(draft December 2015)

**Civil Society in ICANN – A Brief Definition**

Civil society in ICANN is represented by two main groupings. The descriptions below define the groups and helps you as a civil society member identify where the best fit is for you.

The Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group (NCSG), which has two differently focused constituencies, and by At Large Structures, representing member entities of the At Large Advisory Committee. These groups are how civil society organizations and individuals participate at ICANN, and contribute to its various policymaking activities.

As a civil society organization or individual, these groups offer opportunities for you to be active in ICANN in ways that suit your interests and needs.

**Civil society and the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG)**

NCSG is a home for civil society organizations and individuals within ICANN's policy development processes. The NCSG is one of the four stakeholder groups that form ICANN's Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO), where policy for generic Top-level Domains (gTLDs) is developed.

NCSG's primary role is to represent, through its elected representatives and Constituencies, the interests and concerns of noncommercial registrants and non-commercial Internet users of gTLDs. It provides a voice and representation in the GNSO and other ICANN policy processes to non-profit organizations and individuals who are primarily concerned with the noncommercial, public interest aspects of domain name policy.

All civil society and not for profit organizations and non-commercial individuals are welcome to participate in the discussions and the process. Individuals may be members of the NCSG.

Described below, is how the NCSG is comprised of two constituencies, the Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC), established in 1999 when ICANN's supporting organizations were created, and the Not-for-profit Operational Concerns Constituency (NPOC), which was more recently created and caters to the needs of those more interested in operational interests of the DNS.

**Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC)**

The Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC) represents civil society organizations and individuals in ICANN's GNSO.

The NCUC advocates positions on domain name-related policies that protect and support noncommercial communication and activity on the Internet. As a constituency of the NCSG, the NCUC has real voting power in ICANN's bottom-up, multistakeholder policymaking process, including the opportunity to help elect members of the GNSO Council and a member of the ICANN Board of Directors.

The NCUC has a large, growing and diverse membership of more than 100 noncommercial organizations and 320 individuals from more than 100 countries, across all five ICANN-recognized geographic regions. NCUC members include individuals and non-profit organizations involved in civil liberties and human rights, Internet freedom, consumer protection, education, research, development, and many other areas of public policy advocacy. The NCUC focuses on issues such as freedom of expression, privacy and human rights, as they relate to the domain name system and the policies that govern it.

**Not-for-profit Operational Concerns Constituency (NPOC)**

The Not-for-profit Operational Concerns Constituency (NPOC) focuses on the impact of DNS policies and their effects on the operational readiness and implementation of non-commercial missions and objectives.

NPOC members focus on how proposed and existing GNSO policies and initiatives may uniquely impact the operations of not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations. These operational concerns include domain name registration, expansion of the DNS, fraud and abuse, using the DNS to provide and collect information and how the DNS can best serve their members and communities. NPOC's purpose is to represent the concerns of not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations that have registered an Internet domain.

The operational concerns mentioned above drive how NPOC members actively manage their infrastructure, create and improve internal processes and controls, manage risk, and how they respond to and respect the welfare of the communities they represent.

**At-Large Structures (ALS) and civil society**

The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) provides advice on the activities of ICANN insofar as they relate to the interests of individual Internet users. This includes policies created through ICANN's Supporting Organizations, as well as many other issues for which community input and advice is appropriate.

The At-Large community is structured into five Regional At-Large Organizations (RALO) each composed of a number of regional At-Large Structures (ALS) that consist of, Internet user organizations and unaffiliated users. The RALO each appoint two members of the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), which acts as the representative body of the At-Large community. The At-Large Structures, as the constituent members of the RALO, can be not-for-profit organizations, technical or academic groups, or entities representing business interests, as such many ALS self-identify as civil society organizations.

If your organization is involved in issues that affect the individual’s use of the Internet's domain name system and is a not-for-profit and a civil society organization, then you can register as an "At-Large Structure". Your group should be organized so that participation by individual Internet users predominates in its operation.

As an ALS you support individuals' ability to share their views on ICANN issues, work on involving individual Internet users at the local or issue level in ICANN activities, and to help promote individuals' understanding of, and participation in, ICANN.