

Overview of Final Report Geographic Regions Working Group

According to the Charter of the Geographic Regions Working Group approved by the ICANN Board it is required that the chair of this working group, Dave Archbold, receives some written notification from each of the participating organizations before the Final Report can be submitted formally to the ICANN Board. For that matter the chair of the WG has prepared a template letter to be filled in and send before 31 December 2013.

Based on a comparative analysis of the WG recommendations and the ccNSO Statement of the ccNSO on the Draft Final report (16 September 2011), the Council is advised to endorse all recommendations of the WG.

Summary Final Report Geographic Regions Working group

In September 2007 the ccNSO highlighted a number of concerns about the current definition and use of Geographic Regions and recommended the appointment of a community wide working group to study the relevant issues. The charter was adopted by the ICANN Board of Directors at its meeting in Cairo (November 2008), under chairmanship of Dave Archbold.

In June 2013 the WG published its final report, which contained the following relevant recommendations:

1. Wholesale modifications to the current Geographic Regions framework is NOT merited, therefore ICACCN is recommended to adopt its own Geographic Regions framework based upon the current assignment of countries to regions.
2. Based on current regional division, provide individual communities and structures within ICANN flexibility to develop their own mechanisms(with Board oversight) to ensure geographic diversity within their own organization.
3. The Board should direct Staff to prepare and maintain ICANN's own unique organizational table, that clearly shows allocation of countries and territories, as defined in ISO 3166-1, to ICANN's five regions. The initial allocation should reflect the status quo. However Staff should develop and implement a process to permit stakeholder groups in country or territory to pursue re-allocation to a geographic region.
4. Allow the creation of Special Interest Groups to make allowances for cultural and language diversity.
5. The Board is advised to maintain oversight over the Geographic Regions framework and review the effectiveness at regular five-years intervals.

Comparative Analysis

The ccNSO supported maintaining the current designation of five Geographic Regions. According to the ccNSO the benefits to retain the current five regions outweigh the benefits of creating another structure.

The ccNSO supported the notion that individual communities and structures within ICANN should have the flexibility to develop their own procedures for ensuring geographic diversity.

With regard to developing its own procedures for ensuring geographic diversity it is worth noting that following the 2007 report, the ccNSO has already adopted a voluntary regime to allow stakeholder groups in a country or territory to select its own ICANN Geographic Region. See: <http://ccnso.icann.org/applications/geo-region-application.htm>

The ccNSO was generally supportive of the Special Interest Group concept, albeit noted that the creation of these groups may raise complexities.

As to the review at regular five-years intervals, no specific opinion was stated. However it should be noted that according to the ICANN Bylaws (Article VI, Section 5) *“the specific countries included in each Geographic Region shall be determined by the Board, and this Section shall be reviewed by the Board from time to time (but at least every three years) to determine whether any change is appropriate, taking account of the evolution of the Internet.”* Recommendations 3 and 5 of the WG are in line with this Bylaw provision and provide a process and procedure to effectuate this provision.

Conclusion and advice

The Recommendations of the WG are in line with the Statement of the ccNSO from December 2011. The ccNSO Council is therefore advised to fully support the recommendations of the WG.