

ICANN NextGen Program Mentoring Guidelines

Version 1.2

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1 Introduction

As part of the Public Responsibility Support (PRS) ongoing work to support the next generation of Internet users, the NextGen@ICANN program has been formalized as a staple PRS initiative to engage regionally based undergraduate and graduate students at ICANN meetings, and introduce them to ICANN through guided programming. The NextGen@ICANN program was initially organized at ICANN49 in Singapore with DotAsia and NetMission and has been successfully replicated and has grown and expanded since ICANN50.

The ICANN NextGen Mentoring process was created to help NextGen to prepare themselves for the ICANN NextGen experience and make them feel more comfortable to participate in an ICANN Meeting.

NextGen mentors are community members with a good understanding of the ICANN multistakeholder process. They are well positioned to relate with NextsGen participants, share their own experience and demonstrate opportunities for participation in ICANN.

The mentoring process has evolved over the years, and the mechanisms used for mentors were developed from the experiences of the mentors and stakeholders' feedback. Recently, a need was identified to create guidelines for the mentors process to ensure consistent and effective communications between mentors and NextGen.

2 Initial Steps

2.1 Mentor Eligibility

Supporting Organization (SO) and Advisory Committee (ACs) are invited to nominate one individual each (for a total of three) to serve in the capacity of mentor for the ICANN NextGen Program.

Mentors will serve for one ICANN Public Meetings. If a mentor needs to step down, the relevant SO/AC will be invited to nominate a new mentor. Additionally, mentees will evaluate their mentors following each meeting; if multiple negative evaluations are received, the NextGen Program can consider follow-up actions and may request a replacement mentor from the relevant SO/AC.

A call for mentors will be released each November as an announcement on [ICANN.org](https://www.icann.org), and SOs/ACs will have approximately two months to select their mentors. Self-nominations will not be considered; those interested should notify their SO/AC through the relevant channels.

Mentors are expected to devote considerable time to mentoring before, during, and after each meeting. This document details expectations for extensive pre-meeting preparation and on-site support, as well as post-meeting requirements.

2.2 Team Forming

Each mentor will coach a team of up to four ICANN NextGen. Mentors should be prepared to assist NextGen with a range of experience levels, including newcomers, and individuals who are somewhat familiar with ICANN and its ecosystem.

Teams are set up at least two weeks before the mentoring process begins. While creating teams, the NextGen Manager considers a number of factors, including:

- ⦿ sectors of interest
- ⦿ common languages
- ⦿ time zones and regional proximity
- ⦿ mentors' levels of experience

Mentors will have one week to review a list of the mentees on their team and confirm whether those assigned are a suitable fit. A mentee who is not comfortable with an assigned mentor may request to be placed on another team.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Below are the roles and responsibilities in the NextGen Program Mentoring process:

<p style="text-align: center;">Mentors</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assist the mentee with developing the resources and skills to contribute to ICANN's mission and work</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mentees/NextGen</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Focus on learning, networking and identifying ways to contribute to ICANN's mission and work</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NextGen Manager</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Provides support to mentors and mentees</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Provide advice and guidance ⦿ Share experience as appropriate ⦿ Offer encouragement and support ⦿ Identify resources that will help mentees ⦿ Encourage mentees to join ICANN community groups based on sector of interest ⦿ Introduce NextGen to community members ⦿ Participate in mentor post-meeting evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Complete required ICANN Learn courses ⦿ Identify goals for their NextGen experience ⦿ Be open to and seek guidance ⦿ Take an active role in their own learning and help drive the process ⦿ Attend mentor meetings ⦿ Follow through on commitments ⦿ Participate in post-meeting evaluation/report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Assigns teams ⦿ Organizes training for mentors ⦿ Organizes on-site meetings and logistics ⦿ Manages escalation of issues ⦿ Facilitates travel logistics

4 Mentoring Process

A mentor's role is to help NextGen to prepare themselves effectively for the meeting and to provide opportunities for NextGen to find meaningful ways to contribute to the ICANN community.

Mentors are expected to tailor the mentorship experience by keeping in mind their mentees' interests and backgrounds and to create a team support system that gives mentees the resources they need to engage with the ICANN community.

Mentors are not expected to have extensive knowledge/experience of all ICANN communities/groups. Mentors should ask other mentors, community members, and fellowship alumni for help in responding to mentees' queries. It is important to seek input from others to ensure that information about other communities or sectors is accurate.

4.1 Individual Goals and Deliverables

Mentors should assist mentees with establishing individual goals for their NextGen experience.

Mentors should encourage NextGen to find ways to contribute to an SO/AC or working group(s) that interests them. The focus should be on assisting NextGen to integrate into the community and engaging them with ICANN processes. Newcomers should have the necessary support to find their place within ICANN's multistakeholder processes.

Based on individual goals and program requirements, mentors should set deliverables for mentees during different stages of the program (pre-meeting, on-site, and post-meeting). See sections 4.3 - 4.9 for examples of deliverables.

4.2 Communication within Teams

Proper communication and coordination between the team members is a vital part of the mentoring process. After the mentoring teams are announced, a mentor should email the team members and introduce himself/herself, explain his/her role and experience within ICANN, and provide a list of interests. The mentor should also ask team members to introduce themselves and share their interests and backgrounds within a few days. A sample introductory email can be found in the Appendix.

Mentors and mentees can choose the most suitable communication channel (such as email, Skype, WhatsApp, etc) for their team. The NextGen Program does not endorse or enforce use of any specific social media or communication platform.

Throughout the mentoring process, the mentor should remain in active communication with their mentees, sharing useful links and relevant information about ICANN. Before the meeting, a mentor can expect to host at least two online meetings to share information with the team and address any concerns.

Mentors are expected to respond to mentees at reasonable time frames before, during, and after the meeting. If the mentor notices that a team member is not responding to

communications and participating in the mentoring process consistently, the mentor should alert the ICANN NextGen Manager, who will remind the NextGen that the mentoring process is a mandatory part of the NextGen Program. Mentors may also copy the ICANN NextGen Manager in email communications for other urgent matters as needed.

Additionally, if a mentor is not responding to a mentee's queries and concerns or offering needed support, the mentee should alert the ICANN NextGen Manager, who can help to resolve the matter amicably.

4.3 Pre-Meeting Capacity Development

Mentors should remember to provide information to the NextGen in a simple manner that is easy to understand and retain. It is useful for mentors to provide information to mentees in a progressive way rather than overwhelming them with too many details at once. Setting weekly progress deliverables is key; for example, a mentor could give weekly questions to the mentees based on the information provided and ask for their responses and related queries.

It is important to note that team members may not have the same level of experience with or understanding of ICANN. Therefore, deliverables and expectations may differ from mentee to mentee. Mentors should take a clear, consistent approach to the learning process so that each mentee receives approximately the same preparation before the meeting.

Mentors are expected to cover the following topics as part of pre-meeting preparation:

- ⦿ ICANN Learn courses
 - All NextGen need to register on [ICANN Learn](#) and complete the required courses; the NextGen Manager will send an email with an enrollment key to enroll in the mandatory courses
- ⦿ ICANN's work
 - ICANN's mission: what ICANN does and doesn't do
 - Policy Development Processes
 - Operation of Domain Name System
 - Security, Stability and Resiliency
- ⦿ ICANN's multistakeholder model
 - Overview of ICANN Communities
 - *Note:* Other mentors might be involved as support
- ⦿ Current topics of interest in ICANN
 - *Note:* A mentor is not expected to be an expert who knows everything. Rather, mentors should share resources of where to find this information and share webinars and policy reports that have either been archived or will occur pre-meeting
- ⦿ Expectations of the NextGen Program at the meeting
- ⦿ How to network successfully at the meeting

Mentors should encourage all their mentees to take further steps to increase their knowledge of ICANN and their awareness of its SOs and ACs. Below are some additional suggestions for pre-meeting preparation that mentors could assign to NextGen:

- ⦿ Join mailing lists for community groups of interest
- ⦿ Participate in existing community capacity-development programs (such as buddy groups)
- ⦿ Follow a path of self-study before the meeting; research topics or groups of interest beforehand

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- ⦿ Consider attending related events or engaging with National and Regional Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiatives ([NRI](#)), regional Internet registry events ([RIR](#)), or Internet Society ([ISOC](#)) events
 - ⦿ Identify relevant contacts in the ICANN community prior to attending the meeting, think of questions for that person, and plan to introduce yourself (or ask your mentor to introduce you) at the meeting

4.4 Personal Meeting Agendas

Mentors must work with their team members individually to help them build a personal agenda/schedule for the meeting. Mentors should assist NextGen in matching their goals for the meeting to appropriate sessions.

Mentors are required to assign a minimum of three (3) sessions (per meeting) to their NextGen, as well as a list of additional suggested sessions. The three mentor-assigned sessions should be in addition to the mandatory NextGen daily sessions assigned by ICANN NextGen Manager. Mentors are expected to collaborate with other mentors or community members for advice on sectors outside their area of expertise. It is important for NextGen to have a broad and balanced understanding of ICANN and its ecosystem. Mentors should encourage NextGen to create an agenda that covers a range of subjects, including technical topics, policy development, and issues affecting the domain name industry and contracted parties. It is also helpful to suggest that NextGen attend each constituency day. Schedules should also have time allotted for networking. During the meeting, mentors can recommend changes if necessary.

Mentors are responsible for checking in with their NextGen and keeping track of the sessions they attended. Mentors should remind mentees that they should be seen actively participating at the meeting.

4.5 Building Confidence

Mentors are expected to be open, accessible, and approachable to mentees and to create a welcoming atmosphere in order to foster confidence in the mentees. Mentors should strive to be good listeners and communicators and to show a genuine desire to be helpful.

A number of Fellows Program alumni have succeeded in taking leadership positions within ICANN and in the Internet governance world. Sharing success stories of the Fellows and the NextGen Alumni with the newcomers can help to boost their confidence about striving to achieve leadership roles. Mentors should share their learning experiences and difficulties at ICANN to increase the confidence level of the NextGen.

Mentors should aim to ensure that newcomers have the confidence and resources to become active participants in ICANN's policymaking processes, rather than feel that expectations are above their capabilities. One way to do so is to organize the learning process in a progressive way so that information is provided in steps, rather than at the same time.

It is important that the mentee does not rely on the mentor but has autonomy and independence. Mentors should remain unbiased and ensure that mentees develop their own ICANN interests, which may be different to the mentor's.

Mentors should encourage NextGen to ask questions, both before and during the meeting. It is important to keep in mind that mentees will have different abilities and needs and that mentorship requires a tailored approach to communicate and guide NextGen effectively.

4.6 Facilitating Networking at ICANN Meeting

Mentors should prepare mentees for successful networking experiences through regular engagement and interaction with their team and by facilitating introductions for them with community leaders and members. Mentees should be encouraged to make a list of community members they would like to meet ahead of time and to feel empowered to introduce themselves to experts of interest. Mentors should help their mentees meet relevant contacts whenever possible.

4.7 Additional On-Site Activities

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind during the meeting:

- ⦿ Task each of your mentees with providing a brief recap of a session each day or have your cohort gather to share key takeaways each day
- ⦿ Have NextGen introduce themselves to session leaders to ensure that proper support is provided
- ⦿ Encourage NextGen to contribute to policy development work and ensure that they are prepared to do so
- ⦿ Ask that NextGen work together to prepare one public comment rather than multiple individual comments; ensure that this comment focuses on a topic within ICANN's mission and remit
- ⦿ Allocate roles for your NextGen, such as serving as a rapporteur or preparing a written summary of a meeting to share with your mentee group

4.8 Post-Meeting Reporting

NextGen Class Post-Meeting Report

NextGen are expected to work together to prepare a class post-meeting report; they are expected to do so autonomously but may seek mentors' input. This report will be published on icann.org.

4.9 Post-Meeting Support

Mentors are expected to identify those NextGen with the skills to contribute and to liaise with the relevant SOs/ACs to encourage them to involve the NextGen in policy development processes; they should also encourage the NextGen to become actively involved and direct NextGen towards useful contacts.

Mentors should assign NextGen post-meeting tasks relevant to their skills and interests.

Below are post-meeting suggestions for you to provide to your mentees:

- ⦿ Identify a working group of interest and take steps to become involved
- ⦿ Explore a topic within ICANN's mission from your local perspective and share it online, via a blog or social media
- ⦿ Join a relevant [Regional At-Large Organization \(RALO\)](#)
- ⦿ Connect with the [Global Stakeholder Engagement \(GSE\)](#) regional leads

5 ICANN NextGen Mentoring Checklist

Note: A large bullet indicates a mandatory activity; a small dot indicates a suggested activity.

Week 1:

- ⦿ Review list of NextGen from NextGen Manager and confirm suitability (ICANN NextGen Manager will then inform Mentors and NextGen of their teams)
- ⦿ Review ICANN NextGen@ICANN Program Mentoring Guidelines document thoroughly

Week 2:

- ⦿ Send introductory message to NextGen and request introductions from them
 - Alert NextGen Manager if any mentees are not responsive
- ⦿ Determine most suitable form of communication for the group and times for group calls
- ⦿ Learn fellows' individual interests and goals
 - Notify NextGen Manager about questions mentees have about travel arrangements, if applicable

Weeks 3-6:

- ⦿ Set up at least two online meetings with the group of mentees
- ⦿ Communicate individually with NextGen to assess goals and needs
- ⦿ Check in with NextGen to ensure they are completing the mandatory ICANN Learn courses
 - Answer questions on the ICANN Learn message boards where relevant
- ⦿ Assign NextGen tasks relevant to their interests/level of expertise; some suggestions include:
 - Join community mailing lists for groups of interest
 - Participate in existing community capacity-development programs (such as buddy groups)
 - Follow a path of self-study before the meeting; research topics or groups of interest beforehand
 - Encourage NextGen to attend related events or engage with [NRI](#), [RIR](#), or [ISOC](#) events

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- Identify relevant contacts in the ICANN community prior to attending the meeting, think of questions for that person, and introduce yourself (or ask your mentor to introduce you) at the meeting

Weeks 6-7:

- Continue to host online meetings and check in with NextGen about assigned tasks
- Assist fellows with creating a meeting agenda
 - Include 3 mandatory sessions
 - Suggest additional sessions (liaising with other mentors for sector-specific advice as needed)
 - Encourage mentees to create a list of individuals to meet and offer advice (with input from other mentors where relevant)
 - Set expectations about the on-site NextGen requirements

Week 8: At the Meeting

- Introduce NextGen to relevant community members and assist with networking
- Offer continued advice and support, seeking input from others as needed; respond to queries and help resolve issues as needed
- Track sessions that your mentees attend
- Inform NextGen of any relevant changes in the schedule
- Host regular check-in sessions with your group of mentees (for at least 15 minutes)
- Assign NextGen tasks relevant to their interests and levels of expertise
 - Task each of your mentees with providing a brief recap of a session each day or have your cohort gather to share key takeaways each day
 - Have NextGen introduce themselves to session leaders to ensure that proper support is provided
 - Encourage NextGen to contribute to policy development work
 - Ask that NextGen work together to prepare one public comment rather than multiple individual comments; ensure that this comment focuses on a topic within ICANN's mission and remit
 - Introduce NextGen to community members with similar interests for additional sector-specific coaching
 - Allocate roles for your NextGen, such as serving as a rapporteur or preparing a written summary of a meeting to share with your mentee group

Weeks 9-12: Post-Meeting

- Complete post meeting report
 - Identify 3-4 NextGen to gather information from NextGen group and complete the post meeting report.
- Identify NextGen with the skills to contribute and work with SOs/ACs to involve them in policy development processes (if willing and able to begin contributing)
- Encourage NextGen to become involved and direct NextGen towards useful contacts
 - encourage NextGen to share gained ICANN knowledge at their Universities, host webinars, and invite regional reps to come to speak .
 - Identify a working group of interest and take steps to become involved
 - Explore a topic within ICANN's mission from your local perspective and share it online, via a blog or social media
 - Join a relevant [RALO](#)
 - Connect with the [GSE](#) regional leads

6 Useful Links and References

ICANN Organization

- ⦿ ICANN website | <http://www.icann.org>
- ⦿ ICANN Learn | <http://learn.icann.org>
- ⦿ ICANN Newcomers | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/newcomers-2012-06-18-en>
- ⦿ Event Calendar | <https://features.icann.org/calendar>
- ⦿ ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/gse-2012-02-25-en>
- ⦿ ICANN History Project | <https://www.icann.org/history>
- ⦿ ICANN Policy | <https://www.icann.org/policy>
- ⦿ Security, Stability and Resiliency Overview | <https://www.icann.org/octo-ssr>
- ⦿ ICANN 2016-2020 5 Year Strategic Plan | <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-10oct14-en.pdf>

ICANN Supporting Organizations

- ⦿ Address Supporting Organization (ASO) | <https://aso.icann.org>
- ⦿ Country Code Naming Support Organization (ccNSO) | <https://ccnso.icann.org>
- ⦿ Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) | <http://gnsso.icann.org/en/>
 - ⦿ gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) | <https://www.rysg.info/> and <https://gnsso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/rysg>
 - ⦿ Registrars Stakeholder Group (RrSG) | <http://www.icannregistrars.org/> and <http://gnsso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/rrsg>
 - ⦿ Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG) | <http://gnsso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/ncsg>
 - ⦿ Not For Profit Constituency (NPOC) | <http://www.npoc.org/> and <http://gnsso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/ncsg/npoc>
 - ⦿ Non Commercial Stakeholder Constituency (NCUC) | <http://www.ncuc.org/> and <http://gnsso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/ncsg/ncuc>
 - ⦿ Commercial Stakeholder Group (CSG) | <http://gnsso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg>

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- Commercial Business Users Constituency (BC) | <http://www.bizconst.org/> and <http://gns0.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg/cbuc>
 - Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC) | <http://www.ipconstituency.org/> and <http://gns0.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg/ipc>
 - Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers Constituency (ISPCP) | <http://www.ispcp.info/> and <http://gns0.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg/isp>

ICANN Advisory Committees

- At Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) | <http://atlarge.icann.org/>
 - Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs) | <https://atlarge.icann.org/ralos/>
- Government Advisory Committee (GAC) | <https://gac.icann.org/>
- Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC) | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/ssac-2012-02-25-en>
- Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC) | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/rssac-4c-2012-02-25-en>

Other Resources

- History of Internet Governance | <http://www.intgov.net/papers/35>
- Internet Society (ISOC) | <https://www.internetsociety.org/>
- National and Regional Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Initiatives (NRI) | <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-regional-and-national-initiatives>
- Regional Internet Registries (RIR) | <https://www.nro.net/about-the-nro/regional-internet-registries/>

Appendix 1: Sample Introductory Email

Dear all,

My name is _____ and I will be your mentor for the ICANNXX Meeting.

What we find works best is regularly scheduled communications from now until the ICANN Meeting starts. Other than email communication, we can use a number of different communication platforms. The first thing to decide is which communication platform and/or social media we are all comfortable with for our communication. Please let me know about your preferences by replying to this email.

I shall be setting up a Skype Group for us so that we can get together every other week for about 30 minutes to have a quick chat and opportunity to ask questions. Our first session may be a little longer as we go through introductions and get an outline for how we will work together moving forward. I have set up a Doodle poll with some suggested times to find the most reasonable time period for us to meet. *[Note to mentors: Skype is just an example here; use whatever platform works best for you and your group.]*

Once we get started, I will be facilitating your introduction to ICANN using the ICANN Learn website. This ICANN Learn experience is a requirement for all new NextGen. Though I know some of you will be more aware than others about this information, we all will move through various courses designed to help you better understand ICANN and how the work of ICANN is completed with a fresh set of eyes.

I do encourage everyone to visit the ICANN website to keep updated on hot topics that will be discussed at the meeting, as well as referring to the ICANN meeting website (*insert website link here*) which will provide you the complete information about the meeting. The schedule of sessions for the full week will also be posted at this site closer to the meeting. In the schedule, you will see that there will be different track sessions; you have to follow the NextGen Track in particular and others at your own choice.

I would like to kick things off by asking for an introductory email from each of you so that we as a team get to know each other better.

In relation to myself, I work for XXX, doing xxx and have attended XX ICANN Meeting(s). I look forward to working with and meeting you all!

