

MEAC Strategy Working Group 2021-2025 Charter

1. Background on the Middle East Strategy

The idea of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) formulating a regional strategy for the Middle East surfaced in late 2012. A group of more than 20 volunteers from various countries in the region¹ representing all stakeholder groups² came together to develop a strategy that defines regional needs in a bottom-up, multistakeholder fashion. The term of the strategy was for three years beginning on 1 July 2013 and ending on 30 June 2016.

The strategy document defined the strategic objectives of the region and actions needed to fulfill those objectives, and annual strategy implementation plans had been developed between 2013 and 2016. More information on the strategy document, the annual implementation plans and their respective reviews and assessments are available at: <https://community.icann.org/display/MES/Documents>.

In 2016, ICANN solicited feedback from the regional community on the need to have a new strategy in line with ICANN's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. The feedback was positive, and so a new strategy working group came together to develop another strategy for the next 3 years; i.e. 2016-2019. Later in 2019, and after consulting with the MEAC-SWG and the wider community, it was agreed to extend the current strategy by a further year to end on 30 June 2020, and at the same time start working on a new engagement strategy for ICANN in the Middle East to go in line with ICANN's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

2. Mission

The mission of the New Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG 2021-2025) is to provide a multistakeholder, community-led venue for independent volunteers and experts from the region to work inclusively and transparently in order to devise an ICANN regional strategy, catering for the needs of the diverse stakeholders in the Middle East region. The strategy is expected to understand the needs of the Internet ecosystem in the region as well as tackle the obstacles and challenges that hinder its development.

3. Scope

The scope of work of the MEAC- SWG 2021-2025 is:

¹ The region the 2013-2016 Middle East Strategy covered was the 22 Arab States (as defined at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_states), Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

² The stakeholders include but are not limited to: registries, registrars, resellers, country code top-level domains (ccTLDs), internationalized domain name (IDN) ccTLDs, generic top-level domains (gTLDs) applicants and owners, businesses, civil society, governments, the private sector, academia, and the technical community.

1. Limited to the Middle East region as defined by ICANN;³
2. To develop a new engagement strategy in line with ICANN's 2021-2025 strategic plan;
3. To build on the past experience of the 2013-2016 Middle East Strategy, as well as the 2016-2020 MEAC Strategy, using the successes, lessons learned, future recommendations, and what worked well as examples;
4. To give special attention to countries that require more engagement, including countries experiencing political instability, conflicts, or wars;
5. To emphasize the progress and development of the domain name industry, local content development, domain name system (DNS) security, and Internet governance ecosystem in the Middle East region; and
6. To establish a review mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the regional strategy.

4. Working methods

In achieving its mission, the MEAC-SWG 2021-2025 will work in a bottom-up, multistakeholder fashion, relying on the volunteer work of its members. The MEAC-SWG 2021-2025 will conduct most of its work online – maximizing the benefits of its mailing list, holding virtual meetings and conference calls as deemed necessary – and making use of online collaboration tools and resources. The SWG will operate openly and transparently, and all archives, meeting minutes, and call recordings will be made publicly available online at <https://community.icann.org/display/MES/2021-2025+MEAC+Strategy>.

MEAC-SWG 2021-2025 members will organize their work through ICANN facilitation. SWG members will agree among themselves or by no formal opposition on logistical matters such as the scheduling of meetings or other issues.

As deemed necessary, sub-committees or sub-groups may be formed among members of the SWG in order to accomplish certain tasks. Each sub-committee or sub-group may have a work lead. Tasks achieved will ultimately feed into the overall work of the group.

The SWG will endeavor to achieve consensus throughout its work. Where consensus is not possible, decisions will be taken by rough consensus.⁴ ICANN staff will also work to facilitate reaching consensus within the group.

Moreover, members should actively participate in the work of the SWG. Participating volunteers should maintain momentum and be committed to delivering the strategy in accordance with the agreed upon timeframes.

³ Turkey was not included in the initial 2013-2016 Middle East Strategy. It has since been incorporated into the regional grouping and is included in the 2016-2020 Middle East Strategy.

⁴ For a detailed description of rough consensus, see: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc7282>.

In order to have an effective and continuous review of the strategy, all SWG members are expected to attend at least two teleconference calls per year throughout the mandate of the strategy, and no member is expected to attend less than one teleconference call per year.

Representatives from organizations that work with ICANN may be invited to observe and provide feedback on SWG activities. These include United Nations agencies operating in the region, Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) covering countries in the region, and other international organizations that have presence and/or a stake in some or all of the countries in the Middle East region.

5. Deliverables

The SWG is expected to deliver the following:

1. A strategic plan for the period 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2025;
2. Implementation plan(s), including a breakdown of activities, timeline, and focus areas;
3. A regularly updated strategy online page with details about the actions taken by the SWG, such as activities, meetings, correspondence, media coverage, etc.;

6. Membership

Members of the SWG should come from across the region or have interest in the region, and should preferably represent all relevant stakeholder groups in order to accommodate the different perspectives that exist.

SWG members are expected to show strong commitment and be actively engaged in the work of the strategy group. Anyone can apply to become a member of the SWG provided she/he submits an Expression of Interest (EOI) for their willingness to become a member of the SWG.

Observers are welcome to join the SWG and are not required to submit an EOI to join the group. The roles and expectations of “members” and “observers” are defined in Section 7.

Anyone can join the SWG even after the call for membership concludes either as members or as observers. This is conditioned with the following:

1. Membership shall be open after each ICANN public meeting; and
2. New members cannot hinder ongoing work or re-open agreed upon items unless agreed by the wider SWG.

ICANN staff will work with new members/observers to get them abreast with where the strategy stands.

7. Role identification

The different roles that members of the SWG may take on to support its success include but are not limited to the following:

Chair: Schedules and chairs meetings, develops action plans, ensures the effective operation of the SWG as per the charter, oversees that the various volunteers conduct tasks as agreed or assigned, and synthesizes views in order to reach consensus. In cases where consensus has not been reached, the chair determines if consensus or rough consensus has been reached. The chair has to dedicate enough time to his/her mission and keep members engaged in working toward achieving the goals and objectives of the SWG in collaboration with the vice chair and facilitator.

Vice Chair: Assists the chair in executing his/her roles, and chairs the meetings and calls in the absence of the chair.

Facilitator (ICANN staff): Helps the chair and vice-chair plan meetings, facilitates the internal interaction between members by managing logistics, setting up meeting times and virtual rooms, sending reminders and updates to members, fixing any technical issues that require attention, and assisting with travel arrangements for physical meetings. Additionally, the facilitator serves the role of secretary for the meeting by writing and distributing minutes (and/or transcripts, recordings, etc.), manages the creation of subgroups and their outputs, and updates the relevant sections of the SWG online page with the latest information regarding the SWG's meetings, news, and activities.

Members: Support the work of the SWG by actively participating in the mailing list discussions as well as attend as many meetings as possible in accordance with the criteria defined in Section 4, provide feedback, and assist in any capacity they can to improve the overall work of the SWG so it can achieve its goals. Members can also vote if required.

Observers: Are free to join public mailing lists to observe and oversee the activities of the SWG. They can comment through the mailing lists on the work done by the SWG. Observers are not expected to participate in the actual work activities of the SWG and cannot vote or take leadership roles in the SWG.

Leadership roles will be assigned to nominated members who agree to the responsibilities of the respective role and receive the strongest support from members. In the case where more than one member stands for one of the leadership positions, ICANN Staff will initiate a voting poll online for members to cast their vote. The member with the highest number of votes will hold the position in question.

In case the Chair or the Vice-Chair has to step down for any reason, a process will be initiated to select a new member to fill the vacant position whereby a call goes out, and if one member nominates him/herself, that member will fill the vacant slot. However, if 2 or more members stand for the vacant position, an online poll will be set for members to cast their vote. The member with the highest number of votes will fill the vacant position.

8. Performance review

Every six months, the SWG will issue a report on the performance of the working group against the requirements of the charter.

The SWG may review and then make changes to this charter only if those changes are deemed absolutely necessary to make the charter more effective and practical in order to improve the SWG's performance. Those changes must be carefully documented and garner the approval of all SWG members.

9. Members of the Initial Charter Drafting Group

The members of the initial Charter Drafting Group included the following:

1. Michael Oghia	20. Wafa Dahmani
2. Zied Fakhfakh	21. Ahlem Ismail
3. Nadira Alaraj	22. Abdelhamid Al Abbadi
4. Hafedh Alyahmadi	23. Malek BG
5. Mohammad Zeidan	24. Zahr Bou Ghanem
6. Walid Al-Saqaf	25. Oussama Hamal
7. Mustapha Ben Jemaa	26. Ahmed Bakhat Masood
8. Amr Elsadr	27. Zied Dridi
9. Ridha Guellouz	28. Rafik Dammak
10. Rao Naveed Bin Rais	29. Chokri Ben Romdhane
11. Zakir Bin Rehman	30. Mohamed Benyahia
12. Fouad Bajwa	31. Mohamed Najeh Issaoui
13. Mohamed ElGohary	32. Houda Belkasssem
14. Manal Ismail	33. Mohamed Majdoubi
15. Wael Nasr	34. Ali Almeshal
16. Hadia El Miniawi	35. Mahmoud Lattouf
17. Nabil Bukhalid	36. Baher Esmat (ICANN Staff)
18. Omer Mohamed Fadul	37. Fahd Batayneh (ICANN Staff)
19. Said Marjan Zazai	