



## AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### ALAC Statement on the Draft Document from GAC Sub-Group on Geographic Names

#### Introduction

Leon Sanchez, ALAC member from the Latin American and Caribbean Islands Regional At-Large Organization (LACRALO) and ALAC Leadership Team member, Rafid Fatani, ALAC member from the Asian, Australasian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO), and Thomas Lowenhaupt, At-Large Structure member from the North American Regional At-Large Organization (NARALO) composed an initial draft of this Statement after discussion of the topic within At-Large and on the Mailing Lists.

On 17 October 2014, this Statement was posted on the [At-Large Draft Document from GAC Sub-Group on Geographic Names Workspace](#).

On that same day, Alan Greenberg, Chair of the ALAC, requested ICANN Policy Staff in support of the ALAC to send a Call for Comments on the Recommendations to all At-Large members via the [ALAC-Announce Mailing List](#).

On 01 November 2014, a version incorporating the comments received was posted on the aforementioned workspace and the Chair requested that Staff open an ALAC ratification vote on the proposed Statement on 03 November 2014 and close on 10 November 2014.

The Chair then requested that a Statement, referenced AL-ALAC-ST-1114-01-00-EN, be transmitted to the community input process of the ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), copying the ICANN Staff member responsible for this topic, with a note that the Statement was pending ALAC ratification.

On 11 November 2014, Staff confirmed that the online vote resulted in the ALAC endorsing the Statement with 13 votes in favor, 0 vote against, and 0 abstention. You may review the result independently under: <https://www.bigpulse.com/pollresults?code=4351T876I3Eq6CmfHkENcdgv>.

#### Summary

1. The ALAC supports the scope of the draft document and recommends that protection of geographic names must be addressed in next rounds of new gTLDs.
2. The ALAC advocates a strengthening of the nexus between an application for a geographic TLD and the public interest of the geographic area for which a TLD is sought: 1) A compilation of experiences of the 2012 applicants for geographic TLDs should be made available to applicants for geographic TLDs; 2) this compilation should detail the impact the 2012 geographic TLDs had on their respective areas; 3) geographic areas should be required to demonstrate and certify their "Informed Consent" about the scope and impact a geographic TLD might have on their residents and organizations; 4) this Informed Consent shall have been established through inclusive engagement of residents and organizations; 5) the TLD application shall indicate an ongoing process for various Internet stakeholders to engage in the TLD's governance processes at the local, national, and global levels.
3. The ALAC also suggests that the clause "2.2.1.4 Geographic Names Review" in the Applicant Guidebook (AGB) be modified to consider international treaties that address those rights of countries in relation with geographic names.

# ALAC Statement on the Draft Document from GAC Sub-Group on Geographic Names

The ICANN At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) welcomes the call for comments by the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) Sub-working group for protection of geographic names on the paper "The protection of names in the new gTLDs process V3 - August 29 2014" and hereby submits the following comments:

1. The ALAC supports the scope of the draft document and recommends that protection of geographic names must be addressed in next rounds of new gTLDs to avoid preventable conflict situations that have been observed during the current round.

Additionally, we advocate a strengthening of the nexus between an application for a geographic TLD and the public interest of the geographic area for which a TLD is sought. The following are offered as steps to facilitate advancement of the public interest:

- A compilation of experiences of the 2012 applicants for geographic TLDs should be made available to applicants for geographic TLDs.
  - This compilation should detail the impact the 2012 geographic TLDs had on their respective areas including, but not limited to, traditional and new businesses, civic organizations, government operations, religious and cultural groups.
  - Geographic areas for which TLD applications are submitted should be required to demonstrate and certify their "Informed Consent" about the scope and impact a geographic TLD might have on their residents and organizations. This Informed Consent shall be demonstrated by certification of awareness of the 2012 geographic TLD experiences, and the possible utility of a TLD on the social and economic life of a geographic area.
  - This Informed Consent shall have been established through inclusive engagement of residents and organizations, including Internet stakeholders, from the applicant area.
  - The TLD application of an applicant for a geographic TLD shall indicate an ongoing process for residents, community-based organizations, academic institutions, faith-based groups, professional organizations, government, and the Internet community to engage in the TLD's governance processes at the local, national, and global levels.
2. The ALAC also suggests that the Applicant Guidebook (AGB) be modified to consider international treaties that address those rights of countries in relation with geographic names. A suggested change is marked in bold below:

## "2.2.1.4 Geographic Names Review

Applications for gTLD strings must ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the interests of governments or public authorities in geographic names, taking into consideration that, according with the 2007 GAC Principles regarding New gTLDs, ICANN should avoid country, territory or place names, and country, territory or regional language or people descriptions, unless in agreement with the relevant governments or public authorities **and in compliance with applicable international law treaties**. The requirements and procedure ICANN will follow in the evaluation process are described in the following paragraphs. Applicants should review these requirements even if they do not believe their intended gTLD string is a geographic name. All applied-for gTLD strings will be reviewed according to the requirements in this section, regardless of whether the application indicates it is for a geographic name."