

MEAC-SWG Weekly Call (Call 9)

13 January 2020

11:00-12:00 UTC

Attendees: Rafik, Hadia, Zakir, Baher, Magali

Introduction

Rafik mentioned that the regional goals were reviewed during the last call. The next step/aim of this call was to discuss the activities, actions and initiatives under each regional goal, by focus area. Baher shared the link to the google doc.

1. Strategic focus area: security

- 2 regional strategic goals that the WG agreed on.
- Rafik mentioned that the WG listed initiatives and actions but it does not mean that it needs to restrict itself to those. The WG can work on more detailed/new initiatives. The criteria are about the feasibility and if they can bring added value or something new that it's helpful to achieve the regional goals.
- 3 draft actions:
 - Conduct an evaluation of the regional needs
 - Conduct technical workshops
 - Conduct train-the-trainer workshops
- 2 last bullet points: something that was done in the previous strategy. Rafik asked whether the WG wants to keep having the same activities in the next strategy or if there is a need to make any adjustments/improvements to those actions.
- Regarding the actions or activities in general, Baher mentioned that once the group finalizes the regional strategy, Fahd and himself will be working on an implementation plan on an annual basis and they will share the implementation plan with the same WG for review, input, etc. The implementation plan will include all the details with regard to actions, activities, to be pursued to achieve the goals. Baher's suggestion is that the WG tries, as much as possible, not to dive into the details of the actions/activities because this will be addressed in detail in the implementation plan. What the WG can do to help Baher and Fahd is to give them some guidance, directions, approach on how the goals can be achieved and the kind of outcomes we are seeking for each goal. E.g: DNSSEC: to achieve this goal we need technical capacity building, etc. Baher would like the WG to give a broader approach on how to achieve the goals and then the implementation plan will address the details. Baher indicated that this was the approach in the previous regional strategy, and this is something that the WG should consider as well for this strategy.
- Rafik agreed to focus on high level ideas and leave the details, thinking more of what the expected outcome is for each and to be aligned with the regional goals. Rafik is ok to work on the strategy and leave technical details. He proposed to suggest and explain what we need to achieve our goals.
- Hadia is ok with Baher with regard to the actions, in a broader sense. She also mentioned that there is no action item related to the 2nd goal so far. She suggested to start focusing on this. She wondered whether we need to identify the relevant stakeholders or engagement with the stakeholders in the region, taking into consideration that we do not need to be very specific.

- Rafik mentioned that the WG does not need to be specific but needs to give some clear guidance.
- Zakir mentioned that in the previous strategy, the activities are more specific when it comes to implementation. In activities, we can be more specific: e.g. conduct a technical workshop on IDNs, on DNSSEC. More details will be in the activities. In the actions, we have to be generic.

Zakir also mentioned that, in the previous strategy, next to activities, we had a timeline and targeted stakeholders' groups. Down the line below activities we can mention the stakeholder group for activities and actions.

- Rafik asked if the WG was fine with those to continue them in the next strategy and what it thinks it's missing here, if there are gaps to fill in?
- In relation to goal n°2, Hadia suggested to share experiences among stakeholders with regard to, for instance, security threats that already happened, or how they mitigate security threats. Hadia thinks that sharing experience is a good thing but he venue for doing that, the DNS forum, for example, could be one place to do that but maybe not the only.
- About the venue, Rafik indicated that it can be detailed in the implementation plan. He mentioned that what we want to achieve is sharing experiences and knowledge. Experiences can be best practices, but we want to be broader here.
- Baher is fine with this. Baher mentioned that, based on the last 2 editions of the ME region strategy, ICANN has launched 2 regional programs: one was the ME DNS forum, and the other one was the adjoining countries call on internet governance. Baher thinks that, at some point, we need to review both programs and to gage how far they have been effective in achieving the goals, etc. Baher mentioned that this was already done with the ME DNS forum a couple of years ago but in the context of this region strategy, we need to know whether we want to continue the same programs, whether we want to introduce any changes, whether we want to replace them. Baher suggested to run a community survey to evaluate both programs and move forward from there.
- Rafik wondered if, in terms of timing, it would be relevant for the implementation or it might impact the proposed action.
- Baher mentioned that it should not impact our proposed actions, it should not impact the entire work of this WG. The idea is to share experiences, knowledge. Baher doesn't think that the review of any program should delay, impact the work of the WG. Baher mentioned that the next DNS forum is going to take place in March 2020. Anything that might affect the future of the DNS forum will probably take effect in 2021, which means that the WG we have ample time to review the program.
- Rafik mentioned that, in terms of review, such as the DNS forum or other actions, in future, prior to the next cycle of the strategy, we can use those outcomes as inputs for when we discuss the strategy to assess if we can go with those actions or try to adjust them.

2. Strategic focus area: ICANN governance

- 2 regional strategic goals and 2 draft actions/activities
- Support and bring experts from the region to participate in ICANN PDPs: this is aligned with the 1st strategic goal.

- Skill-up and build expertise to participate in the processes effectively: this is also linked to the 1st strategic goals
- Rafik mentioned that we need more actions or activities to cover the 2nd strategic goal. Our exercise is to start think about the actions and activities.
- Actions: high level ideas of what we think should be done to achieve the strategic regional goals. There are 2 proposals, but we probably need more. Rafik mentioned that the idea of skill-up and build expertise has to do with capacity building. For support and bring experts, Rafik thinks this is more related to engagement. Baher suggested to use the same heading used in the ICANN strategic plan “Targeted outcomes”
- Hadia mentioned that the action that could be added is raising awareness because there is a part where we build expertise but awareness itself is important because this is the starting point where people start to follow and then participate. Not necessarily technical workshop, but advertising.
- Rafik proposed to add: raising awareness about ICANN’s governance model discussions and initiatives or raising awareness about ICANN governance improvement.
- Rafik mentioned that all the proposed actions will help to have more people to participate in the improvement thinking about how they can be helpful for our region. Raising awareness would play that role.

3. Strategic focus area: Unique identifiers system

- 2 regional strategic goals and 3 proposed actions
- Support the use of IDNS, promote readiness for UA
- Rafik has the feeling that the 3rd action is too specific.
- Zakir mentioned that this is a bit technical. He is, therefore, ok moving it to activities.
- Rafik mentioned that there are the 2 first proposed actions about IDNs, new gTLDs and the 3d one is about the use of ICANN learn.
- In terms of actions, Rafik suggested to consolidate them and leave the details. For instance, spread information and raise awareness about IDNs and new gTLDs with regional focus and then add targeted stakeholders. He suggested to consolidate, enumerate a possible venue/platform and leave the details for later.

4. Strategic focus area: Geopolitics

- 2 regional strategic goals
- 2 actions: work with GAC members and invite more countries, strengthening active participation in ICANN.
- Rafik mentioned that this was discussed before. The problem is not having more GAC members from the region but to get them participate.
- Zakir agreed. He confirmed that the problem is not having more members at the GAC but having the existing GAC members participating more actively and effectively. If there is any country not member of the GAC, Zakir suggested to try to have them participate, strengthen active participation. If there is any country not member of the GAC, we could have it try to join the GAC.
- Question from Rafik to Baher: which countries are still not involved in the GAC or refusing to join for some reasons?

- Baher indicated that, out of the 26 countries, only 4 countries (Algeria, Syria, Saudi Arabia and one more country) are non GAC members In the region.
- Rafik wondered how realistic it is to get, at least, one of them to join the GAC, if there is a possibility to get some to join or if it is not realistic.
- Baher mentioned that it is realistic. There have been attempts to get those countries to join the GAC in different occasions, and most recently with Saudi Arabia. In 2019, they showed some positive signals by attending the GAC meetings in Marrakesh as observers. It was the same with Algeria 2 years ago. We invited them to join the GAC and wrote to a minister but then things have changed. Recently there were elections going on. Baher mentioned that political circumstances impact our efforts. We can always/do approach governments, talk to them about the GAC, and invite them to join. This is something that we do.
- Rafik mentioned that we can keep this action knowing that it is possible but there is no guarantee, and it might take time. We need to think more of other actions needed to go to the next level.
- Hadia mentioned that there are some activities going on between the GAC and the At-Large Advisory Committee. Within the GAC and other organizations, Hadia was wondering if facilitating GAC engagement with other Advisory Committees and Supporting Organizations could be an action.
- Rafik thinks it can work. He mentioned that we need to clarify who the members are in the region. We do not want to duplicate efforts. Something we can try to work from as a starting point and see how we can get support from gnso, ccnso, etc. Action: facilitate GAC members engagement from the region with other ICANN SO/AC. We can work later the wording/details.
- Baher agrees with Rafik: he thinks that we need to look not only at the GAC but consider other communities, other SO/AC members because even though the overall goal is about geopolitics, we shouldn't underestimate the role of the non-government actors in the geopolitics (national or regional levels).
We need to think about what else can stakeholders from the business community, the domain name community industry, academia, civil society, what kind of role they can play in this context. This shouldn't t be only about governance or the GAC.
- Rafik mentioned that, when we word those actions, we can be broader, include the other stakeholders in these related matters. No proposed wording for now. We will work later on the specifics.

Conclusion

- To conclude, Rafik mentioned that this was the 1st brainstorming, going through some proposed actions and have discussions about them to see if there is anything missing. He proposed, for the next call, to try to work on the wording for those initial ideas and go through them. He mentioned that the WG will continue the review in the mailing list. We also need to have more discussion in the mailing list. Rafik will take the responsibility for that and see how we can foster more and get more input from the rest of the working group members.
- Rafik mentioned that the WG will work on the document to make a new version, trying to focus on the wording of the proposed actions/amended actions, do the review on the next call and continue the discussion. He will ask everyone to do so in the mailing list prior to the call.