



Community consultation on increasing diversity in APNIC community leadership

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from Stage 1 of APNIC's community consultation on increasing diversity in community leadership. The findings provide insights into barriers, leadership pathways, and areas for improvement to inform Executive Council consideration of future actions.

Background

In February 2026, the APNIC Executive Council (EC) directed the APNIC Secretariat to consult the community on diversity in the EC and across community leadership, specifically, the barriers and friction points that affect whether people put themselves forward as EC candidates or participate in leadership roles.

The purpose of the community consultation is to provide the EC with a deeper understanding of Member and community perspectives to inform their decision-making.

The community consultation on increasing diversity in APNIC community leadership aims to:

- Identify barriers and friction points
- Identify where further improvements may be valued

The Secretariat structured the community consultation in two stages to ensure accessible participation:

- Stage 1 – Online engagement:
 - Three open listening sessions via Zoom
 - Post-session survey
 - Discussion via a dedicated [Orbit mailing list](#)
- Stage 2 – APNIC 62 session
 - A dedicated session at APNIC 62 (in-person and remote participation)

At the completion of the consultation, the EC will review the findings and consider appropriate next steps at the end-2026 EC meeting.

Stage 1 Summary Report — Online Engagement

Participation

Between June to August 2026, the APNIC Secretariat conducted three online sessions.

A total of 49 participants from 21 economies took part in the sessions. Participants included APNIC community leaders as well as a broad range of stakeholders across the Internet ecosystem, including NIRs, NOGs, and other organizations. The gender representation was 59% men and 41% women. 43% of participants were APNIC Members or Account Holders. Participants were also invited to complete a voluntary post-session survey, which provided additional input.

A dedicated Orbit mailing list was also established. However, no submissions were received.

Findings summary

Overall, participants discussed diversity in several dimensions beyond gender, particularly geographic, skills and professional diversity. In the post-consultation survey, professional background and expertise was the most selected diversity priority among respondents (83%, 10 of 12).

Inputs have been analysed and categorized into the following three sections, each further split into themes:

- a. Barriers and friction points that affect whether people put themselves forward as EC candidates or participate in leadership roles.
- b. Solutions raised to address barriers and friction points.
- c. Examples of solutions from other organizations cited by participants.

a. Barriers and friction points

Theme 1. Unclear pathway to leadership and limited transparency around leadership roles, candidates and election processes

Participants said they were unsure how to progress into leadership roles. Election processes, eligibility, and pathways from community participation to leadership were specifically referenced as areas in which participants lacked awareness.

They also noted limited visibility of the responsibilities, clarity around obligations, required skills, and time commitments expected of community leaders, that is, what leadership roles involved in practice.

Notable quotes related to the above include:

“Just lack of information on the process involved.”

— *Oceania participant, 18 June*

“Many community members do not clearly understand how to progress into leadership roles.”

— *South Asia participant, 15 July*

“I would like to know what an EC member does, how much time it requires, what skills are expected, how decisions are made, what support is available.”

— *Oceania participant, 15 July*

“I think a lot of people not even think that they could step into one of these leadership roles”

— *Out of Asia Pacific region participant, 11 August*

The post-consultation survey responses also reflected this theme, with limited awareness of leadership pathways selected by 67% of respondents and lack of clarity on how to get involved by 42%.

Theme 2. Success in leadership elections is considered difficult for some candidates due to current election dynamics

Some participants reported that capable candidates may be discouraged from standing for election because they perceive their chances of success to be limited under the current election dynamics. Participants described election dynamics as favouring established candidates, citing factors such as incumbent advantage, popularity dynamics, and voting blocs. Some participants also noted that these dynamics may create additional challenges for candidates from less represented economies.

Notable quotes related to the above include:

“Pacific feel they're too small... what's the point of even being part of something that you will fail anyway?”

— *Oceania participant, 18 June*

“With the current voting system, I think it is pretty tough.”

— *South Asia participant, 15 July*

“Those people who have been in the incumbent roles for a while are going to definitely get some kind of preference.”

— *Oceania participant, 15 July*

“Right now, there are blocks of countries that are going to do blocks of voting, and the country voting is already decided.”

— *South East Asia participant, 11 August*

The post-consultation survey did not explore perceptions of incumbent advantage, voting blocs, or election accessibility.

Theme 3. Limited time, resources and organizational support are major barriers to participation

Participants recognized that community leadership roles require a significant investment of time from the participant, often over a period of years.

They noted community leadership and volunteer activities are seen as difficult to balance with work responsibilities, particularly when employers do not actively support community involvement. They said the required commitment is difficult to sustain without employer support, for example, allowing dedicated time within their workday. They noted many employers do not recognize the value of community leadership roles.

Notable quotes related to the above include:

“We don't get permission to participate in community activities (...) it becomes our personal agenda.”

— *South Asia participant, 18 June*

“Our management is unaware of this (...) Is it possible to make a program for them also? So, they can understand why the community is important for running a safe Internet in the future”

— *South Asia participant, 18 June*

“It may not be quite a barrier, but I think that since potential candidates are employed by their respective organizations, the significance of those organizations is called into question when they try to contribute to community activities.”

— *East Asia participant, 15 July*

“You literally have to accept that it will take up some of your personal time, and you've got to manage that within limits, making sure you balance your day job, working on a board role, and also engaging with your family.”

— *Oceania participant, 11 August*

“Time and effort are in short supply for some of us”

— *Oceania participant, 11 August*

In the post-consultation survey, lack of time was selected by 58% of respondents.

b. Solutions raised to address barriers and friction points

Theme 1. Clarify leadership pathways

Participants suggested providing clearer information about leadership roles, responsibilities, time commitments, required skills, decision-making processes, available support, election processes, and how community members can progress into leadership positions.

Notable quotes related to the above include:

“The pathway from the community participation to the leadership actually is not always clear (...) More transparency about leadership roles, responsibility, selection process, and the expected competencies would encourage greater participation.”

— *South Asia participant, 15 July*

“I would like to know what an EC member does, how much time it requires, what skills are expected, how decisions are made, what support is available.”

— *Oceania participant, 15 July*

Theme 2. Review voting and candidate selection processes

Participants suggested reviewing election, nomination and voting mechanisms to increase opportunities for diverse candidates.

They also suggested providing more information about candidates through profiles, community Q&A processes, and candidate statements (using mixed media including video), to help voters make more informed decisions.

Notable quotes related to the above include:

“One Member should be able to vote to one EC candidate so that we can break this bunching of votes.”

— *South Asia participant, 15 July*

“Sometimes I think we have to think about the voting system itself. Does it really reflect the community's needs?”

— *East Asia participant, 15 July*

“We need a profile of the candidates (...) All these candidates should be given time earlier, maybe four, six months earlier to put up their profile (...) And then they answer the questions for the public, of the APNIC Members”

— *South East Asia participant, 11 August*

Theme 3. Develop mentoring and leadership programs

Participants saw value in strengthening the leadership pipeline.

They supported structured programs to develop future leaders, specifically mentioning mentoring, coaching, governance education, leadership training, outreach to support underrepresented communities, and opportunities to develop practical experience in areas such as finance, strategy and community engagement to support progression into community leadership roles.

Notable quotes related to the above include:

“A structured leadership mentorship program could help fellows and active community members develop the skill, confidence, and experience needed to transition into the community leadership position.”

— *South Asia participant, 15 July*

“Maybe create an APNIC Emerging Leaders Program for Members interested in governance. This could run annually and include governance fundamentals, finance, strategy responsibilities, and community engagement.”

— *Oceania participant, 15 July*

“APNIC has no shortage of talented people across the Asia Pacific. The opportunity is to build a leadership pipeline that identifies, mentors, and empowers those people especially from emerging economies and underrepresented communities so that standing for the Executive Council feels like a natural step rather than an intimidating leap.”

— *Oceania participant, 15 July*

“The Pacific Island communities usually do not advocate or articulate issues that may be relevant. In other communities, I think a helping hand - outreach and awareness can be useful in enabling people to take a first step.”

— *Oceania participant, 15 July*

“We should look at the entire pipeline. Who are the young people in our industry right now?”

— *Oceania participant, 11 August*

c. Examples from other organizations

Participants cited examples from other organizations that targeted different dimensions of diversity, including skills diversity, representation of underrepresented groups, and informed candidate selection.

1. Governance mechanisms that address skills and professional diversity

ICANN Nominating Committee (NomCom) and auDA's nomination committee were cited as examples of identifying candidates based on required skills and organizational needs, helping bring a broader mix of expertise and professional backgrounds into leadership.

2. Refining candidate requirements and eligibility criteria

The NZNOG trustee selection process was described as a model where candidates self-nominate and are interviewed and assessed against defined requirements before appointment.

3. Support informed voting

The ICANN At-Large election process was cited as an example of how members can be supported to make more informed voting decisions. In this model, candidates answer community questions and participate in public Q&A sessions.

Participants also noted that candidates can provide video introductions, along with other information that helps APNIC Members better understand their experience, perspectives, and priorities before voting.

Limitations

The findings in this report reflect participant perspectives and are not statistically representative of the wider APNIC community. Participation was voluntary and public sessions may have shaped what participants felt comfortable sharing.

Next steps

An in-person consultation session will be held during [APNIC 62](#) in Mumbai. Community members who are unable to attend in person will also be able to participate in the discussion live online.

This session will further refine the themes and findings from the online sessions and incorporate additional perspectives.

Findings from both stages will be consolidated into a synthesis report and published publicly.

The EC will review the findings and consider appropriate next steps, with the consultation report shared with the community following the December EC meeting.

Appendix A Methodology and analysis approach

The online consultation used a mixed-methods approach:

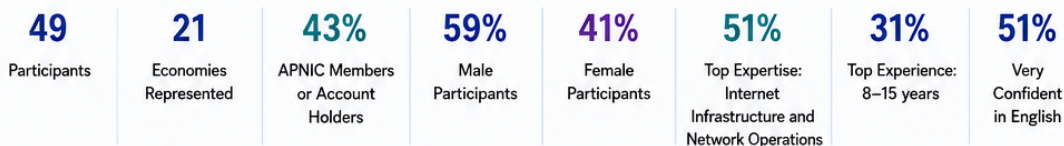
- Registration data was used to describe participant profiles.
- Consultation transcripts and chat comments were analysed thematically to identify recurring barriers, proposed solutions and examples shared by participants. Themes were reviewed across sessions and consolidated where similar ideas appeared in multiple contributions.
- Post-consultation survey responses were used to understand which barriers and diversity priorities were most frequently selected by respondents. Survey findings are presented in this report as supplementary context and should be interpreted alongside discussion themes.

Method	Data used
Registration form	Registration data from 49 participants who attended, excluding APNIC staff and EC members.
Online listening sessions	Transcripts and chat comments from three online sessions with 49 participants, excluding APNIC staff and EC members.
Post-consultation survey	12 survey responses.
Mailing list (Orbit)	0 submissions.

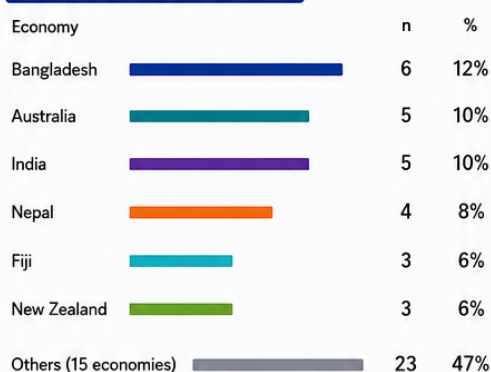
Appendix B Participation profile

This profile shows which perspectives were represented and helps contextualise the findings; it is not representative of the broader APNIC community.

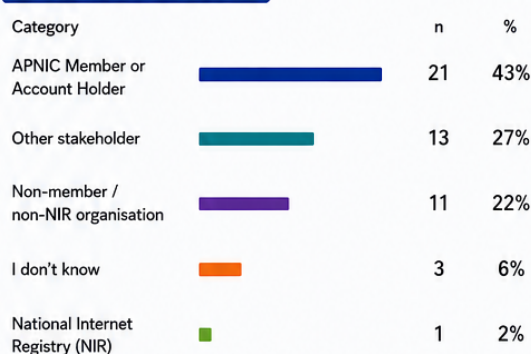
KEY TAKEAWAYS



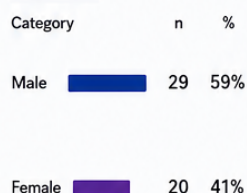
TOP ECONOMIES REPRESENTED



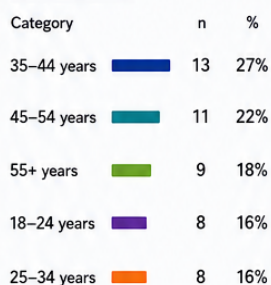
RELATIONSHIP WITH APNIC



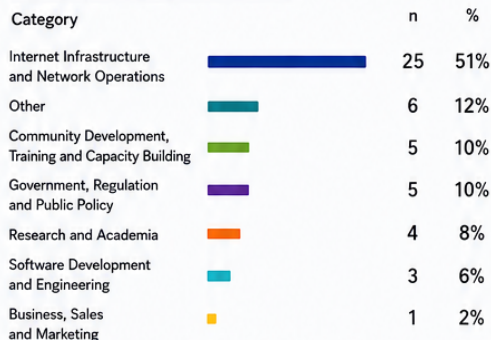
GENDER



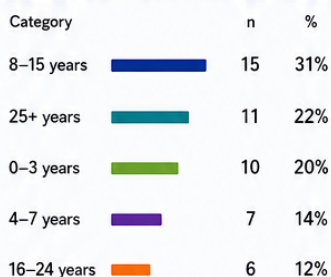
AGE GROUP



PRIMARY AREA OF EXPERTISE



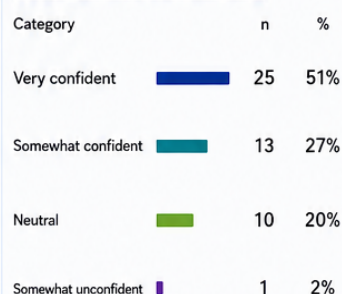
YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE



SENIORITY LEVEL



ENGLISH CONFIDENCE LEVEL



Appendix C Session participation overview

Date	Participants	Economies represented	Post-survey responses
18 June 2026	10	6	6
15 July 2026	24	15	2
11 August 2026	15	11	4