

Regions WG Telephone Conference

31.05.2007

Participants:

David Archbold, .ky
Bart Boswinkel, ICANN
Becky Burr, ccNSO Council member
Oscar Robles, .mx
Gabriella Schitteck, ccNSO Secretariat

Bart Boswinkel (ICANN Staff) clarified at the beginning of the call that it was set up in the intention to deal with the progress of the ICANN Regions report and which next steps there are to be taken. The input received so far was also to be discussed.

Some of the comments received stated that regions would only be required for representation issues. However, there were also views that if more participation within ICANN should be encouraged, a strong regional structure would be needed. It was also felt that if the Regions Report would start tampering with the representation system, it would open a "mine field".

It was therefore suggested to split up the representation issue (which includes the voting system to the ICANN Board and ccNSO Council) from the participation issue and let the report concentrate on participation.

Becky Burr (ccNSO Council) raised some concern that some of the comments had suggested the regions issue should be treated with sensibility, because of the GAC. She felt that the Report should avoid getting into a situation where it refers to the GAC, as that would be inappropriate. The question of what regions there are is not a question for the GAC to consider, but should much more be decided individually. The ccTLD operators themselves will know much better which region is most sensible for them to be in. The only point where the GAC may have an interest is when it comes to voting (i.e. representation) issues, not participation. She therefore supported the suggestion of splitting up the participation issue from the representation issue and focus on participation.

Oscar Robles (.mx), however, felt skeptic about the idea. He didn't think that creating a new geographic classification would improve any participation. He much more felt that the report should concentrate on the representation issue, as he thought the requirements for this issue are very clear. If some ccTLDs say they feel underrepresented that is an argument enough for a recommendation.

Developing his view, he explained that he did not believe that a redesign of regions would address the cause for lack of participation. If ccTLDs would be interested in participation, they would participate, no matter what regions they are designated to.

He outlined how the LACTLD was created, basing on a feeling that cooperation and discussions on topical issues was needed. This was done completely independently of any ICANN regions. He pointed out that the ccNSO is dealing with topics which often are

of no, or very low importance for many ccTLDs and that they therefore don't feel they have a need to participate. He noted that the Latin American community has problems in electing new representatives to the ccNSO, mainly due to lack of relevant issues. He therefore felt that it would be much more appropriate to address the issue of representation, than participation.

Bart pointed out that it is foreseen in the scope of the ccNSO is to share information and experiences. He thought that if people attended ccNSO meetings, they could take back the experiences to their regional organisation and share with other ccTLDs.

David Archbold (.ky) pointed out that Oscar's approach would not be helpful for several countries, such as many in the Caribbean. The ccTLD operators in these regions often don't have the time or money to participate in ICANN business and if they are told their local organisation is European they would "laugh and walk away". He pointed out that there are regions where there are no sufficient resources, understanding or knowledge of how to come together and form a working regional organisation without some kind of facilitator.

Oscar replied that in his opinion participation could only be improved by regional efforts and activities from other organisations, such as ISOC. He also pointed out that ICANN has a regional liaison, which has been traveling around the Caribbean, trying to support participation. He also said that LACTLD would be willing to coordinate the region and to his knowledge, the regional Telecommunications body was also trying to start up an initiative.

David suggested that there will be a note in the Report that there is an issue of participation which cannot be resolved. Alternatively, the bit about participation would be redrafted and split up into two, with both arguments represented with discussions of the Regions WG to follow.

Oscar was happy with the suggestion, but underlined he would prefer to have an agreement on the argument in the end, to be able to help ccTLDs.

Some concern was raised that if new regional organisations would be created outside the ICANN regions in order to encourage participation, how they would be to be recognised and whether they would have election and representation rights in the ccNSO. A suggested possibility was to strict the tie between regional representation from an election point of view, to local support organisations. However, in that case a paragraph in the ccNSO bylaws would need to be deleted, which says only ICANN's geographic regions are recognised in this concept.

A question for clarification was raised on why some people had objected to the idea to form informal subgroups or committees.

Bart explained that, for instance, within Africa, there is a fear that Africa would become split into several different regions, as Africa has not only Arab speaking regions, but also francophone regions etc. Whilst they are trying to get AFTLD up and running, there is a fear such an initiative might split up this effort to join the African countries. Also, countries such as Canada, with several minor ethnic groups, may have to face the creation of several minor regional organisations for each national group.

It was ensured the language in the Regions Report would be changed to reflect this concern.

Some discussion occurred on how to present the self-selection option in the final report. It was agreed that there will be a specific recommendation for self-selection.

It was suggested that the text would say something like "These are the regions, ccTLD managers should self-select into these regions in consultation with their government". In this way, a clash with the GAC could be avoided.

It was finally agreed that those who had attended the call would look at the report again and email concerns and suggestion directly to each other (by the 6th June 2007). After that another round of consultations would start, but only for the Regions Working Group itself. First there should be an email discussion, and then work would start to get the report out for broader consultation. Before it actually is sent out, another telephone conference is to be held.