Comments Posted: Mar 24, 2009

Please accept the following comments in response to ICANN's call for public feedback on the Draft Charter[1] of the Geographic Working Group. In general, we support the adoption of this charter, and anticipate the working group will thoroughly and efficiently complete its objectives.

We agree that there is a need to inventory the various purposes for which Geographic Regions are used to establish geographic diversity within ICANN's various SOs and ACs. That said, we offer the following recommendations on some of the substantive issues likely to be addressed by the GEO WG.

1. Recognize the practical implications of Geographic Regions assignments.

Many functions within ICANN strive to achieve geographical diversity and balance in the selection of: working groups, constituency/stakeholder officers, and council representatives. Recognizing this, it is clear that a significantly larger number of Geographic Regions would make the task of maintaining balance within these groups difficult or unworkable.

To guard against this, we recommend that the total number of Geographic Regions be limited at or near its current level of five (5).

2. Ideally, the RIR region and the Geographical Region assignment should be aligned.

The ASO has designated five general regions, each with its respective Regional Internet Registry (RIR). Any assignment that results in a country or territory having a different region than that of its RIR should be pursued carefully, and be reserved for extraordinary situations.

3. Consider combining the SO/AC Review and the Interim Report Public Comments into a single iteration.

The GEO WG time line establishes comment periods for the Initial and Interim reports. Upon publication of the Final report (prior to the Feb 2010 ICANN meeting), there is an additional period of review by the ALAC, GNSO,

ccNSO, and GAC. Each SO/AC is then required to submit its written support or disagreement in advance of consideration of the report by the ICANN Board.

To expedite the completion of the GEO WG efforts, and reduce the burden on staff and volunteer resources, please consider including the SO/AC review in parallel with the final public comment period. These can then be incorporated into the Final report.

Sincerely,
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1.http://icann.org/en/topics/geographic-regions/wg-draft-charter-18feb09-en.pdf