competencies supporting inclusion and interoperability.
AI & emerging technologies	Assess whether candidates understand how AI and emerging technologies may affect Internet infrastructure, cybersecurity, trust, policy and ICANN's mission, including experience in strategic foresight related to these areas without requiring every candidate to be an AI specialist.
Governance & public-policy awareness	Value strong governance judgment, demonstrated leadership in multi stakeholder policy-development processes, and experience engaging governmental entities on technical, policy or regulatory matters. Value the ability to work across technical, commercial, civil-society and government environments while respecting ICANN's mission and multistakeholder model. Direct experience leading or contributing significantly to ICANN community groups is highly valued. Relevant experience in ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees (SO/ACs), working groups and cross-community initiatives should also be considered across all positions, while recognising equivalent expertise gained through other professional or governance settings. For GNSO Council and ccNSO Council appointments, give particular attention to understanding the relevant policy processes, stakeholder structures and responsibilities. Some background in corporate governance should also be highly valued.
Independence & conflicts	Apply consistent questions and checks regarding conflicts of interest and relevant relationships. Independence should be assessed without equating independence with lack of community experience.
Functional & geographic diversity	Consider geography, gender, culture and professional background together with technical, operational, policy, business, financial, academic and public-interest experience.
Communication & consensus	Require evidence of listening, respectful dialogue, cultural awareness, clear communication and the ability to build consensus within diverse, multi-stakeholder environments, particularly those akin to the ICANN community, without avoiding difficult decisions.
Commitment & capacity	Make workload, travel, preparation, committee responsibilities and cross-time-zone participation explicit before final selection. Emphasize the substantial and sustained time commitment required, especially for Board positions, and seek evidence of a candidate's proven ability to dedicate the necessary time and effort to complex, long-term engagements within a multi-stakeholder environment.

3. Position-Specific Considerations for the 2027 Cycle

Position	ISPCP would particularly value	Assessment should demonstrate
ICANN Board	Strategic governance; deep expertise in the Internet's global naming and addressing systems and their operational implications; operational leadership and experience with complex, distributed Internet infrastructure; cybersecurity and resilience; risk and compliance; finance or executive management; global Internet policy; proven leadership in multistakeholder Internet governance and policy-development forums; experience engaging with governments; UA/IDNs/EAI; and AI/emerging technology. Foster a broad range of professional skills, operational experience and strategic insight to ensure a comprehensive and robust Board composition. The assessment should consider how each candidate's capabilities complement the existing and anticipated composition of the Board, identifying collective skills gaps rather than expecting every candidate to possess all desirable competencies.	Independent judgment; ability to operate within ICANN's remit; deep understanding of ICANN's unique governance model, community and SO/AC dynamics; technical literacy; strategic thinking; consensus-building; crisis reasoning; ability to understand long-term consequences; and demonstrated willingness and capacity to commit the significant time and sustained effort required for effective Board participation. Prior Board experience should be treated as relevant evidence of governance capability, but not as a default prerequisite unless required by the published eligibility criteria. Assess demonstrated leadership, sound judgment, strategic decision-making, ability to operate collectively and readiness to fulfil the ICANN Board's responsibilities. Candidates with strong technical, DNS operational, cybersecurity or connectivity-sector expertise should not be overlooked solely because they have not served on a comparable Board. Induction, mentoring and appropriate capacity-building can help address experience gaps. In developing the Board's collective skills profile, explicitly assess whether it has sufficient practical expertise in Internet infrastructure, DNS operations, connectivity, cybersecurity and operational resilience. Where material gaps are identified, addressing them should be a deliberate consideration alongside other governance and strategic requirements.

ALAC — Africa, Asia Pacific and LAC	End-user perspective; regional and cultural understanding; digital inclusion; multilingual Internet; UA/IDNs/EAI; community engagement with SO/ACs and capacity building.	Ability to listen to and communicate with diverse users, understand regional realities and translate complex Internet issues into meaningful community engagement.
GNSO Council — CPH and NCPH	Policy-development experience; consensus-building; domain-name ecosystem knowledge; technical and stakeholder awareness; ability to bridge divergent interests. Prior engagement with SO/ACs should also be valued. Relevant SO/AC, working-group or cross-community experience should be considered, particularly evidence of contributions to the respective policy process and ability to work across stakeholder perspectives.	Evidence-based policy judgment, understanding of stakeholder impacts, constructive negotiation and ability to work across the two GNSO Houses. Time commitment.
ccNSO Council	ccTLD ecosystem knowledge; DNS operations; regional/country-level Internet experience; public-policy awareness; multilingual and regional diversity. Relevant SO/AC, working-group or cross-community experience should be considered, particularly evidence of contributions to the respective policy process and ability to work across stakeholder perspectives.	Understanding of ccTLD realities, operational and policy judgment, regional perspective and ability to connect local/national needs with the global DNS ecosystem.

4. Outreach and Candidate Pipeline

The NomCom should broaden the qualified candidate pool beyond established ICANN networks while maintaining a high standard of capability. Targeted outreach should include:

- Internet service providers, connectivity providers and network operators.
- Professionals with extensive experience in the design, deployment, and operational management of global network infrastructure and critical Internet services.
- DNS, registry, registrar, root-server, standards and Internet infrastructure communities.
- Cybersecurity, resilience and critical-infrastructure communities.
- Cloud, edge and emerging-technology sectors.
- UA, IDN, EAI and multilingual Internet communities.
- Academic, research, civil-society and public-interest communities where relevant to the position.
- Underrepresented geographic and professional communities.
- ISPCP is willing to support targeted outreach by identifying relevant professional networks, helping communicate opportunities to qualified individuals and encouraging applications from underrepresented technical and operational backgrounds. The NomCom should engage relevant community groups and past NomCom delegates early enough for such outreach to have a meaningful effect.
- Where external search or recruitment consultants are engaged, their performance should be evaluated against the number and proportion of candidates who meet the published eligibility

requirements and role-specific qualifications, rather than the total number of applications generated. The NomCom should review recruitment channels and adjust its outreach strategy in subsequent cycles where the qualified candidate pool remains insufficient or lacks the required range of skills and experience.

Outreach effectiveness should also be evaluated against the availability and diversity of qualified candidates for each position, including the extent to which identified skills gaps are addressed. Findings should inform recruitment planning and outreach priorities for subsequent cycles.

5. A Fair, Consistent and Evidence-Based Evaluation Model

ISPCP recommends that the NomCom use a structured evaluation model in which every candidate is assessed against a common baseline, with additional role-specific criteria applied where necessary.

- Common baseline: integrity, independence, judgment, communication, consensus-building, understanding of ICANN's multi-stakeholder model and its community and commitment.
- Role-specific capability: technical operational expertise in the Internet naming and addressing system, large-scale operational experience with critical Internet infrastructure, policy expertise with a strong focus on ICANN's policy development process and community engagement, regional, end-user or governance expertise appropriate to the position with demonstrated leadership in Internet governance forums.
- Future readiness: cybersecurity, AI/emerging technology, multilingual Internet and changing Internet ecosystem.
- Collective fit: how the candidate complements the existing composition of the receiving body including experience in bridging different stakeholder perspectives within ICANN's multi-stakeholder model.
- Evidence: applications, references, interviews and due diligence should be considered through a consistent methodology.
- Board experience and governance readiness: assess prior Board service as one source of evidence, not an automatic proxy for capability. Consider transferable leadership experience and whether induction, mentoring or capacity-building can address gaps, while maintaining the published requirements for the role.

6. Proposed Transparency Principles

TRANSPARENT PROCESS	CONFIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DATA	ACCOUNTABLE METHODOLOGY
Publish how the process works, its stages, milestones, broad criteria and aggregate outcomes.	Protect identities, references, individual assessments, deliberations and other sensitive information.	Explain how consistency, fairness, role-specific assessment and quality assurance are maintained.

ISPCP's view: Transparency should mean transparency of the rules, methodology and process—not disclosure of confidential candidate information. A more transparent methodology would strengthen community confidence while preserving the independence that is essential to the NomCom.

7. Closing

ISPCP appreciates the independent role of the Nominating Committee in identifying qualified leaders for ICANN's leadership bodies. For the 2027 cycle, we encourage the NomCom to combine strong technical and operational understanding of the Internet with independent governance judgment, diversity of perspectives, public-interest awareness and readiness for emerging challenges as described in the previous sections.

We also encourage the NomCom to strengthen transparency at the process level, including greater clarity around selection stages, evaluation methodology and interview practices, while maintaining the confidentiality required for candid and fair assessment of individual candidates.

A selection process that is transparent in its methodology, consistent in its application and rigorous in its assessment will strengthen confidence in the NomCom and help ICANN identify leaders capable of serving the global Internet community.

Document Development and Consultation

This submission has been developed by the ISPCP in consultation with its current and former NomCom representatives and ISPCP constituency members. It reflects collective deliberations and perspectives intended to contribute constructively to the 2027 NomCom selection process.