

Consultations and Feedback

ArabMIG Meeting

The Middle East Strategy Working Group presented at the Arab Multi-stakeholder Internet Governance Meeting that took place in Dubai on 4-5 March 2013. The meeting was held as part of the Arab IGF Open Consultations, and was an opportunity to inform community of work underway in relation to the Middle East engagement strategy and get feedback.

Summary of feedback:

- Localizing the multi-stakeholder model to suit the region is very important; it will help develop strong policy development processes at national and regional levels; it is an ongoing process that requires efforts by all stakeholders;
- Arab IGF can play a stimulating role in bringing everyone around the table; support from ICANN, ISOC and the RIRs will help the Arab IGF develop and reach out to the larger community;
- Capacity building is essential; organizations such as ISOC and Diplo Foundation play key role in this area;
- Such regional meetings help people understand the role of ICANN; not many people from the region go to ICANN meetings; continuity in participation is also a challenge;
- ICANN should expand its presence in the region; there is a need for more awareness and outreach activities at regional and country level to explain role of ICANN and how to get engaged; different stakeholders may require different outreach approach;
- Engaging private sector from the region in Internet governance processes, and in ICANN, is a challenge; ISPs and operators do not see their role in ICANN; there are very few registrars and domain name dispute resolution providers in the region;
- Need for enabling environments within countries to foster DNS industry; ccTLD operators can contribute to building this industry;
- Need for identifying local partners from the region; this would further extend the outreach and maintain long-term sustainability.

Feedback from Registrars

Members of MESWG at the group's face-to-face meeting in Dubai, on March 5th – 6th, 2013, agreed to reach out to current registrars from the region. The outreach was meant to stand on the challenges registrars from the region faced during ICANN accreditation process as well as challenges they are currently facing in running their registrar business. Despite the small number of registrars interviewed, only 3, they still represent 50% of the registrars in the region and hence constitute a significant sample.

Summary of feedback:

- Competition in this business is very tough;
- The business requires large volumes to make it profitable;
- Selling domains cannot be the core business; it must be complemented with other services which are often more profitable (e.g. hosting, cloud, etc.);
- Becoming an ICANN accredited registrar is an investment; it is important and it gives credibility;
- Different views regarding the financial requirements for accreditation (commercial general liability of \$500,000 and working capital of \$70,000); some believe it used to be an issue in the past; others believe it still acts as a barrier for entry;
- Increase in registry fees is a burden for small registrars;
- In some countries, registrars like other businesses in the country, must pay up to 10% taxes on any bank transactions;
- Different payment methods to suit different customers;
- Different user interfaces with different languages;
- Registrars can either build their own platforms or use 3rd parties; it depends on the business model and the size of the business;
- Increasing the number of registrars should not be goal in itself; ICANN should engage more with existing registrars, help them sustain their businesses;
- Registrar accreditation rules must be the same across all regions;
- All agreements with ICANN and with registries are subject to the laws of the United States, which is not favorable for many businesses in the region;
- No major technical challenges; migration from RRP to EPP was an issue long time ago.