2021-2025 MEAC Strategy Working Group
Minutes of Meeting – Call 22 | Monday 16 January 2023

The 2021-2025 MEAC-SWG had their twenty second (22) teleconference call on Monday 16 January 2023 at 10.00 UTC.

On the call, we had *Rafik Dammak*, *Hadia* Elminiawi, *Baha Toman*, *Chokri Ben Romdhane*, *Noha Fathy*, and *Shehab Karman*. And from ICANN staff, the call had *Baher Esmat*, *Seher Sagiroglu*, and *Fahd Batayneh*.

The agenda for the call was fully dedicated to discussing the questionnaire on reinvigorating the MEAC-SWG and the way forward.

Rafik D welcomed attendees to the call. He spoke about the purpose of circulating the questionnaire and the results received. He then handed back the microphone to ICANN staff to go through the results.

Fahd B started by stating that of the 29 members of the MEAC-SWG, 13 took the survey. Questionnaire results stated that reasons for SWG members generally not being very active includes:

- Occupied with work and other commitments
- No incentive to participate and contribute
- Newcomers feeling excluded due to the varying levels of knowledge and expertise of members
- Repetitiveness of themes and activities
- Political circumstances limiting participation

When asked about suggestions for changes to be made for more active and effective participation, response were as follows:

- More in-person meetings as virtual meetings do not motivate
- Offer incentives such as travel support, careers prospects, gifts, and other perks
- Create some sub-groups within the MEAC-SWG to undertake specific tasks (public comments, liaisons to the UASG…)
- Nominate MEAC-SWG members to attend the MEAC School on IG or the regional ME DNS Forum
- Offer a track for SWG members who are newcomers to get them abreast with the discussions
- Utilize social media groups (WhatsApp) for SWG members to discuss
- Expand and diversify the scope and activities of the MEAC-SWG
- Reach out and engage new members
- More events at the regional level

One of the respondents suggested moving Pakistan from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region.

Regarding the comment "*Newcomers feeling excluded due to the varying levels of knowledge and expertise of members*". ICANN has a program for newcomers where webinars are conducted on different topics. There is also a dedicated webpage online at https://www.icann.org/en/beginners.

Regarding the comment "*Repetitiveness of themes and activities*". It is very important to note that ICANN has a very focused mandate of coordinating the unique identifiers of the Internet.

One other comment that came in the survey reads as "*Create some sub-groups within the MEAC-SWG to undertake specific tasks*". Fahd B asked if the SWG would be willing to consider creating a sub-group to investigate ways of reinvigorating the SWG?

Fahd B shared some initiatives where the SWG could be of help to.

- Promote the initiative "Knowledge-sharing and Instantiating Norms for DNS and Naming Security (KINDNS)" to network operators (ISPs, mobile operators, e-government programs…).
- Promote DNSSEC Validation to network operators (ISPs, mobile operators, e-government programs…).
- Promote ICANN's work on DNS Security Threats by speaking at events or organizing workshops/talks/seminars on the same.
- Organize four (4) thematic webinars to update the regional community on policies, processes, and constituency work. Any topics you think are worth considering?
- Pushing the work of UA at the national level where 1) National initiatives are encouraged, and 2) Community members are encouraged to apply to become UA Ambassadors.
- Seeking opportunities to engage with policy makers and regulators on national Internet regulations and legislations that may have an impact on the DNS and its global operation.

Chokri BR asked about ICANN's views on Blockchain replacing the DNS. Fahd B answered that ICANN does not have positions on such technologies, and that ICANN studies these technologies and explores if there are any impact they could have on the DNS. ICANN authored a paper on Blockchain domain names, and the 2022 edition of the ME DNS Forum had a session on decentralized domain names.

Chokri BR suggested to create a sub-group within the SWG to explore UA work, and to liaise with the UASG. Fahd B asked Chokri BR if he would be willing to explore this and talk to the UASG. ICANN staff remain there to support such efforts.

Rafik D shared some last comments and suggested to experiment the idea of sub-groups on a trial basis for 1 or 2 topic and evaluate the results.

The call was adjourned.

The call recording can be found at https://bit.ly/3iR4wmP.