

UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT'S COMMENTS ON  
THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT  
BY THE GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS REVIEW WORKING GROUP

The United Kingdom Government appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Final Report of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group (WG). Consistent with the provisions in the Affirmation of Commitments relating to ICANN's global role, this study and review has been important and timely in underlining the vital importance of ensuring diversity of stakeholder representation, participation and operational contributions throughout all of ICANN's discussion fora, interactions, activities and policy development processes.

We believe that the Board, staff and supporting organisations and advisory committees should be consistently mindful of supporting and advancing this fundamental principle and monitor all their activities and processes accordingly to identify where additional outreach may need to be undertaken.

The UK welcomes the commendable progress across the ICANN community - including at Board level - in pursuing the overall aim of maximising geographical diversity, tackling under-representation of specific regions and communities, and safeguarding ICANN, consistent with its mandate, as a truly internationalised entity serving the global interest, free from undue influence from any specific regional or national sector, community or political interest.

As the WG draft report recognizes, this approach need not require the imposition of a rigid structure of geographical allocation based solely on physical geographical location. Rather we believe it is sufficient for ICANN centrally to provide guidance on ensuring geographical diversity and to monitor adherence to that guidance, while leaving open the possibility for individual communities of stakeholders within ICANN to be flexible in how they fulfil their commitment to maximising diversity in all their activities.

The UK agrees with the WG draft report's recommendation that the current five regional groupings should be maintained consistent with the framework for the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs). We support the view of the WG draft report that any modification or expansion of the number of regions would be unjustifiable, costly and likely to create negative effects that could outweigh the benefits gained.

The United Kingdom Government welcomes the WG's recognition of the importance of allowing for cultural and political affiliations (including dependant and overseas territory relationships with mother countries) which may be of greater importance than physical geographical location.

Furthermore, the UK welcomes the WG draft report's regard for national and territorial sovereignty and the right of self-determination: every country and territory should be allowed the opportunity to determine its regional allocation at any time. We firmly believe that this should be a bottom-up, self-selecting procedure for each community of stakeholders. The possible changes to regions identified in Appendix B of the report, if RIR allocation is adopted, should be seen in the light of that fundamental bottom up principle of self-determination.

Accordingly, the United Kingdom Government believes that ICANN should only proceed with a new geographical allocation on the basis of an explicit “opt in” basis from the stakeholders concerned.

With regard to the UK’s Overseas Territories on the listing in Appendix B to the draft report, if ICANN intends to consider implementing these changes on the basis of the WG’s recommendations, the UK Government accordingly would consult the administrations of these territories for their views on a re-allocation. It is expected that the administrations would in turn consult stakeholders in the local Internet community (including the ccTLD registry). In this way, the UK Government would formulate a view for each of its territories as to whether to opt in and thereby agree to any of the changes in allocations.

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