

APNIC 54

Analysis of Election Results

28 September 2022

BACKGROUND

Elections were held at APNIC 54 for one position on the NRO NC (ASO AC) and for four Co-Chair positions, for the Policy, NIR, Cooperation and Routing Security SIGs.

During the event, anomalies were observed in the conference registration list and in patterns of online participation, when multiple duplicate and possibly fraudulent registrations were present and active in online Zoom and Confer polling.

These observations were reported to the Election Chair who agreed that an announcement of elections results should be deferred, pending an analysis to confirm that the election was unaffected by the anomalies observed.

This report provides the result of the analysis, which was conducted by APNIC Secretariat staff between 19 and 22 September 2022.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. No anomalies were found in election processes or voting that would impact the results of the APNIC 54 elections. The election results as originally received from the election system are therefore considered to be valid.
2. APNIC 54 registration and attendance data indicates significant potential for manipulation of the existing rules and procedures in future elections.

INVESTIGATION

Basic procedures

All processes for the opening and closing of nominations, and the opening and closing of voting, followed standard procedure. No issues were found.

System integrity

APNIC uses the BigPulse election system for all elections. There was no evidence of any system malfunction, interference or security breach during this election process.

Candidate and Voter Eligibility

Nominees for elections must meet the [stated criteria](#). All final candidates in the elections met the criteria for nomination.

To be [eligible to vote in SIG elections](#), individuals must be registered for the current conference and have attended at least one of the previous eight APRICOT or APNIC conferences. NRO NC Elections follow the same on-site conference [voting criteria](#) as SIGs, however each APNIC Member organization may also cast a single vote via the online election system.

The eligibility of all those who cast a vote in the APNIC 54 elections was reviewed and validated during this review.

The number of votes cast was broadly in line with previous elections: for NRO NC, 460 votes in 2022 vs 462 in 2020, and for SIGs, 89-105 votes in 2022 vs 49-83 in 2020).

Confirmation of voter identity

The voter eligibility criteria for SIG elections, and for conference attendee voters in NRO NC elections, does not require confirmation of identity. Any registered identity is allowed to vote as long as they meet the conference attendance criteria. This does allow for “fake” identities to be registered and to vote in elections, which appears to be contrary to the intent of the election procedures and eligibility requirements.

Notably, in each of the four SIG elections, between 49-55% of votes were cast by identities affiliated with a single APNIC Member organisation (referred to as “ABC-CO” in this report). The current registration process does not validate these registrations as genuine individuals, or that such individuals were “genuine” participants in the conference (by any definition of “participation”).

Registration and Zoom attendance

APNIC 54 attracted 2,118 registrations, a very high number. By economy, the largest number of registrations came from India (587), followed by Bangladesh (276).

Of the 587 registrants from India, 348 were affiliated with ABC-CO. Some of these registrations appeared to be duplicates, with similarly or identically named identities registering with two email addresses.

Of the ABC-CO registrations, 291 participated online, with 231 attending Day 3 of the conference (Policy SIG and AMM).

This attendance had no impact on the election voting at APNIC 54, because first-time attendees are not eligible to vote. However, it does have implications for future APNIC conferences, as all APNIC 54 attendees are entitled to vote in future community elections under the current rules, regardless of their validity as actual individuals who genuinely participate in the event.

COMMENTARY ON FINDINGS

The high number (291) of questionable registrations from ABC-CO was notable, given that a candidate employed by that organisation was successful in the elections.

While not affecting the election results in APNIC 54, the suspect registrations will be entitled to vote in future elections, under current rules. This may be interpreted as a manipulation of the election rules, in an attempt to dominate future elections.

The implications are significant. SIG elections normally attract 50-100 votes; therefore an organised voting bloc of 250+ would determine election results in future.

The difficulty of confirming the identities of voters also indicates a further vulnerability to the SIG and NRO NC elections. Prior to online elections, all SIG voting was in-person at a conference so voter identities could be confirmed.

APNIC Secretariat