



How to engage with internet standardisation and governance bodies?

Practical guidance to the ICANN

August 2025



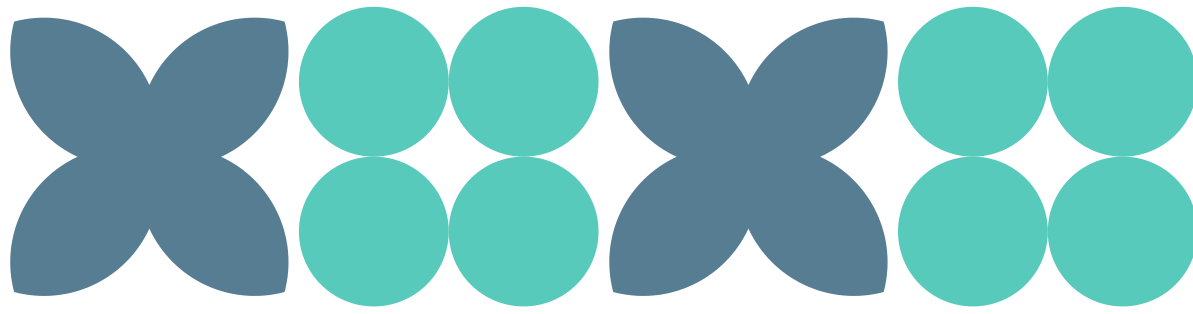
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Civil Society Alliances for
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Abbreviations

ALAC - At-Large Advisory Committee

ALS - At-large Structure

CSO - Civil Society Organisation

DESA - Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN)

GNSO - Generic Names Supporting Organisation

gTLD - Generic Top-Level Domains

IAB - Internet Architecture Board

ICANN - Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

I-D - Internet Draft

IESG - Internet Engineering Steering Group

IETF - Internet Engineering Task Force

IGF - Internet Governance Forum

IRTF - Internet Research Task Force

ITU - International Telecommunication Union

ITU-D - Telecommunication Development

ITU-R - Radiocommunication

ITU-T - Telecommunication Standardisation

MAG - Multistakeholder Advisory Group

NCUC - Non-Commercial Users Constituency

NCSG - Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group

NPOC - Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency

RALO - Regional At-Large Organisations

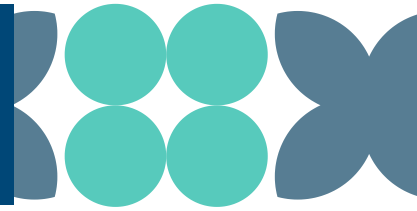
RFC - Requests for Comments

SG - Study Groups

WTDC - World Telecommunication Development Conference

WTSa - World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers



What is ICANN, and how does it work?

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is a non-profit organisation responsible for coordinating the maintenance of the interconnected network of unique identifiers that allow computers on the internet to find one another. It oversees the management of the Domain Name System and coordinates the assignment of IP addresses. As such, it plays a crucial role in ensuring a global, interoperable internet by coordinating the technical infrastructure and developing policies for its stable operation. ICANN relies on a multistakeholder governance model involving individuals, businesses, technical experts, civil society organisations, academia and governments.

ICANN has [three supporting organisations](#) that represent different interests on the internet and four advisory committees representing various stakeholders that provide advice and recommendations. Usually, policies and recommendations are developed by one of the three supporting organisations. They are then elevated for public review and discussion between supporting organisations and advisory committees. Final decisions at ICANN are made by the **Board of Directors** which is composed of 20 members representing stakeholders forming the ICANN community.





- [ICANN's decision-making and policy development process](#)
- [ICANN groups and constituencies](#)
- [ICANN Board](#)

How can civil society get involved?

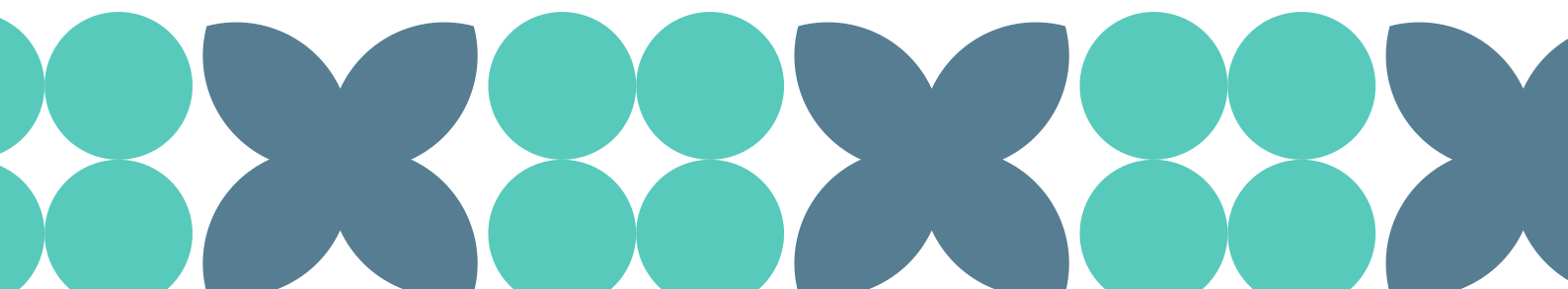
Similarly to IETF, ICANN values continued, long-term engagement. The Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group (NCSG) and its two constituencies are always open to new organisations and are very welcoming for newcomers who wish to engage with ICANN on a continuous, reliable basis.

Join an ICANN meeting

ICANN public meetings are free to participate and open to everyone, even if you or your organisation are not members of a specific ICANN group. It can be a good way for organisations interested in getting involved to get acquainted with ICANN's structure, ongoing discussions and issues in focus, and different stakeholder groups. The Community Forum and Annual General Meeting also have dedicated programmes for newcomers.

ICANN organises **three public meetings per year** in different regions of the world to make it easier for participants from different countries to attend:

- **Community Forum**, usually in February/March. 2025 Community Forum: Seattle, USA, 8–13 March 2025.
- **Policy Forum**, usually in June. Because the focus of this meeting is on policy development, we do not recommend it for complete newcomers. 2025 Public Forum: Prague, Czech Republic, 9–12 June 2025.
- **Annual General Meeting**, usually in October/November. We especially recommend attending this meeting as it focuses on showcasing ICANN's work to a broader audience and has dedicated sessions for newcomers. 2025 AGM: Dublin, Ireland, 25–30 October 2025.



More Information



- [List of upcoming public meetings](#)
- **Travel costs:** You will usually need to cover your own travel and accommodation costs. However, sponsorship is available for all ICANN meetings. More details are available by contacting meeting-sponsorship@icann.org.
- **Languages:** English is the working language of ICANN, but most plenary sessions of ICANN Public Meetings offer simultaneous translation to other official UN languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish.
- **Remote participation:** most sessions enable remote participation via Zoom.

Apply for ICANN Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN Program

ICANN Fellowship

The fellowship programme provides grants to members of the global internet community who would otherwise be unable to attend ICANN Public Meetings. This is an excellent opportunity for newcomers, especially from the Global Majority and underrepresented communities, to learn more about ICANN. Fellows are assigned a mentor and receive training before, during and after an ICANN Public Meeting. Applications are open for each upcoming Public Meeting a few months in advance.



How and when to apply:

Applications for individual events are usually announced much in advance and open until 6-7 months before the event. For example, applications for the ICANN84 Annual General Meeting taking place in October 2025 were open between 25 February 2025 and 25 March 2025 with fellows announced on 23 June 2025.

→ **More information:** [Application form as well as eligibility and selection criteria.](#)

NextGen@ICANN Program

This programme is dedicated to supporting the participation and learning of students under the age of 30 who live in the region where ICANN's Public Meeting is taking place.



How and when to apply:

Applications for individual events are usually announced much in advance and open until 6-7 months before the event. For example, applications for the ICANN84 Annual General Meeting were open between 31 March 2025 and 9 May 2025 with fellows announced on 15 July 2025.

→ ***More information: [Application form as well as eligibility and selection criteria.](#)***

Join the Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group (NCSG) and its two constituencies

The Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group (NCSG) represents non-commercial stakeholders in one of ICANN's supporting organisations, the Generic Names Supporting Organisation (GNSO). This organisation is the policy development body responsible for generic top-level domains (gTLDs), such as .com, .org, .net, etc. (as opposed to country-specific domains like .fr, .ke, .co, etc.). Its members include representatives from various stakeholders relevant to the domain registration process (registries, ICANN-accredited registrars), intellectual property interests, internet service and connectivity providers, business, and non-commercial interests. NCSG represents the voice of civil society organisations and individuals concerned with non-commercial and public interests. You can join the NCSG as an organisation or as an individual.

The NCSG is composed of two constituencies:

- Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC), which seeks to protect and support non-commercial communication and activity on the internet, including rights such as freedom of expression and privacy
- Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency (NPOC), which aims to represent the concerns of not-for-profit and non-governmental organisations who have an internet domain registered, for example, in the .org domain

You can become a member only of NCSG or also of one or both constituencies



- [Generic Names Supporting Organisation](#)
- [**Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group**](#)
- [Non-Commercial Users Constituency](#)
- [Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency](#)

Join the At-Large Community

The **At-Large Community** acts in the interests of individual users of the internet and organisations representing their views. The community has national, regional, and ICANN structures.

National level: At-Large Structures (ALSes) and individual membership.

There are currently 265 ALSes and 213 individual members in 113 countries and territories.

→ **More information:** [**See the full list of ALSes to find one in your country or region.**](#)

Regional level: Regional At-Large Organisations (RALOs)

At-Large structures and individual members are organised into five Regional At-Large Organisations (RALOs) based on five geographic regions: Africa; Asia, Australasia and the Pacific Islands; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean Islands; and North America.

The role of RALOs is to disseminate information from ICANN, promote the participation of their members, and support the development of ICANN's regional strategies and priorities.

→ **More information:** [**About RALOs.**](#)

ICANN level: At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

ALAC is one of ICANN's four advisory committees. It is the primary organisational home within ICANN for individual internet users. The role of the ALAC is to consider and provide advice on the activities of ICANN, insofar as they relate to the interests of individual internet users. It can, for example, initiate a public comment proceeding or request the Generic Names Supporting Organisation to initiate a policy development process. They can also provide formal policy advice to the ICANN Board. ALAC is composed of 15 members: two members selected by each of the five Regional At Large Organizations (RALOs) and five members appointed by ICANN's Nominating Committee.

→ **More information:** [**See more on the process of selection.**](#)

Contribute to Public Comments

Contribution to ICANN processes is also possible without attending ICANN meetings or joining one of its constituencies by providing input to Public Comments. All comments are reviewed by ICANN staff and included in a summary report summarising the input received. The summary is then provided to the relevant ICANN body, which must refer to it explicitly during subsequent discussions. Organisations and individuals can respond to any public comment in their own capacity, but they can also be endorsed by a group or constituency, subject to an approval process.

In particular, Public Comments can be a useful avenue to influence the Policy Development Process within ICANN which is led by the GNSO Council. Newcomers can make their first steps in this process by providing input into NCSG or NCUC contributions. At each ICANN meeting there are also discussions on the issues at the forefront of the community's concerns. Many of these are open mic sessions, which allows space for civil society organisations to provide input informally and independently of a particular constituency group.

More Information



- [See more on the Policy Development Process](#)
- [**Step-by-step guide for preparing ICANN public comment submissions**](#)
- [Open public comment processes](#)
- [Surveys and other public consultations](#)

How can I join NCSG and At-Large Community?

Application form

- **For the NCSG and its constituencies**, There are different forms depending on whether you want to apply as an individual or an organisation.
- **For the At-Large Community, there are several options for joining:**
 - [Get accredited as an ALS](#) on the national level (the step-by-step process is explained on the linked website)
 - [Join an existing ALS](#) on the national level
- [Apply as an individual member](#) to the Regional At-Large Organisation

Eligibility and criteria

For the NCSG and its constituencies:

- Individuals: Be able to demonstrate non-commercial interest in the Domain Name System policy and agree to advocate a non-commercial public interest position.
- CSOs: Operate on a not-for-profit basis primarily for noncommercial purposes, be the exclusive owner of at least one noncommercial domain name, be engaged in online activities that are primarily noncommercial, and support the mission of the NCSG.

→ **More information:** [The approval process for NCSG Membership](#)

To become an accredited At-Large Structure:

- Formal registration as an organisation is not necessary.
- Show commitment to supporting individual internet user participation in ICANN by sharing information on ICANN activities and issues, facilitating online discussions, and involving members in relevant ICANN policy development, discussions, and decisions.
- Ensure that participants are primarily users who are citizens or residents of countries within the region/country in which the ALS is based.
- Be self-supporting and do not rely on ICANN for funding.
- Make publicly available information about the ALS's goals, structure, constituent group(s)/ membership description, working mechanisms, leadership, and contact(s).
- Commit to assisting the RALO in performing its function.

→ **More information:** [The ALS accreditation process](#)

To join an existing ALS:

- The criteria and application process depend on a particular ALS. We recommend getting in touch with the ALS directly.

To apply as a member of the Regional At-Large Organisation:

- Conditions for specific RALOs vary, but most commonly, they include:
 - Being a permanent resident of the region relevant to the RALO,
 - Not being a member of an accredited At-Large Structure,
 - Being subscribed to a relevant RALO discussion list.

→ **More information:** [Application details for each RALO](#)

Fees

Joining ICANN groups and meetings is **not subject to any fees**. However, you should ensure sufficient financial resources to cover staff time and travel. Note that **travel support might be available to attend ICANN meetings**.

→ **Tip: For inquiries, contact meeting-sponsorship@icann.org.**

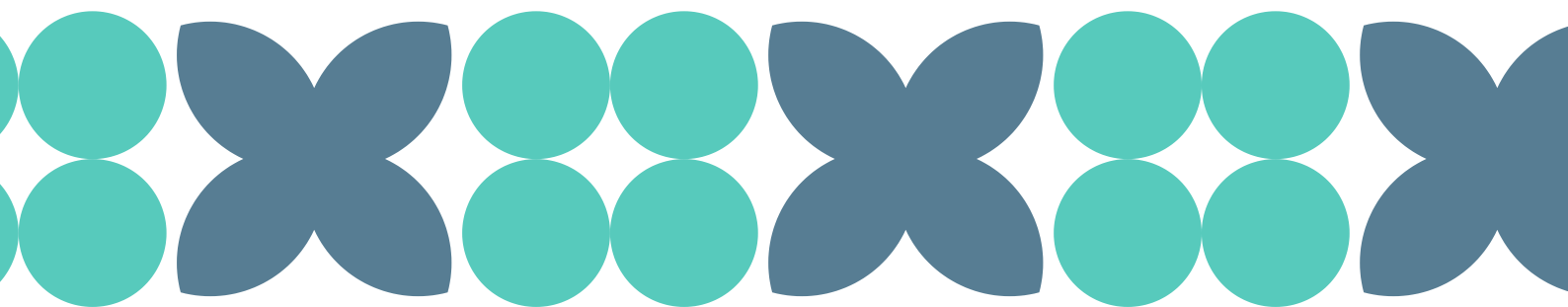
Are there any materials for newcomers?

ICANN has dedicated [websites for beginners](#) and for [civil society](#), which include useful information for newcomers. In addition, the following support is available:

- [ICANN online courses and learning materials](#), including the [ICANN Learn](#) platform
- [Support from the ICANN civil society liaison](#). They can be contacted at civilsociety@icann.org.
- For support from existing members, you can contact the NCSG chair and GNSO councillors to ask a question or request a clarification.
- Both NCSG and NCUC are very welcoming spaces. Both constituencies host sessions at nearly every ICANN meeting to welcome newcomers.

After joining, check these useful resources:

- [How to get started in NCSG](#)
- [How to contribute to the At-Large Community](#)





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