

Appointment of African GeGC reps

The African region of the Global eduroam Governance Committee (GeGC) appoints three senior representatives from the region's eduroam national Roaming Operators (ROs) to serve on the GeGC.

By consensus on 29 September 2023, the African region has adopted the following process for appointing such representatives:

1. One (1) seat is reserved for the African regional research and educational networks (RRENs) responsible for operating regional eduroam infrastructure, such as the African regional proxy servers and the eduroam Switchboard. The RRENs decide among themselves how this seat is to be allocated.

Rationale: While the GeGC is supposed to be representatives from the Roaming Operators, many of the smaller or newer ROs in Africa have neither the organisational capacity nor the experience needed to take on this role effectively. However, by virtue of their role in bootstrapping new national ROs and through the operation of the RPS and eduroam Switchboard, the RRENs have gained substantial insight into the issues affecting the newly established and incubating NRENs and ROs. Thus this is, in effect, a proxy seat representing those ROs behind regional infrastructure.

In addition, the existence of the RPS is unique in Africa and creates operational complexity not found in other regions. Those responsible for maintaining such infrastructure should be involved in the governance processes that shape their operations. Thus this seat should continue to be reserved for the RRENs unless the GeGC sees fit to create an equivalent non-voting advisory role.

2. The remaining two (2) seats are filled by senior representatives of those ROs from the African region that have signed an eduroam Compliance Statement ("African ROs"). Each RO representative from the African region is appointed to serve two consecutive GeGC terms. The appointment of the RO representatives should be offset such that there is one representative in their second GeGC term and one representative in their first GeGC term.

Rationale: Most regions have long-standing representatives (some of whom have been on the GeGC since its inception), whereas only one African representative has served more than a single term before being replaced. This disadvantages the region by losing institutional knowledge, making continuity a concern. On the other hand, eduroam growth in Africa is higher than in most other regions. Establishing "permanent" or semi-permanent representatives to the GeGC unduly advantages those ROs who were early eduroam adopters. Appointing African RO representatives for staggered periods is a compromise allowing both diversity of representation and continuity.

Coupled with the reserved seat, this means that only one seat will come up for

reappointment at the end of each GeGC term. A slate consisting of the RREN representative, the longest-serving RO representative, and a new representative appointed as below will be put forward to the eduroam Secretariat.

3. At the conclusion of each GeGC term, the three existing African GeGC representatives are tasked with consulting with the community and then proposing (and motivating for) a candidate for consideration as the new RO representative. The African ROs will be asked to endorse the proposed candidate or alternatively object with reasons.

Rationale: The existing GeGC representatives (including the RREN representative) should have interacted broadly with the various national ROs throughout the region during their term. Through this interaction, along with an understanding of the issues currently before the GeGC, they are best placed to understand who within the region has both a sufficiently broad knowledge of the eduroam service itself and the specific context of African ROs to represent the region adequately. They are expected to consult if necessary and seek the consent of the person they propose.

4. The outgoing RO representative, having served two consecutive GeGC terms, is not normally eligible for reappointment. They may only be reappointed after an absence of one year.

Rationale: This guarantees the rotation of representatives after at most five years. However, it does not permanently exclude a capable and desirable representative. Typically the exclusion of one year will equate to one full GeGC term but is deliberately specified shorter to allow for the reappointment of a representative if a seat unexpectedly falls vacant.

5. If consensus cannot be reached among the existing African GeGC representatives or the African ROs, the outgoing RO representative shall call for nominations from among the African ROs and oversee an electoral process for a new RO representative.

Rationale: This is a catch-all mechanism to handle disagreements among the African GeGC representatives or African ROs, and effectively resorts to the former ad-hoc nomination and election process. The outgoing representative serves as a neutral party to oversee the process since they're not eligible for re-election.

6. If an existing African RO representative cannot complete their term for any reason (including leaving the employ of their RO), a new RO representative should be appointed per this process. The newly appointed RO representative serves the balance of term before commencing their two consecutive terms.

Rationale: Avoids complex byelection processes. The effect of this is that the remaining RO representative automatically becomes the longest-serving, and the replacement representative becomes the shortest-serving (even if the representative they replace was the longest-serving). For the avoidance of doubt, the balance of

term should not count towards the two-term limit.

7. At any stage, any African RO can indicate their loss of confidence in any one of the African GeGC representatives and request their reconsideration. Should there be a consensus among the African ROs, the representative shall be replaced as if their term had ended. If consensus cannot be reached, the eduroam Secretariat may be asked to manage a vote among the African ROs.

Rationale: There needs to be a mechanism to deal with dysfunctional representation. This may be needed if, for example, a representative does not attend GeGC meetings or if the RO the representative comes from is itself dysfunctional (indicating a loss of capacity). In most cases, the issues are expected to be clear-cut and can be resolved by consensus among the ROs. However, in the exceptional situation where there are irreconcilable differences of opinion, the eduroam Secretariate provides a neutral party. (The RRENs cannot fulfil this function as it may be their representative that's contested.)