

Terms of Reference (ToR)

ccNSO Community Onboarding Program (ccNSO COP)

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Tour de table

1. Introduction and Background.....	2
2. Purpose of the ccNSO COP.....	2
3. COP Selection Committee.....	2
3.1. Composition & Term.....	2
3.2. Role.....	2
4. ccNSO COP mentor and mentee.....	2
4.1. Term of appointment.....	2
4.2. ccNSO COP Mentor.....	3
4.2.1. Eligibility Criteria.....	3
4.2.2. Role.....	3
4.3. ccNSO COP Mentee.....	3
4.3.1. Eligibility Criteria.....	3
4.3.2. Role.....	3
5. Application Process.....	3
6. Selection Process.....	4
6.1. Selection Criteria.....	4
6.1.1. Mentor Requirements.....	4
6.1.2. Mentee Requirements.....	4
6.2. Decision and Notification.....	4
7. Resources.....	5
7.1. Onboarding materials.....	5
7.2. ccNSO Travel Support.....	5

1. Introduction and Background

Based on the ICANN Community Onboarding Program (COP), a ccNSO Community Onboarding Program was designed in December 2018 to improve engagement and retention of new participants within the ccNSO. This was achieved by creating a structured, year-round onboarding process and mentorship framework tailored to the needs and constraints of the ccNSO environment.

In early 2021, the ccNSO Council decided to integrate the ccNSO COP activities into the Outreach and Involvement Committee (OISC). Following a review and closure of the OISC, the former COP-related activities have now been fully incorporated into the activities of the ccNSO Outreach and Mentorship Committee (OMC).

This document sets out the processes and procedures pertaining to the ccNSO COP, as well as the related roles and responsibilities of those involved in the application, assessment, and decision-making. This document - and any changes to it - have to be adopted by the ccNSO Council: the procedures will guide the OMC in implementing and managing the ccNSO COP.

2. Purpose of the ccNSO COP

The purpose of the ccNSO mentoring program is to engage relative newcomers to the ccNSO through an extensive onboarding process that prepares them to participate actively in the work of the ccNSO.

3. COP Selection Committee

3.1. Composition & Term

A ccNSO COP Selection Committee shall be established as a subcommittee of the OMC. The Selection Committee shall consist of three OMC members, at least one NomCom appointed Councillor, and one additional Councillor, preferably representing different regions. Where possible, the committee should also include one member of the ccNSO Travel Funding Committee. The term of appointment shall be one (1) year.

3.2. Role

The ccNSO COP Selection Committee is responsible for receiving and assessing all applications from prospective mentors and mentees under the ccNSO COP. The committee shall ensure that a simple and accessible mechanism is in place for applicants to apply for mentorship or mentee participation. The Committee will assess the applications according to the selection criteria specified in this document.

4. ccNSO COP mentor and mentee

4.1. Term of appointment

- The term of appointment for a mentor shall be one (1) year. A mentor may be re-appointed for up to two additional terms, for a maximum of three terms in total.

- The term of appointment for a mentee shall be one (1) year. Mentees are not eligible for re-appointment.

4.2. ccNSO COP Mentor

4.2.1. Eligibility Criteria

Experienced members of the ccNSO community who can demonstrate knowledge of ccNSO processes, commitment to supporting newcomers, and availability to mentor for the full term.

4.2.2. Role

A mentor is expected to:

- Be available to the mentee through previously agreed upon communication channels, within reasonable time frames throughout the experience
- Guide the mentee through all available resources and share relevant information
- Respond to mentee queries in a timely manner
- Facilitate introductions to ccNSO and broader ICANN Community Members, for instance while attending ICANN meetings
- Provide updates to the ccNSO Council and/or Secretariat when requested
- Attend ccNSO-relevant sessions at ICANN meetings during the mentorship period, whenever possible

4.3. ccNSO COP Mentee

4.3.1. Eligibility Criteria

A mentee is a relatively new member of the ccTLD community who has demonstrated both the potential and desire to actively engage and participate in the work of the ccNSO.

4.3.2. Role

A mentee is expected to:

- Be available to the mentor through previously agreed upon communication channels, within reasonable time frames, throughout the mentorship period
- Review the available ccNSO onboarding materials, and where possible, provide suggestions for improvements
- Maintain an open mind to guidance through ccNSO activities
- Work towards the goal of actively contributing to the work of the ccNSO
- Provide updates the ccNSO Council and/or Secretariat when requested
- Attend ccNSO-relevant sessions at ICANN meetings, whenever possible.

5. Application Process

- Applications shall be open to all eligible candidates for the roles of mentor and mentee.
- The OMC shall provide a simple, accessible application mechanism (e.g., online form or email submission).
- Applications must include the required information as specified in the application form, such as:

- For mentors: relevant experience within the ccNSO, areas of expertise, and willingness to commit time.
- For mentees: background, interest in the ccNSO, goals for the mentorship, and commitment to participate in activities.
- The OMC shall set clear deadlines for submission to ensure timely processing.
- Applications shall be open for a minimum of two weeks
- The ccNSO Secretariat shall promptly convey the applications to the Selection Committee, upon closure of the call for proposals.

6. Selection Process

6.1. Selection Criteria

Applications shall be assessed according to transparent criteria, including but not limited to:

- Affiliation with a ccTLD, regardless of ccNSO membership
- Ability to work and communicate effectively in English
- Relevant experience and expertise
- Engagement potential and motivation
- Commitment to participate fully throughout the mentorship period
- Geographic and stakeholder diversity considerations, where relevant
- Additional criteria as outlined below

6.1.1. Mentor Requirements

- Have a solid understanding of ICANN and the ccNSO Actively contribute to the work of the ccNSO
- Be approachable, accessible, and committed to supporting the onboarding experience of the mentee
- Be willing and able to share best practices and experiences
- Be employed by, or have active backing from a ccTLD manager, with evidence of support for the time commitment required to participate actively in the ccNSO COP

6.1.2. Mentee Requirements

- Have a basic knowledge of ICANN and specifically the ccNSO
- Be a relatively new community member
- Show genuine interest to contribute to the work of the ccNSO
- Be employed by, or have active backing from, a ccTLD manager, with evidence of support for the time commitment to participate actively in the ccNSO COP

6.2. Decision and Notification

Selection decisions shall be based on the merits of each application and the criteria outlined above. The Selection Committee shall ensure transparency and fairness in the evaluation process. Commitment refers to active participation throughout the mentorship period, including pre-, during, and post-ICANN meeting activities.

The Selection Committee shall finalize its recommendations and formally notify selected mentors and mentees in a timely manner, and publish their appointments on the ccNSO website. Unsuccessful applicants shall be informed and may reapply in subsequent cycles if eligible.

If the committee remains deadlocked, the full OMC shall make the final decision. The Committee is not required to provide reasons for declining any application, however, it may do so at its discretion. Applications received prior to the opening date or after the closing date will not be considered.

Committee members should declare a conflict of interest at any stage. After such a declaration, the Committee member ceases to be involved in the selection process.

7. Resources

7.1. Onboarding materials

Various onboarding materials are made available by ICANN, the ccNSO and the OMC, to help both the mentor and the mentee in their experience. Examples may include ICANN learn courses, including for instance “ICANN for beginners” or “ccNSO for newcomers”, or the materials provided under the OMC Buddy Programme.

7.2. ccNSO Travel Support

ICANN supports community members attending ICANN Public Meetings to advance policy development and other work. As part of this, ICANN provides travel support for a limited number of ccNSO selected recipients. The goal of the ccNSO Travel Support is to provide travel funding to a limited number of ccNSO community members who are expected to make significant contributions during the meeting for which they seek travel funding or who the Travel Support Committee want to encourage to participate more broadly. Decisions on whether to award travel support to an application shall be based on the merits of each application and the criteria included in the ccNSO Travel Support Guideline as published on the ccNSO website.