

Roundtable discussion on
“Review of ICANN
Geographical Regions”

October 9, 2015
at DeitY

Background

- “Geographic Regions”: Europe; Asia/Australia/Pacific; Latin America/Caribbean islands; Africa; and North America
- Core values under ICANN Bylaws under Article I Section 2: Seeking and supporting broad, informed participation reflecting the functional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Internet at all levels of policy development and decision-making.
- Article VI Section 5 of ICANN Bylaws - International Representation: At least one Director from each Region, and at all times no region shall have more than five Directors on the Board (not including the President).

- There is nothing in the public record that definitively explains how the original five geographic regions were selected.
- One hypothesis is that because the Green and White Papers both suggested that representatives of APNIC (Asia/Australia/Pacific), ARIN (North America) and RIPE (Europe) should be on the ICANN Board, these three RIRs helped to determine the first three official Regions with Latin America/Caribbean and Africa being projected as the next most likely RIRs to be established.

Procedural Background

- Board authorized its formation at its December 2008 Meeting and the Board approved the charter of the working group at its public meeting in June 2009
- The proposal to constitute the WG was based on the ccNSO Council resolution in 2007 recommending that CANN Board appoint a community-wide working group to further study and review the issues related to the definition of the ICANN Geographic Regions, to consult with all stakeholders and submit proposals to the Board to resolve the issues relating to the current definition of the ICANN Geographic Regions.

Geographical Regions Review Working Group (WG)

- In response to the number of concerns highlighted by CCNSO, the scope of the WG was broadened and included representatives from all SO's/AC's. The current mandate of the WG is to:
 - Identify the different purposes for which ICANN's geographic regions are used. (e.g. To host Meetings, allocation of number resources)
 - Determine whether the uses of ICANN's geographic regions continue to meet the requirements of the relevant stakeholders
 - Submit proposal for community and Board consideration relating to the current and future uses and definition of the ICANN Geographic Regions

Findings of the Report

- Part I: Initial Report - The Initial Report identified Representation, Participation and Operations as the three primary “usage categories” for which geographic regions are currently being applied within the ICANN community.
- Part II: Interim Report - The report offered (a) a review of the underlying history, objectives and general principles of ICANN’s Geographic Regions Framework; (b) it raised a number of fundamental strategic questions for further community consideration; and (c) it expanded on a number of specific matters identified in the Initial Report that were likely to be addressed in the Final Report.
- Part III: The Final Report - This report provides specific recommendations from the Working Group to the ICANN Board.
- One of the key findings of the Interim Report was that NTIA and the stakeholder community anticipated that the Internet would change over time, they believed that the procedures for appointing Board Members should be **“sufficiently flexible to permit evolution to reflect changes in the constituency of Internet stakeholders.”**

Specific Recommendations

- The Working Group concludes that the general principle of geographic diversity is valuable and should be preserved.
- Application of the geographic diversity principles must be more rigorous, clear and consistent.
- Adjusting the number of ICANN geographic regions is not currently practical.
- No other International Regional Structures offer useful options for ICANN.
- ICANN must formally adopt and maintain its own unique Geographic Regions Framework.
- The Community wants to minimize any changes to the current structure.

- ICANN must acknowledge the sovereignty and right of self-determination of states to let them choose their region of allocation.
- 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.
- “Special Interest Groups” or “Cross-Regional Sub-Groups” offer new diversity opportunities.
- Implementation mechanisms and processes must be developed by Staff.
- The Board must preserve its oversight and future review opportunities.

Issues for Consideration

- The WG has recommended that ICANN should adopt its own Geographic Regions Framework based upon the current assignment of countries to Regions. The new framework should dictate the formation of the ICANN Board. What should be the key features of such a framework?
- Special Interest Groups to promote the interests and unique attributes of stakeholder communities that may not clearly fit into the formal top-down regional structures. These “bottom-up” groupings would be complementary to the formal regional framework, and would not replace it. What kind of “bottom-up” grouping are desirable in the future?

Thank you.