Guideline: ccNSO Council Selection and Removal Procedures

Version 3
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1. Introduction and Background

The ICANN Bylaws outline the roles and responsibilities of the ccNSO Council, ccNSO members, and individuals involved in selecting Councillors by the ccNSO membership. Regarding the composition of the ccNSO Council and the roles of the ccNSO Representatives and Emissaries, the Bylaws, as amended on 9 January 2025, state:

Section 10.3. CCNSO COUNCIL

"(a) The ccNSO Council shall consist of three ccNSO Council members selected by the ccNSO members within each of ICANN's Geographic Regions in the manner described in Section 10.4(g) through Section 10.4(i); (ii) three ccNSO Council members selected by the ICANN Nominating Committee; (iii) liaisons as described in Section 10.3(b); and (iv) observers as described in Section 10.3(c)."

Section 10.4 MEMBERSHIP

"(e) Designation of Representative
(i) Each ccTLD manager may designate in writing a person, organization, or entity to represent the ccTLD manager in matters relating to the ccNSO ("Representative"). In the absence of such a designation, the person, organization, or entity listed as the administrative contact in the IANA database shall be deemed to be the designate of the ccTLD manager by whom the ccNSO member shall be represented.
(ii) For any Territory for which there is a single ccTLD manager that is a ccNSO member, the Representative selected by that manager in accordance with Section 10.4(e) shall be the Territory's emissary ("Emissary") for the purpose of voting in the specific cases enumerated in this Article, Annex B, or Annex C of these Bylaws. In the event two or more ccTLD managers from the same Territory are ccNSO members, those ccTLD managers are to appoint one of the Representatives from among those ccNSO members to serve as the Emissary to vote on behalf of the ccNSO members from that Territory.
(iii) During any period in which an Emissary is not appointed, the ccTLD manager that has been the member of the ccNSO for the longest period is deemed to be the Emissary for that Territory.
(iv) Each Emissary, regardless of the number of ccTLD managers within the relevant Territory, is entitled to cast a single vote in any round of any voting process defined within this Article, Annex B or Annex C that is reserved for Emissary voting. The ccTLD managers within each Territory may define the process to determine how their respective Emissary's vote is determined.

[…]

(g) The ccNSO Council members selected by the ccNSO members from each Geographic Region (see Section 10.3(a)(i)) shall be selected through nomination, and if necessary election, by the ccNSO members within that Geographic Region. At least 90 days before the end of the regular term of any ccNSO-member-selected member of the ccNSO Council, or upon the occurrence of a vacancy in the seat of such a ccNSO Council member, the ccNSO Council shall establish a nomination and election schedule, which shall be sent to all ccNSO members within the Geographic Region and posted on the Website.

(h) Any ccNSO member may nominate an individual to serve as a ccNSO Council member representing the ccNSO member's Geographic Region. Nominations must be seconded by another ccNSO member from a different Territory, from the same Geographic Region. By accepting their nomination, individuals nominated to the ccNSO Council agree to support the policies committed to by ccNSO members.

(i) If at the close of nominations there are no more candidates nominated (with seconds and acceptances) in a particular Geographic Region than there are seats on the ccNSO Council available for that Geographic Region, then the nominated candidates shall be selected to serve on the ccNSO Council. Otherwise, an election by written ballot (which may be by electronic means) shall be held to select the ccNSO Council members from among those nominated (with seconds and acceptances), with ccNSO members from the Geographic Region being entitled to vote in the election through their Emissaries. In such an election, a majority of the Emissaries entitled to vote in the Geographic Region shall constitute a quorum, and the selected candidate must receive a plurality of the votes cast by the Emissaries within the Geographic Region. The ccNSO Council Chair shall provide the ICANN Secretary prompt written notice of the selection of ccNSO Council members under this paragraph."

With regard to the **regular term**[1] of each ccNSO Council member the bylaws state:

Section 10.3. CCNSO COUNCIL

"(d) (i) the regular term of each ccNSO Council member shall begin at the conclusion of an ICANN annual meeting and shall end at the conclusion of the third ICANN annual meeting thereafter; (ii) the regular terms of the three ccNSO Council members selected by the ccNSO members within each ICANN Geographic Region shall be staggered so that one member's term begins in a year divisible by three, a second member's term begins in the first year following a year divisible by three, and the third member's term begins in the second year following a year divisible by three; and (iii) the regular terms of the three ccNSO Council members selected by the Nominating Committee shall be staggered in the same manner. Each ccNSO Council member shall hold office during his or her regular term and until a successor has been selected and qualified or until that member resigns or is removed in accordance with these Bylaws."

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[1] *Bylaw Section 10.3(h) designates the ccNSO Council as responsible for administering and coordinating the affairs of the ccNSO. Under this authority, the Council has established that, since 2003, the term of the Councillors selected by the ccNSO members begins at the conclusion of the first ICANN meeting of a calendar year and ends at the conclusion of the first ICANN meeting of a calendar year. The Council believes that continuing this practice will ensure both continuity and predictability.*

Continuity is ensured as not all six Councillors whose term ends need to step down at once. The NomCom appointed Councilors take their seat at the end of the Annual General Meeting (AGM). As for predictability, the current practice has evolved since 2003. Changing this process without a compelling reason could prove to be disruptive - for example by ending the practice of interviewing potential Council candidates at the most appropriate ICANN meeting preceding the selection, which is currently the AGM.

2.   Glossary

The ICANN Bylaws, the Rules for the ccNSO Membership (Version 03, publication date 26 October 2022) and ccNSO Internal Procedure | General Statement of Interest & ccNSO [Council] Conflict of Interest, contain a list of terms and their definitions, including but not limited to:

- **Member of the ccNSO**
- **ccNSO Membership** or **ccNSO Members**
- **ccTLD Manager**
- **Territory**
- **Quorum**
- **Simple Majority**
- **Super Majority**
- **Extraordinary Super Majority**
- **Plurality**
- **Representative**
- **Emissary**
- **Statement of Interest**

For purposes of this guideline, the term "Council", refers to the ccNSO Council, and the term "Councillor" refers to a ccNSO Council member. The following terms are also defined for the purposes of this guideline:

- **Nominee:** A person who has been formally nominated and seconded in accordance with the procedures outlined in this guideline.

- **Candidate:** A Nominee who has accepted the nomination to serve on the Council.

- **Selection Process:** The entire process starting with the adoption of the selection process timeline and appointment of the Selection Process Manager by the Council, and concluding with the adoption of the Selection Report by Council.

- **Selection Process Manager:** The staff member designated by the Council to manage and supervise the Council Selection Process.

- **Self-nomination:** When a Representative either nominates oneself or nominates another person from the same entity listed as ccTLD Manager in the IANA Database.

- **Self-seconding:** When a Representative either seconds their own nomination or seconds the nomination of another person from the same entity listed as ccTLD Manager in the IANA Database.

- **Councillor-elect:** A Candidate who has been selected to serve on the Council but whose first term has not yet started.

3.   Purpose of the Guideline

The purpose of this guideline is to document processes and procedures pertaining to the nomination, selection, and removal of ccNSO Council members.

4.   Eligibility to participate in the selection process

4.1.   Eligibility to be selected as a ccNSO Councillor by ccNSO Members

Any individual eligible to serve as a Councillor selected by ccNSO members may be selected in accordance with the procedures outlined in this Guideline.

4.2.   Eligibility to Nominate and Second

Only Representatives of ccTLD managers whose ccNSO membership has been approved by the ccNSO Council no later than one day before the start of the Call for Nominations are eligible to nominate or second a candidate.

If the individual submitting a nomination or seconding is not the Representative, the Selection Process Manager will notify the Representative and request confirmation of the nomination or seconding.

4.3.   Eligibility to Vote

Only Emissaries for ccTLD Managers whose ccNSO membership has been approved by the ccNSO Council no later than one day before the start of the call for Nominations, are eligible to vote for a candidate from their respective region.

5.   Selection Process Timeline

The Council shall appoint the Selection Process Manager and establish the Council Selection Process timeline. When determining the timeline, the Council should consider the following factors:

- Appointment of the Selection Process Manager.

- Nomination period: The Nomination Period of at least 3 weeks.

- Nomination Acceptance Period: This period of at least 1 week.

- Q&A session with Candidates: After the Nomination Acceptance Period closes, a Q&A session should be held, preferably during a ccNSO members' session at ICANN's Annual General Meeting.

- Voting Process Duration:
    - The voting period will last 2 weeks
    - If needed, a run-off election will last 1 week
    - A second round of voting may be required if the quorum is not met

- Review and Adoption of the Selection Process Report by Council.

- The objective is to complete the regular, annual Council Selection Process at least two months before the meeting at which newly elected Councillors take their seats on the Council.
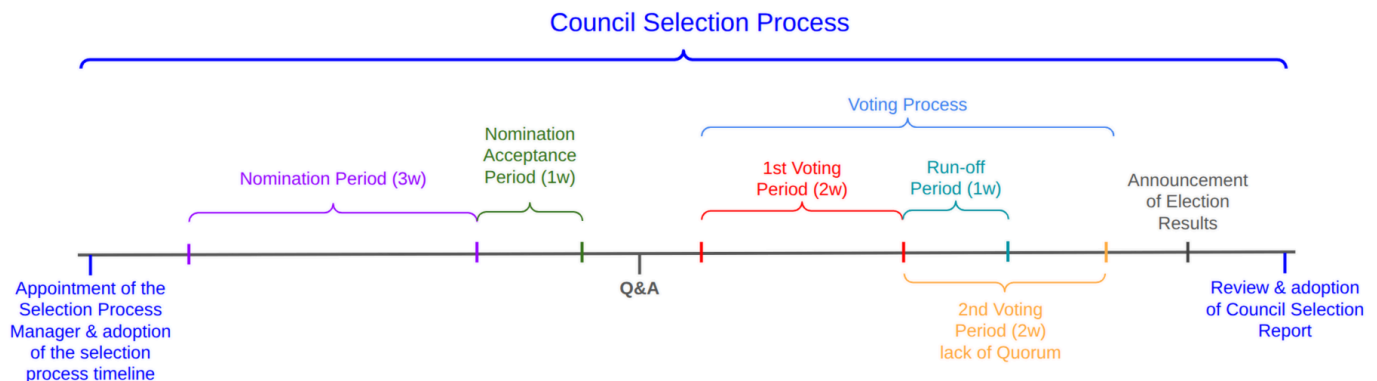
6.   Call for Nominations

6.1.   Nomination Process

The Selection Process Manager will send a Call for Nominations to the ccNSO membership, including:
- Instructions on how to nominate or second a nomination, along with a link to the necessary forms and submission details
- Eligibility criteria for nominating or seconding
- The Selection Process timeline as adopted by the Council

Key details for nominations and seconding:

- Nomination and Seconding Limits:
  - Each Representative may nominate and/or second only one (1) person to serve as Councillor for their respective ICANN Geographical Region.
  - If a Representative nominates more than one person, only the first nomination will be considered valid.

- Self-Nominations:
  - A Representative may self-nominate.
  - A self-nominated individual must be seconded by at least two (2) other Representatives from the same ICANN Geographic Region.

- Seconding Process:
  - If a Representative seconds more than one nomination, only the first seconding will be considered valid.
  - Self-secondings are not valid and will not be processed.

- Nomination and Seconding Forms:
  - All nominations and secondings must be submitted using the nomination or secondment form.
  - To be valid, these forms must be completed in full and submitted within the relevant deadlines.
  - All nominations and secondings will be publicly posted.

6.1.1.   Nomination Form

Your full name:
Your ccTLD:
Your ICANN Geographic Region:
Full name of the person you nominate to the ccNSO Council:

6.1.2.   Secondment Form

Your full name:
Your ccTLD:
Your ICANN Geographic Region:
Full name of the nominee you would like to second:

6.2.   Nomination Acceptance

To be considered a valid candidate for a specific ICANN Geographic Region, an individual must be nominated and seconded by Representatives from that same Region, in accordance with the rules outlined below.

The Selection Process Manager will ask Nominees to confirm their nomination acceptance by completing the Nomination Acceptance Form. This must be submitted along with the following documentation:
- Employer's Letter of Support (from the ccTLD or another relevant organization), which must include an acknowledgment of the time commitment required.
- Nominees must also submit their Statement of Interest.

The nomination will be considered invalid if the Nomination Acceptance Form or any required documentation is

not submitted by the end of the Nomination Acceptance Period. After the Nomination Acceptance Period is closed, the Selection Process Manager will publish a list of Candidates, along with records of the nominations and acceptances, on the ccNSO website.

6.2.1. Nomination Acceptance Form

The Nomination Acceptance Form will include the following items:
- Nominee's Full Name
- Nominee's Affiliation
- Acceptance of the ccNSO Council Selection Guideline and ccNSO Rules, including the Council Removal Mechanism, as well as a commitment to keep the Statement of Interest up to date
- Acceptance of the ICANN Privacy Policy and ICANN website Terms and Conditions

7. Voting

7.1. Voting Process

If there is only one (1) Candidate in an ICANN Geographic Region, that Candidate will be selected to serve on the Council. If there are two or more Candidates for the same ICANN Geographic Region, the selection will be made through a voting, following the timeline specified in Section 5 of this Guideline and the procedures outlined in Section 7.

Voting will be conducted by Emissaries, who will select their preferred candidate on the ballot. The candidate receiving the most votes (plurality) will be declared the Councillor-elect. If two or more Candidates receive an equal number of votes, a run-off vote will be held between those candidates.

7.2. Quorum and results

Only votes that are quorate shall be considered valid. To meet quorum, at least a majority of all Emissaries entitled to vote in the ICANN Geographic Region must have cast a vote.

The Selection Process Manager will announce and publish the voting results on the ccNSO website.

Voting results will be published using ballot IDs only, ensuring that the identity of each voter - including their email address - remains confidential.

8.   Council Selection Report

The Council Selection Report is prepared by the Selection Process Manager and provides a summary of the Council Selection Process. It includes:

- Records of the nomination process
- The list of candidates
- The voting results (if applicable)
- Any relevant observations or notes related to the selection process

The report is submitted to the ccNSO Council for review and adoption. Once the Council adopts the Selection Process Report, the Chair of the Council will notify the ICANN Secretary of the selection. The adoption of the report by the Council marks the formal conclusion of the Council Selection Process.

9.   Change of Affiliation

Candidates and Councillors are required to maintain an up-to-date Statement of Interest (SoI), which includes their current affiliation. By submitting the SoI, they commit to updating it as needed.

A Candidate or Councillor-elect who changes affiliation must inform the Chair of the Council. Upon such notification, the individual is deemed to have withdrawn from candidacy or from serving as a Councillor-elect.

A Councillor serving on Council who changes affiliation during their term must notify the Chair of the Council. If the Chair is the one changing affiliation, the Vice-Chair(s) must be notified instead. The Councillor may continue to serve the remainder of their term unless one or both of the following conditions apply:
- At least 33% of the Emissaries from the relevant ICANN Geographic Region express objection to the Councillor's continued service.
- The new employer objects to the Councillor's continued service on the Council.

To assess whether the Councillor can continue:
- Within one week of receiving the notification, the Chair or Vice-Chair(s) shall instruct the ccNSO Secretariat to consult the Emissaries from the relevant ICANN Geographic Region.
- Emissaries will be asked whether they support or object to the Councillor continuing to serve after the change of affiliation.
- Simultaneously, the Councillor is expected to obtain at least a statement of non-objection from their new employer within the same one-week period.

The ccNSO Secretariat will report the outcome of the consultations to the Chair or Vice-Chair(s), as applicable.

10. Removal of a Councillor

A Councillor removal process may be initiated:
1) By ccNSO Members from the ICANN Geographic Region that selected the Councillor (section 10.1) or
2) By the ccNSO Council (section 10.2).

10.1. Removal Process initiated by ccNSO Members

10.1.1. Process initiation

The removal process can be initiated by at least 25% of the ccNSO Emissaries from the ICANN Geographic Region that selected the Councillor in question, by submitting a written request to the Chair of the Council. The request must include:
a) The Name of the Councillor proposed for removal
b) The list of the ccNSO members initiating the request
c) A supporting rationale in reasonable detail
d) A statement indicating whether the initiators request a questions and answers session with the Councillor during the upcoming ccNSO Members Meeting.

Upon receiving the request, the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Council shall invite the initiators and the Councillor to engage in a dialogue. If this dialogue cannot take place or fails to produce a meaningful resolution within two months, the Chair shall inform the Council accordingly. Council must then formally decide to initiate the removal process.

Once the Council has decided to proceed, the Chair shall inform the ccNSO members from the relevant ICANN Geographic Region about the Council's decision to launch the Councillor Removal Process., Council shall appoint a Removal Process Manager and establish the voting timeline

If the Chair is the subject of the removal request, the Vice-Chair with the longest service on the Council will assume the Chair's responsibilities until the process is complete.

10.1.2. Vote

The Council shall establish the voting timeline, ensuring:

● Voting must begin no earlier than one week after the appointment of the Removal Process Manager

● The voting period must last at least two weeks.

The Removal Process Manager will notify the ccNSO members of the removal request and share the supporting rationale submitted with the request. The Removal Process Manager will also offer the Councillor in question the opportunity to submit a written response, which will also be shared with members.

A vote will then be conducted among the ccNSO Emissaries from the relevant ICANN Geographic Region. If a majority of those who vote support removal, the Councillor shall be removed, and the Council will initiate a new Selection Process for the region. The removed Councillor is not eligible to stand in the resulting selection process.

10.2. Removal Process initiated by the ccNSO Council

If a Councillor substantially misbehaves or consistently neglects its responsibilities as Councillor, the Chair of the Council, along with at least one of the Vice-Chairs, will notify the Councillor to discuss potential solutions to resolve the issue. If the Chair of the Council is the subject of the concern, the longest-serving Vice-Chair will act as Chair for the duration of the process.

If the dialogue is not possible or if it does not produce any significant results within two months, the acting Chair will inform the Council. The Council may:
- Close the process
- Establish a Mediation Committee, or
- Proceed directly to a Council vote on removal

The Mediation Committee should consist of at least three Councillors. At least one of the members on the Mediation Committee should be another Councillor from the same ICANN Geographic Region as the individual in question.

The Mediation Committee has one (1) month to engage with the Councillor and attempt resolution. The Mediation Committee will submit a recommendation to Council on further actions. If 75% of the Council vote in favour of removal, the Councillor is removed, and a new Council Selection Process for that ICANN Geographic Region is initiated. The removed Councillor may stand again in the new selection process.

10.3. Removal Process of a NomCom Appointed Councillor

[Placeholder, pending consultation with among other NomCom]

11.   Miscellaneous

11.1.   ccNSO Internal Guideline

This Guideline is an internal rule of the ccNSO in accordance with the ICANN Bylaws.

11.2.   Omission in or unreasonable impact of the Guideline

In the event the Guideline does not provide guidance and/or the impact is unreasonable to conduct the business of the ccNSO, the ccNSO Council, or the review team, the Chair of the ccNSO will decide.

11.3.   Publication and Review of Guidelines

The Guideline will be published as part of the rules and guidelines of the ccNSO after adoption by the ccNSO Council.

The Guideline will be reviewed after any changes to the relevant sections in the ICANN bylaws or change of the Operating Standards, or otherwise adjusted when considered necessary. In order to   become effective, the updated Guideline must be adopted by the ccNSO Council and published on the ccNSO website.

Before publishing the updated Guideline, the Secretariat will update the version number and insert the date the Guideline was reviewed and adopted by the ccNSO.