Geographic Regions Review Working Group Recommendations
Mapping Document
-- Table of Recommended Board Actions (11 October 2018) –

WG Recommendation	Community Reaction	Analysis and Suggested Board Action
Issue 1 – General Principles of Geographic Diversity *WG Recommendation "A" – "The Working Group concludes that the general principle of geographic diversity is valuable and should be preserved."*	**Pro:** The ALAC agrees that the general principle of geographic diversity is "valuable and should be preserved." ALAC notes that the origin of the ICANN Geographic Regions was the need to ensure geographic diversity within the ICANN Board. The ALAC "strongly believes that the Geographic Regions review should address that very aspect to preserve and improve the geographic diversity in the ICANN Board composition." The BC endorses the recommendations of the Geographical Regions report stating that it "strongly agrees with the report's reiteration that diversity - including geographical diversity - is essential to ICANN's mission and to the success of the multistakeholder model, as is continued emphasis on making ICANN more open to a multilingual audience through translation." The NCSG says it supports Recommendation A. **Con:** N/A	WG recommendation supported by community, including recommendations from Work Stream 2 of the CCWG-Accountability. **<mark>Accept recommendation</mark>**
Issue 2 – Applying Rigor to the Diversity Principles – and Identifying Region of Origin *WG Recommendation "B" – "Application of the geographic diversity principles must be more rigorous, clear and consistent."*	**Pro:** The NCSG and the ALAC both support Recommendation "B". The ALAC notes, "The current means for identifying an individual's region of origin is a choice between citizenship (or origin) and residency." The ALAC says, "This criterion should be more rigorous and for purposes of clarity and consistency there should be just one single criterion for the identification of a person's region". The ALAC says the current "non-rigorous approach may result in having a large number of the Board … residing and working for long time in the same region, thus having the same spirit and the same interests."	Community supports more rigorous, clear and consistent application of geographic diversity principles. **<mark>Accept recommendation</mark>**

	Con: N/A	
Issue 3 – Number of Regions *WG Recommendation "C" – "Adjusting the number of ICANN geographic regions is not currently practical."*	**Pro:** The BC agrees with the report recommendation that ICANN's geographical regions are distinct from those of many major international organizations, and that changing those regions or adding to the number of regions would be "unlikely to enhance ICANN's mission and could lead to additional cost and confusion."	Regardless of the Board's decision on this recommendation, in the next phase of this work, the Board can consider encouraging further community discussions to investigate practical ways to explore the potential formation of new regions or community groupings that are considered under-represented. A first step can be a feasibility assessment to be conducted by ICANN organization. The study results can lead to the formation of a community/staff discussion group to further explore these issues as well as broader diversity matters of interest ranging beyond geography to other diversity matters, in line with the recommendations from Work Stream 2 of the CCWG-Accountability. **==Accept recommendation and direct ICANN organization to commence implementation by first conducting a feasibility assessment, the results of which will inform a community consultation on practical ways for the potential formation of new regions or community groupings==**
	Con: The ALAC does not think that it is appropriate to approach the potential adjustment of the number of the ICANN Geographic Regions from the perspective 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 ALAC says, "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", the ALAC states, "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)." The NCSG says it does not support Recommendation C. The NCSG says it "would like to see further discussion on practical ways to foster the formation of new regions that are under-represented, according to the community's wishes, as well as fairness in the size of Board and ALAC representation." The NCSG "does not support the Working Group conclusions that the creation of new geographical regions is not merited" and asserts that "the suggestion that there be no wholesale modifications to the existing geographical regions framework are incorrect." In fact, the NCSG "encourages the Working Group to better consider the relationship between geographic boundaries and cultural groups, and to see the formation	

	of new regions according to the community's wishes."	**that are considered under-represented.**
Issue 4 - Other International Regional Structures *WG Recommendation "D" – "No other International Regional Structures offer useful options for ICANN."*	**Pro:** NCSG agrees and accepts Recommendation D - that no other international regional structures are applicable to ICANN. That being said, the NCSG notes, "The Working Group's proposed geographical framework is largely a legacy of anachronic geopolitical arrangements." The NCSG notes that the current framework "proposes that dependent territories be allocated to the same geographical region as their 'country', regardless of their geographical location, thus continuing the legacy of cultural and institutional influence. While the NCSG acknowledges that "some international institutions, like the European Union, continue to cluster countries together based upon geographical standing", the NCSG asserts that "they have a legitimate claim to do so because they are providing their members with a mechanism to reduce cross-border transaction costs." ICANN, according to the NCSG, "can make no such claims". The NCSG also does not support the use of the United Nations Statistics Division's classifications of nations and territories as an appropriate model for ICANN to draw from. The NCSG says, "It is not fit for purpose, as evidenced by the fact that ICANN Staff themselves do not consistently use the UN's regional allocations despite committing to do so in 2000. In addition, [the UN classification] does not appropriately take into consideration geographical nor linguistic diversity." According to the NCSG, the challenge for ICANN, in resolving this tension, "will be in how it equally and usefully subdivides the globe into smaller units to form a part of a new regions framework." In doing so, the NCSG says, "we ask that ICANN consider larger cultural variations, as well as	Community comments regarding this recommendation challenge the organization to re-examine the size and scope of the current geographic regions framework. Acknowledging that no other international institutions employ structures that are applicable to ICANN, community comments suggest that ICANN consider another set of alternatives. This is an area that the Board may wish to investigate in the next potential phase of these inquiries. **Accept finding, which should form part of the feasibility assessment to be conducted by ICANN organization**

	ethnographic analyses of the regions and widespread public consultation activities to collect subjective experiences to ensure we are developing a relevant and dynamic framework which considers individualism over collectivism. The NCSG would like to be involved in the development of any such policy processes."	
	Con: N/A	
Issue 5 – ICANN's Own List of Countries and Territories *WG Recommendation "E" – "ICANN must formally adopt and maintain its own unique Geographic Regions Framework."*	**Pro:** The ALAC supports ICANN formally adopting and maintaining its own record of the assignment of countries and territories to ICANN's Geographic Regions. The NCSG supports Recommendation E, "provided that ICANN adopts and maintains [its] own geographic regions framework which both accommodates and reflects its bylaws and articles of incorporation." NCSG asks, that "this recommendation be amended to require the participation of the multi-stakeholder community in the development of this framework, and that it not be developed entirely by Staff." The NCSG also says it does not support the use of the United Nations Statistics Division's classifications of nations and territories as an appropriate model for ICANN to draw from. "It is not fit for purpose", the NCSG asserts, "as evidenced by the fact that ICANN Staff themselves do not consistently use the UN's regional allocations despite committing to do so in 2000. In addition, it does not appropriately take into consideration geographical nor linguistic diversity."	Based on community comments, the Board can direct staff to include community input in the development of the next formal ICANN Geographic Framework and, potentially, its own list of countries, territories and regions, based on the results of the initial feasibility assessment. The Board could determine that ICANN's own unique framework need not be completely different from other frameworks but could be built upon the foundation of other accepted structural models. ==**Accept recommendation and direct ICANN staff to include the development of a potential new framework as part of the community consultations to be conducted following the conclusion of the feasibility assessment.**==
	Con: N/A	
Issue 6 – Minimal Change to the current structure. *WG Recommendation "F" – "The Community*	**Pro:** The RySG says it "generally supports the recommendation that ICANN shall maintain its current geographic regions framework that is suited to the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs), while each SO or AC has	The WG's assertion that the community favored minimal changes to the current geographic regions framework was addressed in Paragraph 59

wants to minimize any changes to the current structure."	flexibility in applying the geographic diversity principles." The ALAC agrees for the time being to leave the current structure "as is", with countries and territories having the right to "opt in" for a change in region if they so wish.	of the Final Report. In that paragraph, the WG noted that of the initial comments on the Final Report by the community, "the preponderance of those commenting on the draft report favored leaving the structure 'as is'." Those comments, according to the WG Final Report, opposed "the original WG recommendation to move the organization 'to a new regional structure based (loosely) on the RIR regional structure, with countries having the right to 'opt out' of moving'." As result of that opposition, the WG's recommendation shifted to an opt-in model. Community interest in closer involvement with the assignment of countries and territories to regions could be addressed by the Board directing staff to make sure that the community has the opportunity to participate in development of the new ICANN list recommended in the Final Report (see Final Report - paragraphs 8 and 84). ==Accept finding==
	Con: NCSG disagrees with the WG conclusion in Recommendation F stating, "We are unsure as to how the Working Group reached this conclusion because no evidence was provided in support of this statement. We have reviewed one of your earlier public consultation activities from 2009 - which attracted only [one response](#) from a community member, in support of the formation of a new region - and your claim about a strong community preference does not appear to be supported by this data, nor do we consider this exercise to be a statistically significant representation of the community's wishes." The NCSG says it "supports further discussion on how ICANN assigns countries and territories to regions." Adding, "More community input should be solicited to ensure the community's wishes are being accurately captured."	
Issue 7 – Matters of Sovereignty *WG Recommendation "G" – "ICANN must acknowledge the*	**Pro:** The IPC notes the Final Report recommends that "countries or territories should be given the opportunity to seek reassignment from one region to another" and that ICANN staff should "develop a self-selection process".	Analysis – With the conditions noted, community commenters seem to support the opportunity for a self selection process if any

sovereignty and right of self-determination of states to let them choose their region of allocation."	The IPC notes, "while these recommendations potentially create a risk of provoking international conflict, this position is prudently consistent with the longstanding IANA/ICANN policy of avoiding making determinations as to what is or is not a country." The ALAC asserts that for 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 counties/territories to petition to move to a different ICANN Geographic Region – utilizing the right to "opt-in". The ALAC emphasizes, "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" and that "no territory re-assignment should be made if objections are raised by the Government of the 'mother country'." The ALAC also says, "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 further 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.	state or other entity has an interest in being re-assigned to another geographic region. Based on the comments noted in this section and others noted in other sections of this report, there also seems to be a strong community desire for the opportunity to provide input into any staff effort to develop or establish that reassignment process. **==Accept recommendation, but do not limit reassignment to any timing cycle==**
	Con: The NCSG comments accept Recommendation "G" with one modification. The NCSG says, "It is outside the scope of ICANN's remit to become involved in questions of sovereignty." The NCSG asks that ICANN "promote usage of the term	

	'states and other collective entities' in place of 'states', in order to take into consideration situations such as disputed territories." This view is also noted in the terminology issue section of this report. Further, the NCSG says it, "does not support paragraph 63, point B, of the Final Report that says no country may be reassigned to a different region more than once every three years." The NCSG says ICANN should be silent on this matter as "countries and territories should be free to make this call".	
Issue 8 – Community Governance Issues *WG Recommendation "H" – "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."*	**Pro:** The NCSG accepts recommendation H, but suggests the recommendation "be reworded to stress that ICANN requires a community-wide strategy." The NCSG states, "We understand this is the intention of the report, but how this recommendation currently reads suggests that different supporting organisations could develop their own geographic regions frameworks." The IPC notes, "the general theme of Recommendations A through F is that 'for the time being' the existing methodology of ICANN geographic region designation should be maintained and continue to be applied, in particular to the selection of members of the Board (which the Final Report identifies as being the original purpose of the concept of geographic diversity within ICANN, dating back to the US Government's Green Paper leading to the formation of ICANN)." Noting this approach, The IPC goes on to assert, "Recommendations H and I provide that communities within ICANN have the option of following that methodology or adopting some other Board-approved methodology for ensuring geographical diversity. The Final Report notes that individual communities should have time for and flexibility in ensuring how best they deal with diversity, but also notes that it is desirable that current inconsistencies across communities (SOs, ACs, SGs, Cs, etc.) are minimized.	Analysis – The community comments express an understanding of the need for consistency in the application of a geographic framework across the organization. They express reservations about potential negative consequences if individual communities interpret the WG guidance to give them the ability to create their own separate geographic frameworks. The WG recommendation to keep all these matters under Board oversight (Recommendation "K") should be sufficient to prevent any inconsistent geographic frameworks from being developed by individual communities. Nevertheless, it would be advisable that any Board decision should make efforts to provide clear direction on the limits, if any, on individual community flexibility in this area.

	Con: The IPC notes, "these recommendations overlap with the ongoing work by external consultancy Westlake Governance Limited ("Westlake") to review the GNSO". The IPC "questions whether the [WG] and Westlake were aware of each other's efforts in relation to geographic diversity. The IOC says, as a general principle, it believes "overlapping efforts within the community are an inefficient use of ICANN funds and scarce volunteer time resources, and further believes that the risk of potentially conflicting outcomes from overlapping initiatives should be avoided." The IPC notes the WG Final Report "is NOT suggesting that each SO or AC be permitted to create its own regional framework" and "questions whether this was taken into consideration by Westlake in its recent review of the GNSO."	**Accept recommendation. Ongoing Board review of community charter documents should provide appropriate level of future oversight.**
Issue 9 – Interest Groups *WG Recommendation "I" - "'Special Interest Groups' or 'Cross-Regional Sub-Groups' offer new diversity opportunities."*	**Pros and "Cautions":** The IPC notes that the WG recommends mechanisms for "special interest groups" to self-designate and participate through those groups within the ICANN environment. These groups, which "might restrict their interest to a single SO or AC, while others might span all of ICANN's communities", would not be formally recognized within or replace the ICANN structure, but rather "would be complementary" to it. The IPC notes, "It is not clear how such groupings will interact with the formally recognized ICANN structures: will the Board, SOs and ACs be required to interact in a consistent way with these groupings? If so, how will this procedurally be achieved? The IPC notes that such an approach potentially risks contravening the longstanding IANA/ICANN policy of avoiding making determinations as to what is or is not a country. The ALAC is in full support of recognizing and accommodating "Special Interest Groups" based on common specificities such as	Analysis –The WG made an effort to specifically define the parameters of potential new special interest groups that may wish to form (see Final Report at paragraph 78). If the Board is inclined to adopt this recommendation, it may wish to follow those parameters or articulate others consistent with the community comments. Community concerns expressed in this area reflect a cautious approach to the actual implementation of this and other WG recommendations. Board direction to staff with respect to implementation could include the expectation of

	culture, language, etc., assuming that those "Special Interest Groups" do not replace the adopted geographic regions. The NCSG "partially" supports recommendation "I". The NCSG says, "We are in agreement that 'cross-regional subgroups' that are not currently aware of ICANN's work - but may become aware of it in the future - should be warmly welcomed into the community. However, we consider it inappropriate to extend the same principle to 'special interest groups'." The NCSG says, "If a more precise definition of this term can be provided and agreed upon across the supporting organisations, our objection may not be sustained". "Our fear", says the NCSG, "is that this term could be applied to disputed territories, leading to a situation where ICANN is giving credence to a state that does not accept the autonomous existence of another entity." In that case, the NCSG posits, "We would have two distinct categories, states with full status, and 'special interest groups' with an inferior status."	community collaboration to help confirm or further define the appropriate parameters for the formation and activities of potential special interest groups. **Accept recommendation. Board review of community charters (or bylaws) should provide appropriate level of oversight.** **Direct staff to develop draft guidelines for community consultation following conclusion of the feasibility assessment and based on its results.**
Issue 10 – Implementation Mechanisms *WG Recommendation "J" – "Implementation mechanisms and processes must be developed by Staff."*	**Comments:** The NCSG notes its partial support for Recommendation J and acknowledges that "Staff will need to do the majority of the work in developing internal operating procedures and other resources." However, the NCSG notes, "the multi-stakeholder community must remain involved in all policy-making processes, especially in relation to the development of criteria for evaluating the success and failure of the geographic regions framework." "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	Analysis – Based on comments regarding this and other recommendations, there is clear community interest in active collaboration with staff on a number of the implementation matters associated with the WG recommendations (e.g., the opt-in process and the new ICANN regions list assigning states and other entities to particular regions). Depending on the recommendations, if any, that the Board adopts or modifies, the component of community staff collaboration is likely to be a major consideration.

	themselves of the "opt in" or "opt out" scheme being considered." According to the ALAC, "This OGI would report to the Board, bringing to their attention specific cases and proposing solutions." The ALAC says, "This would not, or very marginally, impact the role of the existing Ombudsman."	Consideration of the ALAC's OGI idea could be incorporated into a potential implementation discussion of the opt-in concept described in the language of WG Recommendation "G" (Issue 7) above. **Accept recommendation. Direct staff to develop, proposed new framework (assigning countries and territories to regions), "opt-In" scheme and guidelines (as outlined above) for community consultation following the conclusion of the feasibility assessment and based on its results.**
Issue 11 - Board Review *WG Recommendation "K" - "The Board must preserve its oversight and future review opportunities."*	**Pro:** The ALAC believes that the Board should have the ultimate oversight over the ICANN Geographic Regions' framework including the 5 year review and reassignment process. **Con:** The NCSG does not support recommendation K in its present form. The NCSG says, "We believe that oversight should be a joint community and Board responsibility, particularly on matters integral to the functioning of the ICANN community."	**Accept recommendation. Discussions over a future framework should include the possibility of establishing a future 5-year review cycle and Board role in assessing any specific community plans regarding geographic diversity within individual community charters or bylaws provisions and in light of the recommendations from Work Stream 2 of the CCWG-Accountability.**
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