

NCSG Membership: Applicants' Guidelines and Approval Process

1. What are non-commercial interest, users, and uses?

The Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group amplifies the voice of civil society organisations, public interest groups, and individuals in ICANN processes. Typical members include: non-profit organizations that serve non-commercial interests; non-profit services such as education, philanthropies, consumer protection, community organizing, promotion of the arts, public interest policy advocacy, children's welfare, religion, scientific research, and human rights; public interest software concerns; families or individuals who register domain names for non-commercial personal use; and Internet users who are primarily concerned with the non-commercial, public interest aspects of domain name policy.

2. Why is it essential for us that you protect and aim to advance the noncommercial interest in domain name policy as an NCSG and its constituencies member?

We are the only community within the ICANN ecosystem that exclusively advances non-state and non-market interests. We use the **Domain Name System (DNS)** in order to promote and protect non-commercial communication and activity. Our members are researchers, academics, advocates, digital human rights groups, and ICT for development organisations, among others.

We also welcome individuals with a technical background whose DNS activities advance non-commercial policy objectives. For example, if you have a company that uses WHOIS personal data of domain registrants to provide software for others, you are not eligible to apply for NCSG. If you do business in the digital realm but are passionate about the non-commercial aspects of DNS policy, as long as the company does not directly relate to DNS, you can still apply as a non-commercial individual. If you are a member of **At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)** and **Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs)**¹, as long as you have non-commercial interest and agree to promote non-commercial interests in NCSG, you are eligible to apply.

If you are protecting the brand owners' interests over non-commercial users and uses of DNS interests, you are not eligible to apply. You can join the commercial stakeholder group, which has an intellectual property constituency and a business constituency as well as an Internet service provider constituency. Such criterion does not mean NCSG is not concerned with

¹ For example through an ISOC chapter or other RALO organizations

intellectual property rights law and policy. We have intellectual property lawyers and experts as our members, but their mission is to prevent intellectual property overreach and have a balanced approach towards individual rights and commercial rights.

3. How does the approval process work?

After you submit your application to join the NCSG, the NCSG Executive Committee (EC) will review your Statement of Interest, evaluate your non-commercial interest in Domain Name System policy, and verify your credentials. Incomplete forms make it difficult for us to assess the suitability of a candidate for membership. You will not be automatically accepted into the NCSG; in order to protect our reputation and the integrity of our work, there is a review process of all applications that can take up to one month or longer if there are questions or need more information.

We are also a voluntary organization. If the process takes longer, or you have not been informed about your application status, the delay might just be due to the EC's heavy workload, however you are welcome to contact the NCSG Chair to follow-up on your membership application: (chair@ncsg.is).

We encourage the inclusion of references on your application form, particularly if your online presence is limited.

After assessing your application, the following will happen:

- When the Executive Committee approves your application, you will receive a welcome email, and you will be subscribed to our main mailing list, and will be a member of NCSG. After your NCSG membership has been approved, those constituencies you indicated you want to join, if any, will be notified. Constituencies have their own processes for accepting your application after your NCSG membership application has been approved.
- If the Executive Committee does not find you eligible for membership, you will be sent an email with the reason explaining why your application has been unsuccessful. Your personal information, other than your name (or/ and organization name, if applicable) and the reason for rejection, will be deleted from our database. The EC will also keep a

record of its communication with you which might have the email address you provided in your application.

- If the Executive Committee cannot verify your non-commercial interest in DNS policy or if the website you have pointed us to does not resolve , or for other reasons that the Executive Committee deems appropriate based on the charter and these guidelines and your application, you will be sent an email requesting clarification before a formal decision is made. If we did not receive any response within one month of our inquiry, your application will be withdrawn, but you will be welcome to re-apply for membership again in the future. In such circumstances, the Executive Committee will delete your personal data from our membership database other than your name (and organization name, if applicable) and the reason for rejection. The EC will also keep a record of its communication with you which might have the email address you provided in your application.

4. How can I ensure my application is processed in a timely manner?

Make sure that you provide us with an effective means to contact you if we require clarification about something contained within your application. Ensure that you submit a clear and detailed statement of interest, with ample justification as to why you want to join the NCSG. Your statement of interest should:

- clarify your non-commercial interest in Domain Name System policy; and
- explain how you would like to advance Domain Name System policy in furtherance of non-commercial objectives.

Please note that while we are one of the most diverse communities at ICANN, we can only help with advancing the interests of non-commercial users and uses of the Domain Name System. Regional and national Internet governance issues can only be advanced within the NCSG as they pertain to ICANN's mandate and mission. We cannot help with important but broader issues to do with Internet access and infrastructure.

If you are known by, or affiliated with, an existing NCSG member, please state their name in your application.