

At-Large Final Report Recommendations of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group Workspace

Comment Close Date	Statement Name	Status	Assignee (s)	Call for Comments Open	Call for Comments Close	Vote Open	Vote Close	Date of Submission	Staff Contact and Email	Statement Number
24 Apr 2016	Final Report Recommendations of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group	ADOPTED 11Y, 0N, 0A	Tijani Ben Jemaa Assisted by: Jean-Jacques Subrenat Narine Khachatryan	09 Apr 2016	15 Apr 2016	18 Apr 2016	22 Apr 2016	23 Apr 2016	Robert Hoggarth robert.hoggarth@icann.org	AL-ALAC-ST-0416-02-00-EN

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Brief Overview

Purpose: The cross-community Geographic Regions Review Working Group has produced its Final Report in which it proposes a series of recommendations regarding the ongoing application of the organization's geographic regions framework. The ICANN Board is interested in further community reaction to those recommendations and has instructed the Staff to open and manage a public comment period of at least 120 days to give the community an opportunity to thoroughly review the proposals and provide any additional comments on the working group recommendations.

Current Status: Community feedback is requested concerning the Working Group recommendations.

Next Steps: Upon completion of the public comment period, staff will summarize and forward any community input to the ICANN Board of Directors.

Section I: Description, Explanation, and Purpose

The cross-community Geographic Regions Review Working Group has produced its Final Report in which it proposes a series of recommendations regarding the ongoing application of the organization's geographic regions framework. The ICANN Board is interested in further community reaction to those recommendations and has instructed the Staff to open and manage a public comment period of at least 120 days to give the community an opportunity to thoroughly review the proposals and provide any additional comments on the working group recommendations.

The Working Group's Final Report provides an extensive series of conclusions, proposals and recommendations including:

1. The Working Group concludes that the general principle of geographic diversity is valuable and should be preserved.
2. Application of the geographic diversity principles must be more rigorous, clear and consistent.
3. Adjusting the number of ICANN geographic regions is not currently practical.
4. No other International Regional Structures offer useful options for ICANN.
5. ICANN must formally adopt and maintain its own unique Geographic Regions Framework.
6. The Community wants to minimize any changes to the current structure.
7. ICANN must acknowledge the sovereignty and right of self-determination of states to let them choose their region of allocation.
8. ICANN communities have flexibly applied geographic diversity principles over the years. While the Board should remain strictly subject to the current framework, flexibility should be preserved for other structures.
9. "Special Interest Groups" or "Cross-Regional Sub-Groups" offer new diversity opportunities.
10. Implementation mechanisms and processes must be developed by Staff; and
11. The Board must preserve its oversight and future review opportunities.

The comment period will give individuals and community groups an opportunity to thoroughly review the proposals and provide any additional comments on the working group recommendations.

Section II: Background

The ICANN Board chartered a cross-community working group to (1) identify the different purposes for which ICANN's Geographic Regions are used; (2) determine whether the uses of ICANN's Geographic Regions (as currently defined, or at all) continue to meet the requirements of the relevant stakeholders; and (3) submit proposals for community and Board consideration relating to the current and future uses and definition of the ICANN Geographic Regions.

Over the course of its deliberations, the Working Group (1) reviewed the underlying history, objectives and general principles of ICANN's Geographic Regions Framework, (2) identified the various applications and functions to which the regions framework has been applied by existing structures and the ICANN staff; and (3) engaged the ICANN community in an extensive collaborative dialogue about issues and potential solutions to maintain and potentially expand the value of the geographic regions framework for the entire community.

The Working Group concluded its work and presented its Final Report recommendations to the Chair of the ICANN Board on 4 November 2015. The Working Group recommended that the Board direct staff to manage a public comment forum period to give the community an opportunity to review and evaluate the recommendations and share comments with the Board before it begins its assessment of and deliberations on the recommendations. The Board agreed.

Section III: Relevant Resources

[Final Report by the Geographic Regions Review Working Group](#) [EN] [PDF, 409 KB]

[\[AR\]](#) [PDF, 283 KB]

[\[ES\]](#) [PDF, 377 KB]

[\[FR\]](#) [PDF, 331 KB]

[\[PT\]](#) [PDF, 313 KB]

[\[RU\]](#) [PDF, 323 KB]

[\[ZH\]](#) [PDF, 763 KB]

Section IV: Additional Information

Section V: Reports

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FINAL VERSION TO BE SUBMITTED IF RATIFIED

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FINAL DRAFT VERSION TO BE VOTED UPON BY THE ALAC

The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) appreciates the excellent work done by the Geographic Regions Review Working Group. The improvement this final report brings is appreciated.

The origin of the ICANN Geographic Regions was the need to ensure a geographic diversity within the ICANN Board. We strongly believe that the Geographic Regions review should address that very aspect to preserve and improve the geographic diversity in the ICANN Board composition.

The ALAC agrees that the general principle of geographic diversity is valuable and should be preserved and that its application must be more rigorous, clear and consistent.

One aspect of the rigorousness, the clarity and the consistency should be to define one single criterion for the identification of a person's region. Today, for the ICANN Board of Directors, it is a choice between citizenship (or origin) and residency. This non-rigorous approach may result in having a large number of the Board Directors residing and working for long time in the same region, thus having the same spirit and the same interests.

The ALAC supports ICANN formally adopting and maintaining its own record of the assignment of countries and territories to ICANN's Geographic Regions.

Nevertheless, the ALAC does not think that it is appropriate to approach the adjustment of the number of the ICANN Geographic Regions from the side of organizational or financial consequences since the mission of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group is to find the best arrangement that may lead to more diversity as per the ICANN bylaws. The number of regions should not curb the improvement when necessary.

While we recognize that reducing the current number of the ICANN Geographic Regions is neither a desired nor a viable option, we find that adding new regions may address some of the concerns raised by parts of the community regarding their representation (the Arab and small islands communities for example).

However, the ALAC agrees for the time being to leave the structure “as is”, with countries and territories having the right to “opt in” for a change in Region if they so wish. The request should be initiated or supported by the local government of the relevant country or territory, taking into account the views of the local Internet community.

We also agree that in the sake of avoiding any interference in the relationship between the dependent countries or territories and their “mother countries”, ICANN should give the opportunity to the dependent countries/territories to petition to move to a different ICANN Geographic Region. However, no territory re-assignment should be made if objections are raised by the Government of the “mother country”.

The ALAC believes that no country/territory should be able to seek reassignment more frequently than once every 5 years, using the same cycle of the ICANN Geographic Regions Review.

We do not believe that the reassignment to a region that is not geographically adjacent to the existing region should be restricted. For example if a dependent country/territory wishes to be reassigned to the region where it is physically situated but the region is not adjacent to the mother country's one, we do not understand why this kind of reassignment is not permitted.

The ALAC is in full support of recognizing and accommodating “Special Interest Groups” based on common specificities such as culture, language, etc., assuming that those “Special Interest Groups” do not replace the adopted geographic regions.

As for the implementation mechanisms, and in order to ensure a smooth 5 year review and a high quality of the process by which re-assignments are considered, the ALAC suggests that ICANN set up an Ombudsman for Global Issues (OGI), assisted by a handful of experts from various parts of the community. This small group would receive requests from governments, associations, groups or individuals wishing to avail themselves of the “opt in” or “opt out” scheme being considered. This OGI would report to the Board, bringing to their attention specific cases and proposing solutions. This would not, or very marginally, impact the role of the existing Ombudsman.

Finally, the ALAC believes that the Board should have the ultimate oversight over the ICANN Geographic Regions’ framework including the 5 years review and reassignment process.

FIRST DRAFT SUBMITTED

The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) appreciates the excellent work done by the Geographic Regions Review Working Group. The improvement this final report brings is appreciable.

The origin of the ICANN Geographic regions was the need to ensure a geographic diversity inside the ICANN board. We strongly think that the Geographic Regions review should be addressed from that very side to preserve and improve the geographic diversity in the ICANN board composition.

The ALAC agrees that the general principle of geographic diversity is valuable and should be preserved and that its application must be more rigorous, clear and consistent.

One aspect of the rigorousness, the clarity and the consistence should be to fix one single criterion of belonging to a region while it is now a choice between citizenship (or origin) and residency for the board population. This non rigorous, non clear and non consistent situation may lead to having most of the Board directors residing and working for long time in the same region, thus having the same spirit and the same interests.

The ALAC supports ICANN formally adopting and maintaining its own record of the assignment of countries and territories to ICANN's Geographic Regions

Nevertheless, the At-Large Advisory Committee doesn't think that approaching the adjustment of the number of the ICANN Geographic regions from the side of organizational or financial consequences is appropriate since the mission of the Geographic regions review WG is to find the best arrangement that may lead to a better diversity as per the ICANN bylaws. The number of regions shouldn't curb the improvement when necessary.

While we recognize that reducing the current number of the ICANN Geographic Regions is neither a desired nor a viable option, we find that adding new regions may resolve some of the concerns raised by parts of the community regarding their representation (Arab, small islands for example).

But for the time being, the ALAC agrees leaving the structure “as is”, with countries having the right to “opt in” for a change in Region if they so wish. The request being initiated or supported by the local government of the relevant country or territory and taking into account the views of the local Internet community.

We also agree that in the sake of avoiding any interference in the relationship between the dependent countries or territories and their mother countries, ICANN should give the opportunity to the dependent countries/territories to petition to move to a new ICANN geographic region. However, no territory re-assignment should be made if objections are raised by the Government of the “mother country”.

The ALAC believes that no country / territory should be able to seek reassignment more frequently than once every 5 years, using the same cycle of the ICANN Geographic Regions review.

We do not believe that the reassignment to a region that is not geographically adjacent to the existing region should be restricted; for example if a dependent country / territory wishes to be reassigned to its original region, we don't understand why this kind of reassignment is not permitted; The fact that the original region is not adjacent to the mother country one is not a valid reason for the restriction.

The ALAC is in full support of the recognition and accommodation of « Special Interest Groups » based on common specificities such as culture, language, etc., assuming that those « Special Interest Groups » don't replace the adopted geographic regions.

As for the implementation mechanisms, and in order to insure a smooth 5 year review and a good quality of the process by which re-assignments are considered, the At-Large Advisory Committee suggests that ICANN set up an "Ombudsman for global issues", assisted by a handful of experts from various parts of the community. This small group would receive requests from governments, associations, groups or individuals wishing to avail themselves of the opt-in or opt-out facility being considered. This special Ombudsman would report to the Board, bringing to their attention specific cases and proposing solutions. This would not impact the role of the existing Ombudsman, or very marginally.

Finally, the ALAC believes that Board should have ultimate oversight over the ICANN Geographic regions' framework including the 5 years review and reassignment process.