ICANN Diversity Data

Providing facts and figures to support diversity enhancements

20 June 2016

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1. Diversity is neither an option nor a secondary requirement for ICANN

While enhancing ICANN's diversity has been agreed on as a principle, previous discussions were often characterized by conflicting views on priorities, dimensions of diversity, or the current levels of diversity. As a new group is about to be formed to enhance Icann's diversity, the importance of the purpose cannot be underestimated : "Maximum participation and transparent deliberations by all affected stakeholders are necessary in order to capture the diversity of views that constitute the (global) public interest in a given instance"[1].

Through the provision of a data collection framework, and a snapshot of ICANN's current diversity metrics the pursued goal of this publication is to enable :

- In the short term, a quick and fact based assessment of the current situation

- In the medium to long term, provide a clear baseline for tracking progress

The initial effort has focused on 190 "ICANN community leaders" as a first step. The 190 individuals, have at least one the following roles within ICANN at the time of collection (April 2016) :

- Board Director
- Supporting Organization or Advisory Committee member of the Council or equivalent body[2]
- gNSO Constituency Executive Committee or Bureau member
- Nominating Committee member
- CCWG-Accountability members

This analysis had led to some early findings.

- ICANN community largely remains North American Region centric. Close to 40% of the 190 leaders considered in this study are from the North American Region. This is by far the largest delegation of the « ICANN leaders » population. On the other hand, Africa, Latin America and Asia are under-represented.
- The dominance of native English speakers within ICANN is very strong. Close to two thirds of the "ICANN Leaders" speak English as their mother tongue. The repartition of languages within ICANN is in stark difference with the global population. It is unclear of course whether the fact that English is the working language is an outcome or a cause for this situation.
- 26% of "ICANN leaders" are women. While this is obviously far from gender balance, it remains difficult to assess whether this ratio is representative of the population of ICANN participants in general. This ratio was not available at the time of writing. It is hard to find a reason for the very limited women representation within the ICANN Board (4 out of 16) and Nomcom (2 out of 20). It would be useful to assess whether the gap in the Board is related to the gender imbalance in the Nominating Committee.
- Across the population of 190 "ICANN leaders", the business sector and academic / technical community are most prominently represented. They represent about 80% of the individuals in the study. On the other hand, Civil Society and Government represent only 10% each approximately.

This publication is a pilot, an experimental attempt at providing facts and figures about ICANN Diversity. Much remains to be done to provide even more insights.

[1] See CCWG-Accountability Supplemental Report, Annex 12,
https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=58723827

[2] For the GAC, Chair and Vice-Chairs were included in this category

For any request related to the above, or interest in following the latest developments of this initiative, please contact Afnic at **ICANN-diversity@afnic.fr**

2. The first step towards enhancing ICANN's diversity

Diversity is a recurring theme within ICANN circles, and ICANN's diversity is a recurring discussion topic outside when engaging around ICANN issues outside of these circles. As part of the ongoing enhancements to ICANN's accountability, a group is being tasked to "*Consider improvements to ICANN's standards for diversity at all levels.*" Indeed, diversity is closely linked to ICANN's legitimacy to act in the global public interest :

> "Maximum participation and transparent deliberations by all affected stakeholders are necessary in order to capture the diversity of views that constitute the (global) public interest in a given instance"[3].

2.1. Diversity is neither an option nor a secondary requirement

While enhancing ICANN's diversity has been agreed on as a principle, previous discussions were often characterized by conflicting views on priorities, dimensions of diversity, or the current levels of diversity. For instance, the same report that called for enhancing ICANN's diversity mentioned : *"While acknowledging the importance of diversity in the accountability mechanisms, commenters have also expressed the view that any diversity requirement should not prevail over skills or experience requirements."[4]*

Reasons to promote diversity are well documented in many organizations and areas :

- more experiences and perspectives = richer discussion and debate
- more involvement by all affected = more informed and effective policy
- more equivalent opportunities for participation = fairer distributions of benefits
- more voice and influence to all affected = greater democracy
- more accountability to all affected = greater institutional legitimacy and vitality

Or, to put it in the negative, the worse the diversity, the more likely that ICANN would have narrow deliberations, misinformed decisions, inequitable outcomes, arbitrary power hierarchies, and loss of public confidence. Thus an organization which ignores the diversity of its stakeholders (current and future) operates sub-optimally and, in an extreme, can collapse.

2.2. A pilot initiative looking for feedback

The purpose of this initiative is to provide clear, transparent and useful facts and figures to facilitate these discussions. This initiative is tentative, as a way to stimulate further discussion, instead of pretending to provide final assessments of ICANN's diversity.

Through the provision of a data collection framework, and a snapshot of ICANN's current diversity metrics the pursued goal is to enable :

- In the short term, a quick and fact based assessment of the current situation

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[3] See CCWG-Accountability Supplemental Report, Annex 12, **https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=58723827**

[4] Id.

- In the medium to long term, provide a clear baseline for tracking progress

This contribution is hopefully going to be helpful to the ongoing work on enhancing ICANN's diversity. Beyond this effort, all stakeholders are encouraged to rely, improve and expand on this data to drive enhancements within their groups or initiatives.

As a consequence, feedbacks are actively sought on quality of data, relevance or enhancements to the framework, as well as potential next steps to expand the initiative itself. All feedbacks can be directed to **ICANN-diversity@afnic.fr**

2.3. Acknowledgements

This initial set of data and analysis has been reviewed by a small, but diverse, group of volunteers, selected because of their commitment to diversity and their willingness to provide this service to the wider community. Through an informal group, they provided valuable and very relevant feedbacks which contribute immensely to the quality of this publication.

- Many thanks for their time, contributions and support to : Fiona Asonga
- Sébastien Bachollet
- Olga Cavalli
- Avri Doria
- Asha Hemrajani
- Jan Aart Scholte

3. Data collection framework

3.1. 190 "ICANN community leaders"

The first question to address when collecting data on diversity is the scope of the database. Because of the ongoing focus on the "Empowered Community", it was decided to focus on a set of ICANN community leaders as a first step. The current set of data includes 190 individuals, which had at least one the following roles within ICANN at the time of collection (April 2016) :

- Board Director
- Supporting Organization or Advisory Committee member of the Council or equivalent body[5]
- gNSO Constituency Executive Committee or Bureau member
- Nominating Committee member
- CCWG-Accountability members

3.2. There are other areas where it would be useful to collect further data in future : e.g. ICANN professional staff, RALOs, etc. See 5.1 below for further elaboration on these next steps. Multiple dimensions of diversity

Recognizing that diversity has multiple dimensions, the goal is to provide a variety of views of diversity within ICANN. Focus has been directed on attributes that were publicly available with a reasonable level of consistency and accuracy. As a consequence the following attributes and definitions are used in this publication.

Other areas worthy of further investigation would be age or race, which have not been collected so far. See 5.1 below for further elaboration on these next steps.

3.2.1. ICANN SO/AC structure

Each individual has been assigned to one "principal" SO or AC within ICANN, from the list below :

- ccNSO
- gNSO
- ASO
- GAC
- ALAC
- SSAC
- RSSAC
- The "Other" category has been added to include the NomCom appointed members of the Board (except when they were also involved in SO or ACs), as well as the President and CEO.

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[5] For the GAC, Chair and Vice-Chairs were included in this category

3.2.2. Regions

There are many regional diversity mechanisms within ICANN. this study is relying on ICANN's definition of Regions as described publicly here : **https://meetings.icann.org/en/regions**. While this definition has shortcomings (documented through the Geographic Review Working Group[6]), relying on an existing definition of regions was far more convenient. These shortcomings include the marginalization of South East Europe, Russia and some Middle East countries within Europe, as well as Caribbean and Central America in Latin America.

Each individual is assigned to an ICANN Region (when available this is based upon the individual's declaration in their statement of interest or application) :

- AF for Africa
- AP for Asia Pacific
- EUR for Europe
- LAC for Latin America and Caribbeans
- NA for North America

3.2.3. Gender

Each individual has been self-identified as Male or Female.

3.2.4. Native language

ICANN provides language services to facilitate access to ICANN and participation in its work for those who do not speak or are not fluent in English, which is the working language. Despite some challenges in data collection, this dimension of diversity may be useful as a proxy to some form of cultural diversity. Assumptions have been made generally when collecting data based on country of birth rather than location.

Because of the high number of languages, the first step has been to map each individual in the data set whose native language was one of the 6 United Nations languages, as well as Portuguese (in line with ICANN's meeting translation policy) :

- Arabic
- Spanish
- French
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Chinese
- English
- Other (for all other native languages)

An alternative view would be based on the top five languages in terms of numbers of speakers globally[7] which would be :

- Mandarin Chinese
- Hindi
- Spanish
- English
- Arabic

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[6] https://www.icann.org/news/announcement-3-2015-12-23-en

[7] See **http://www.vistawide.com/languages/top_30_languages.htm**

Portuguese comes in 6th rank and French 18[th]in this list. Further versions of this work will attempt to merge both approaches to gain a better view.

3.2.5. Sector

As a multistakeholder organization, the balance of participation and engagement of the various stakeholder types is highly important to ICANN. Amongst the various categorizations available, the categories defined by the World Summit on Information Society were chosen as a starting point, which states :

> *We [...] recognize that the management of the Internet as a global facility includes multilateral, transparent, democratic and multi-stakeholder processes, with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities.[8]*

As a consequence, we have assigned each individual to one of the following :

- Governments (including civil servants from national governments, local, regional or global agencies)
- Business
- Civil Society
- Academic / technical community
- Other

Such assignments have sometimes proven challenging, and no authoritative source of data was available. When self-assignments were available (some individuals recognize themselves as part of a category for instance), inconsistencies were sometimes noted : individuals in apparently similar situations would pick different categories. In addition, many individuals would probably be eligible for multiple assignments rather than being assigned to a single category.

For instance, individuals employed by registries (such as Afnic) were categorized as Business, even when not for profit, when most of their employer's revenue was related to the sales of domain names or related services. On the other hand, individual consultants or lawyers whose main business did not appear linked to domain names have been categorized as Civil society.

This area would deserve more work, both on refining definitions and collecting the data in a more systematic and auditable manner, to reach firmer conclusions.

3.3. Privacy implications

By definition, data collected for the purpose of this publication is personal data. The fact that all data was publicly available does not change that qualification.

A review of the legal implications has been initiated, within the French legal framework, but can confirm at this stage the commitment to comply with the following principles :

- No publication of any individual's data

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[8] Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 2015,
http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN96078.pdf

- Any individual within the scope of the study can reach out and have access / modify / remove their data
- Data subset analysis will be kept wide enough to avoid accidentally revealing personal informations.

For any request related to the above, please feel free to contact Afnic at **ICANN-diversity@afnic.fr**

4. Early findings confirm room for improvement

Based on the 190 individuals qualified as "ICANN community leaders" for the purpose of this study, the study reveal some clear areas of improvement for ICANN's diversity.

4.1. ICANN community largely remains North American Region centric

The chart below displays the geographic regions of individuals across the various bodies studied (SO/AC councils, Board, Nominating Committee, CCWG-Accountability, gNSO constituency Excom), as well as overall. Please see section 3.2.2 for related methodology and assumptions.
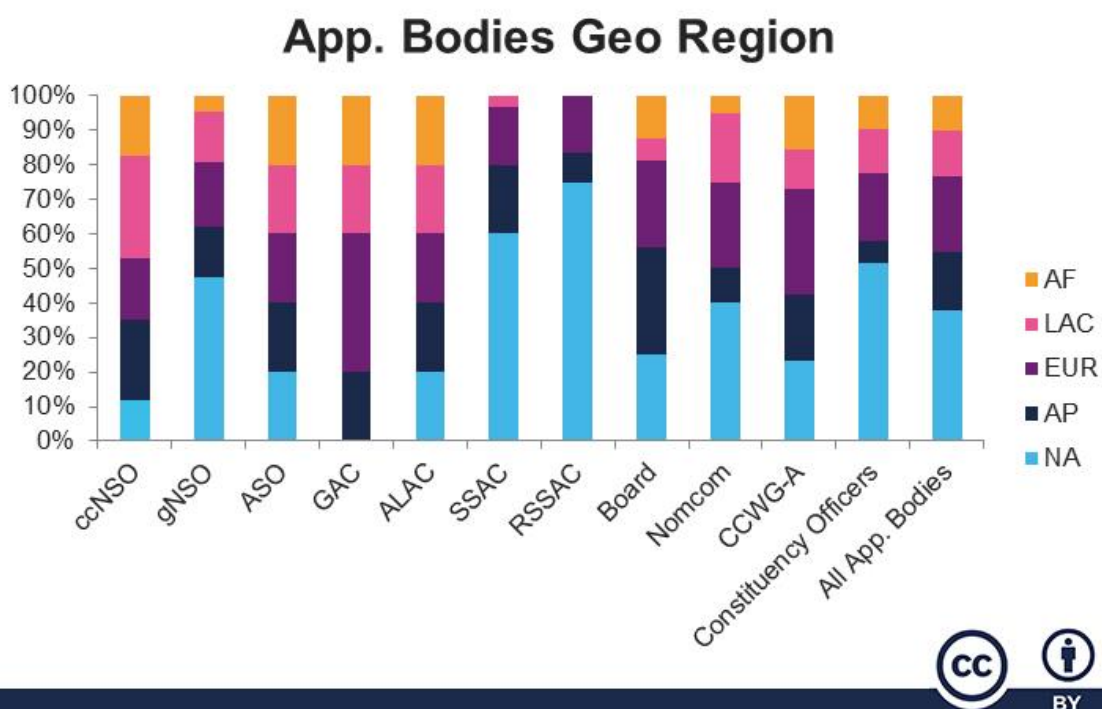
4.1.1. Bylaw driven mechanisms deliver regional balance

ICANN's Bylaws include several measures to ensure regional balance in some of its structures. The efficiency of these Bylaws is apparent, for instance, in the ccNSO council, ALAC, ASO as well as to a lesser extent in the ICANN Board itself. The GAC chair and vice-chairs are also reasonably split across Regions, although none of them comes from the North American Region at the moment.

Icann Leaders by Region
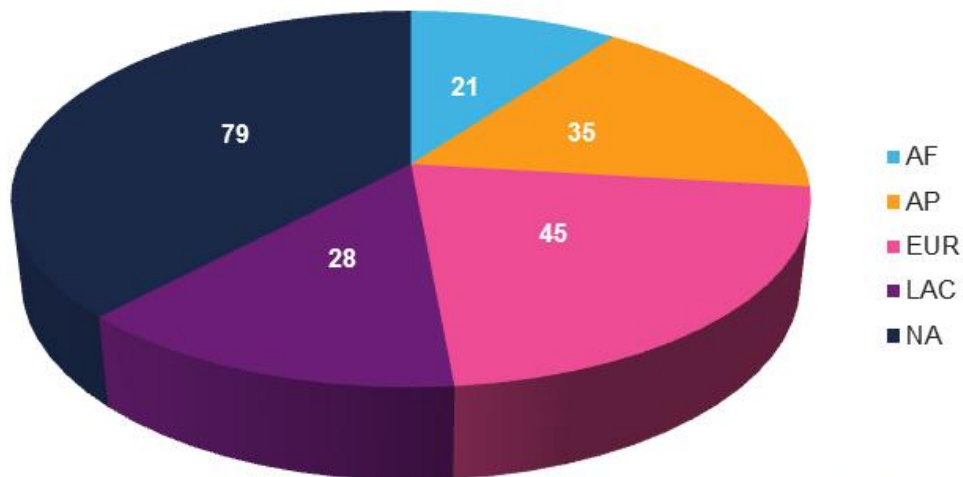
4.1.2. Africa, Latin America and Asia are under-represented

Another striking element of this chart is the very low presence of African Region representatives: only 21 of the 190 "leaders". The Latin American region is slightly above with 28 representatives.

gNSO and NomCom have only one African representative and some groups even have no African presence at all such as SSAC and RSSAC. The latter also has no Latin American representative.

As a reference, Africa has more than 1,1 billion inhabitants, and Latin America around 650 million inhabitants.

Indeed a complementary approach would be to compare with data on regular Internet users. On this measure Asia will be the most underrepresented. Indeed, one of the most glaring absences in ICANN, relative to prominence in the Internet world, is China and India, the two largest countries by Internet users.

4.1.3. North America Region remains dominant

Close to 40% of the 190 leaders considered in this study are from the North American Region. This is by far the largest delegation of the « ICANN leaders » population.

In some areas of ICANN, North American representatives even represent a majority. This is the case for:

- SSAC (18 out of 30)
- RSSAC (9 out of 12)
- gNSO constituency officers (16 out of 31)

10 out of 21 gNSO council representatives are from the North America Region. Within the Contracted Party House, North American representatives have a clear majority.

It is worth noting that these areas of ICANN match precisely the areas where no Bylaw requirement is set for Regional balance.

4.1.4. Europe, Australia and New Zealand also benefit from strong representation

Europe, with 45 individuals (24%) also has a stronger representation than its population (738 million inhabitants, even if the ICANN definition of Europe goes beyond the usual boundaries of Europe). Most of European representation comes from within the European Union, and mostly the western countries. With Australia (7 individuals) and New Zealand (1), the "Western" dominance remains quite strong.

4.2. A large majority of ICANN leaders are native English speakers

The chart below displays the native language of "ICANN Leaders" across the various bodies studied (SO/AC councils, Board, Nominating Committee, CCWG-Accountability, gNSO constituency Excom), as well as overall. Please see section 3.2.4 for related methodology and assumptions.
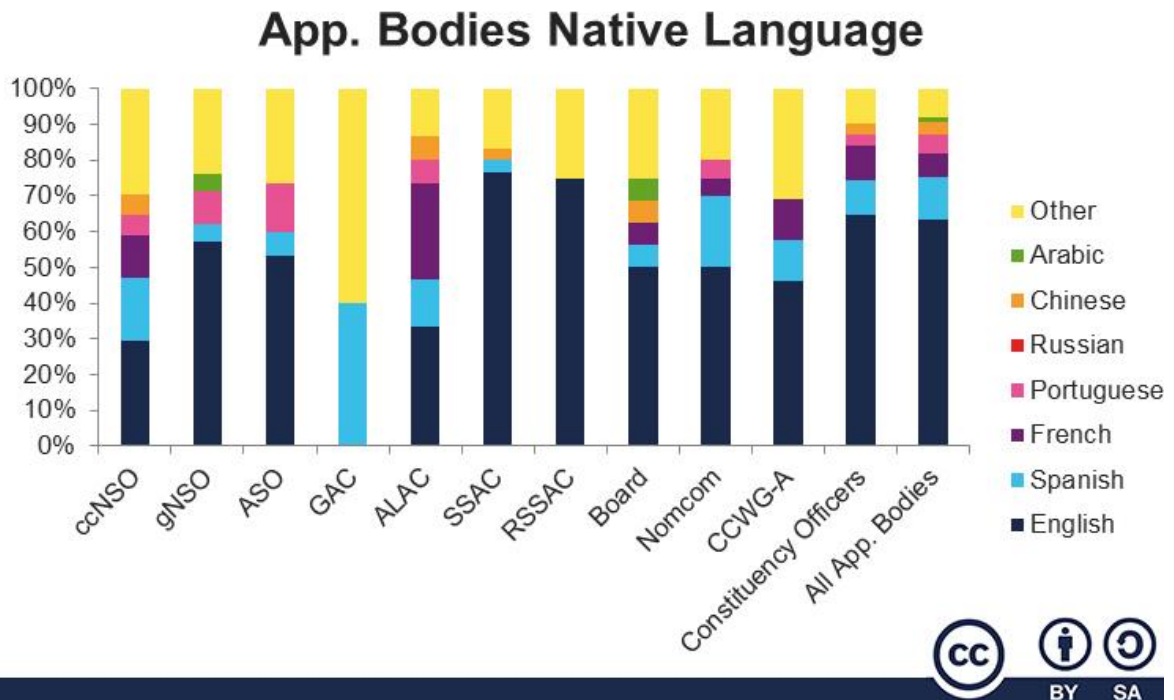
4.2.1. 63% of ICANN Leaders are native English speakers

The dominance of native English speakers within ICANN is very strong. Close to two thirds of the "ICANN Leaders" speak English as their mother tongue. This is to be compared with a native English speaker population of roughly 400 million people in the world (5,5% of the world population). English is the third largest language spoken after Mandarin and Spanish according to **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_languages_by_number_of_native_speakers**

The repartition of languages within ICANN is in stark difference with the global population. It is unclear of course whether the fact that English is the working language is an outcome or a cause for this situation.

There is a strong correlation of course between this situation and the Regional balance situation as described above, because all North American countries have English as their primary language.

4.2.2. English fluency is a core skill for ICANN Leaders.

While no specific data has been collected on the issue at this time, the issue is perhaps less English native speaking and more English fluency. The proportion of leaders with English fluency is likely to be 90+%, suggesting that the deeper exclusion occurs when one does not speak English, whether as first or supplementary language.

4.2.3. Slightly better balance is achieved when Regional requirements are set

Organizations within ICANN where English speaking dominance is lower than 50% are ALAC, GAC, ccNSO, NomCom and the Board. As mentioned previously, these organizations appear all have Regional balance requirements.

4.2.4. Low levels of non-native English speakers in SSAC and RSSAC

Less than 1 in 4 of SSAC and RSSAC members are not native English speakers. Considering the type of issues that these committees have been dealing with in the last few years (such as the introduction of IDNs), one may question whether this should be addressed in the future.

4.3. Gender balance concerns in some areas

The chart below displays individuals' gender across the various bodies studied (SO/AC councils, Board, Nominating Committee, CCWG-Accountability, gNSO constituency Excom), as well as overall. Please see section 3.2.3 for related methodology and assumptions.

Icann leaders gender

- ■ Male
- ■ Female
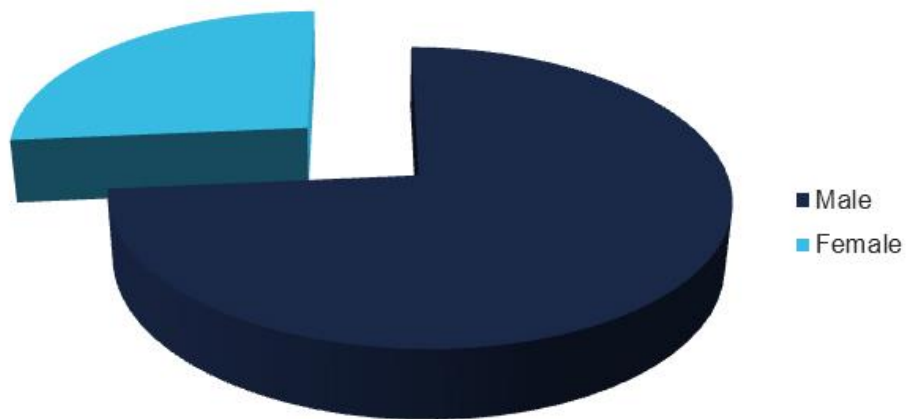
4.3.1. Women representation at leadership level is around 25%

26% of "ICANN leaders" are women. While this is obviously far from gender balance, it remains difficult to assess whether this ratio is representative of the population of ICANN participants in general. This ratio was not available at the time of writing.

4.3.2. Some organizations within ICANN achieve a reasonable level of gender balance

App. Bodies gender
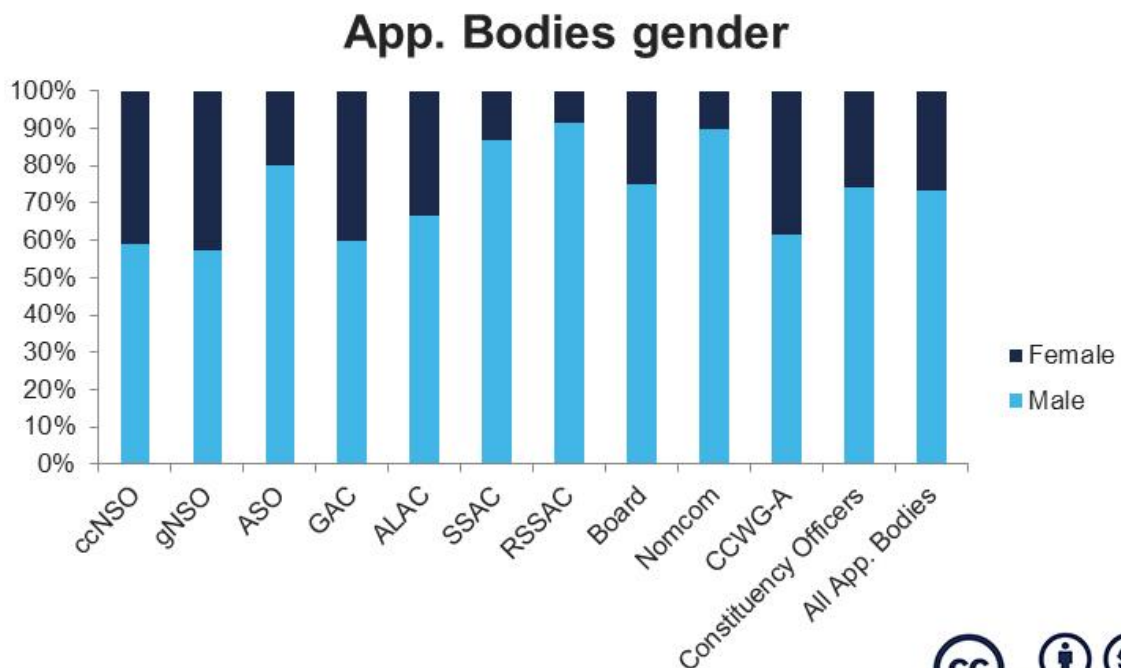
The ccNSO council, gNSO council, GAC chair and vice-chairs, as well as the CCWG-Accountability members, include around 40% of women in their ranks. In the absence of any Bylaw requirement, it would be useful to understand whether this is a consequence of how these communities are represented at ICANN, of awareness and attention to this issue, or of specific policies.

4.3.3. Women are under-represented in the most technical parts of ICANN

Only one woman in RSSAC out of 12, 4 out of 30 within SSAC and 3 out of 15 in ASO : women representation in the most "technical" communities in ICANN remain even lower than in the rest of ICANN.

The fact that many of these representatives are drawn from a pool of technical experts, amongst which women remain rare, may explain this situation, at least partly. Still, the situation can hardly be found satisfactory. Technical community stakeholders have started to address this issue, with some positive developments in gender distribution of IETF leadership in recent years.

4.3.4. Unexplained imbalance within the Nomcom and Board

It is hard to find a reason for the very limited women representation within the ICANN Board (4 out of 16) and Nomcom (2 out of 20). While the Board gender balance is similar to the "ICANN leaders" community balance, one would think that the NomCom (which appoints about half of the Board members) would be in a position to correct this gap. It would be useful to assess whether a this gap is related to the gender imbalance in the Nominating Committee.

4.4. Government and civil society participation remains limited

The chart below displays which stakeholder group or sector of "ICANN leaders" across the various bodies studied (SO/AC councils, Board, Nominating Committee, CCWG-Accountability, gNSO constituency Excom), as well as overall.

As mentioned in the methodology section, this data may be subject to caution on an individual basis, so readers are encouraged to refrain jumping to conclusions until further analysis. Please see section 3.2.5 for a more detailed description methodology and assumptions.
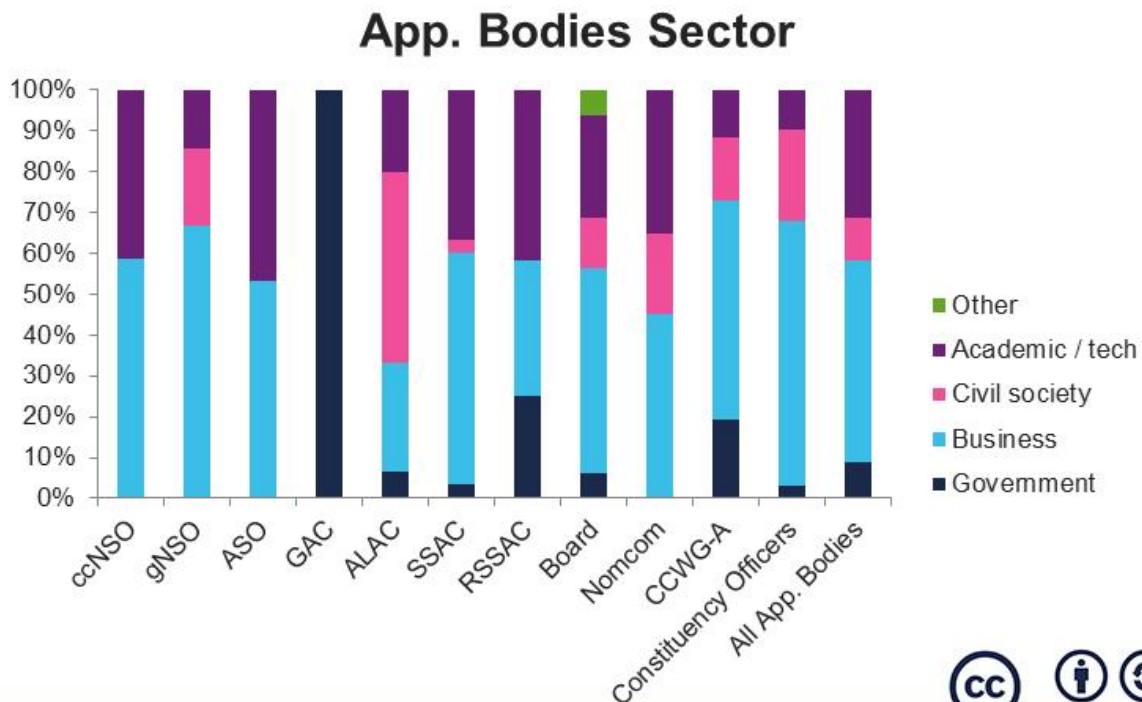
Across the ample population of 190 "ICANN leaders", the business sector and academic / technical community are most prominently represented. They represent about 80% of the individuals in the study. On the other hand, Civil Society and Government represent only 10% each approximately.

These statistics should however be taken with caution because some underlying factors heavily influence this outcome such as :

- The GAC "leadership" is the smallest group of the sample (5 individuals)
- SSAC (30) and RSSAC (15) are, in contrast, large groups with strong academic and business presence
- Most ICANN bodies are designed to represent a category of stakeholders : as a consequence, the multistakeholder aspect is designed to be achieved globally, not necessarily within each SO or AC.
- The ICANN Board and CCWG-Accountability are the subgroups where a slightly better balance is achieved. It is worth noting that this is achieved by design (Charter or Bylaws).
- The structure of the gNSO in two party houses explains the strong business presence.

5. Next steps : improving and expanding the data

This publication is a pilot, an experimental attempt at providing facts and figures about ICANN Diversity. Much remains to be done to provide even more insights. A first step will of course be a review of the assessment on a yearly basis to track progress.

Beyond that, the main areas of improvement for the study itself are highlighted below.

5.1. Expanding the scope to Staff leaders and Review Teams

Staff leaders play a significant role in influencing decisions, recruiting participants and driving the organization's culture. It would be useful to include in the study the "ICANN Global Leaders" or, even better, from Global Leaders to all ICANNVice Presidents within ICANN.

Review Teams and Cross Community Working Groups are also becoming more and more influent within ICANN. Including their membership into the study would be a logical next step.

Gathering some historical data maybe also useful to draw some tendencies.

5.2. Refining definitions and adding extra dimensions

As discussed above, some definitions (especially sector definitions and language related data), would deserve refinements. It would also be useful to be able to analyze in more details the geographic diversity, by investigating on a country by country basis, or by analyzing groups of countries together (such as EU member states, or G77 states…).

One possible way wouldl be to collect two sets of graphs in the language diversity section – one for UN languages and one reflecting the world's most widely spoken languages. Or merge both lists to include the 7 languages presented in this study as well as Hindi, Bengali, Japanese and German.

In addition to these enhancements, additional dimensions would be worth investigating :

- Age of participants
- Type of skills and education (technical, legal, policy…)
- Place of education
- Number of ICANN meetings attended to

Another challenge of such a study is how best to cover cultural diversity. Levels of participation in ICANN from major Asian countries do not reflect their technical maturity and Internet usage e.g. China, Japan, Korea, India. At least for China, Japan, Korea, one could question how much is due to language, but more importantly, how much is due to cultural differences? It is not in some cultures, for instance, to stand up and speak and argue/debate. However, this is very much a part of life at ICANN meetings.

Suggestions are highly welcome at **icann-diversity@afnic.fr**

5.3. Considering how to streamline data collection

ICANN currently collects data about participants and leaders in several ways :

- Meeting registration
- Statements of Interest
- Profiles on the ICANN website
- ICANNWiki profiles

Should ICANN want to invest in building a reliable, accurate set of metrics on diversity to monitor its progress, considering should be given at integrating these systems, ensuring alignment of type of data collected, and regular quality checks. Engaging with ICANN staff and community on how best to achieve this would be extremely helpful.