New Middle East Strategy Working Group
Minutes of Meeting – Call 1 | Tuesday 15 October 2019

The new working group in charge of developing ICANN's new engagement strategy for the Middle East had their first teleconference call on Tuesday 15 October at 13.00 UTC.

On the call, we had *Baha Toman*, *Chokri Ben Romdhane*, *Noha Abdel Baky*, *Pooya Teimoory*, and *Zakir Syed*. And from ICANN staff, the call had *Baher Esmat*, *Magali Jean*, and *Fahd Batayneh*. We had some noted apologizes for the call.

The agenda for the call covered the following items:

- Welcome
- The Notion of Regional Engagement Strategies and Where We are Today
- ICANN's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan
- Aligning the Regional Strategy with ICANN's Strategic Plan
- Work Timeline
- Work Modalities
- AoB

Welcome

Baher Esmat; ICANN's VP for Global Stakeholder Engagement in the Middle East, welcomed those on the call, and thanked them for their will to contribute their time and effort towards developing ICANN's engagement strategy for the Middle East.

The Notion of Regional Engagement Strategies and Where We are Today

The objective of such strategies is twofold:

1. Better understand regional needs in the context of ICANN's remit and identify priorities / goals accordingly
2. Two-way engagement between all stakeholder groups and ICANN

Such strategies are developed in alignment with ICANN's current (at the time) Strategic Plan, and within the boundaries of ICANN's remit. The idea of such strategies started with Africa in 2012, and went on to be replicated by other ICANN regions.

The first engagement strategy for ICANN in the Middle East started in 2013. The first regional strategy spanned for 3 years between 2013-2016, while the second one spanned for 4 years between 2016-2020. The second strategy is in its 4th and final year as we speak.

Each strategy was executed through annual implementation plans that were developed in close coordination with the SWG of that strategy. At the end of each ICANN fiscal year, that implementation plan would be reviewed and assessed to measure what was achieved, what was not, and hot to improve for the next implementation plan; if any.

ICANN's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan

ICANN's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is a 5-year plan that is effective on 1 July 2021. It covers five focus areas:

1. Focus Area 1: Security
2. Focus Area 2: ICANN's Governance
3. Focus Area 3: Unique Identifiers System
4. Focus Area 4: Geopolitics
5. Focus Area 5: Financials

Each focus area has a defined strategic objective and key trend themes (the slides shown during the call cover this). As for the regional trends, members of the SWG need to keep in mind the following questions:

- What are some regional perspectives on these trends?
- Are there other regional trends to take in consideration?

Aligning the Regional Strategy with ICANN's Strategic Plan

In aligning the regional strategy with ICANN's overall strategic plan, the group need to answer 3 questions:

- What is relevant to this region?
- What are regional implications?
- What are some specificities to the region to take in consideration?

Work Timeline

The following timeline was suggested for the group:

- ⊙ **Oct 2019** - Brainstorming and deliberations amongst new SWG members, and discussions with the wider community over mailing lists and webinar(s)
- ⊙ **Nov 2019 – Jan 2020** - SWG to draft new engagement strategy
- ⊙ **Feb 2020** - Draft engagement strategy issued for public comments, and hold a region-wide webinar to seek input/feedback
- ⊙ **Mar –Apr 2020** - SWG to finalize new engagement strategy
- ⊙ **May 2020** - Final strategy document issued, and work begins on developing the Year 1 implementation plan
- ⊙ **May-Jun 2020** - Final Year 1 implementation plan issued

Work Modalities

The group will work over a mailing list. The group also has an online presence at https://go.icann.org/2OOgzQL where teleconference calls content, strategy documents, implementation plans, and other relevant content will be posted.

The group may also want to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair.

Any Other Business (AoB)

The group would want to decide on the term of the strategy. As ICANN's Strategic Plan spans over 5 years (1 July 2021 – 30 June 2025), it was suggested to align the Middle East regional strategy along with it.

There was a question on the Charter of the Strategy. Baher E pointed that a charter was developed for the current 2016-2020 Middle East Strategy, and that the group may want to look at that and maybe amend it before approving it. There was a suggestion to set aside 2 weeks for the Charter work.

There was a question on how newcomers can get themselves better acquainted in the work of the strategy. Fahd B pointed to:

1. The ICANN 2021-2025 Strategic Plan;
2. The two identical webinars describing the ICANN 2021-2025 Strategic Plan; and
3. The current running 2016-2020 MEAC Strategy.

All SWG members are encouraged to read the above mentioned documents and view the webinars. They are quite short, concise, and straight to the point. Baher E also suggested that anyone can reach out to ICANN Staff at anytime for any sort of help; be it Baher, Magali, or even Fahd.

Baher E suggested fixing a date and time for future calls. In the early stages, calls could be on weekly basis, but the frequency becomes less once the strategy document is in place.

The call was adjourned.

Follow-Up Items

1. SWG members to discuss the term of the strategy
2. ICANN Staff to share the Charter with the SWG
3. ICANN Staff to share relevant content for the SWG to read and view
4. ICANN staff to circulate a Doodle Poll to set a date and time to have our regular calls