MIDDLE EAST
REGIONAL REPORT

1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020

ICANN

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Year at a Glance — Timeline

2019

8-12 July

The 6th edition of the Middle East and Adjoining Countries School on Internet Governance (**MEAC-SIG 2019**) was held in Rabat, Morocco.

17 July

FY19 Middle East Engagement satisfaction **survey results** showed 70% were satisfied with ICANN's engagement efforts in the region.

22-27 September

ICANN's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) and Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team members held technical engagement activities in Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey.

15 October

The new Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group (**MEAC-SWG**) began efforts to develop a new regional strategic plan.

20-21 November

ICANN's Istanbul regional office hosted a Tech Talk delivered by ICANN's Chief Technology Officer (CTO) David Conrad to a group of technical stakeholders.

ICANN's CTO delivered a keynote speech on the security and stability of the unique identifiers at the ICT Summit 2019, in Istanbul, Turkey.

2020

22-23 January

ICANN org participated in a panel discussion on Internet and multilingualism, speaking about Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance at the Arab Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2020 in Cairo, Egypt.

18 February

The Middle East Regional Plan FY21–25 was released for Public Comments.

15 April

The Middle East Space held a remote session on the Universal Acceptance of Arabic script-based domain names and email addresses.

27 April

A **regional webinar** was held on Understanding DNS over TLS (DoT) and DNS over HTTPS (DoH).

14 May

The first joint Middle East and Africa regional webinar was conducted for ICANN's Open Data Program.

The final version of the FY21–25 **Middle East Regional Plan** published, and work started on the FY21 Action Plan.

8 June

The Middle East Space held another remote session to discuss and finalize its statement on Universal Acceptance of Arabic script-based domain names and email addresses.

30 June

The final version of the **FY21 Action Plan** was published, and the 2016–2020 MEAC Strategy concluded.

Regional Highlights

FY21–25 MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL PLAN

In mid-October, a group of community members came together to begin working on a new regional plan (previously known as a "Regional Strategy"). Some of the initial agreements of the MEAC Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG) included developing a five-year regional plan that aligns with ICANN's Five-Year Strategic Plan, and implementing the regional plan via annual action plans.

Of the five focus areas found in the ICANN FY21–25 Strategic Plan, the MEAC-SWG were of the view that four were relevant to the region: security, ICANN's governance, unique identifier systems, and geopolitics.

The final version of the FY21–25 Middle East Regional Plan was published on 14 May 2020, and work started on the FY21 Action Plan thereafter. The final FY21 Action Plan was published on 30 June 2020.

UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Work around Universal Acceptance has been intensifying in the Middle East from increasing content on the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) website, to organizing discussions under the Middle East Space, speaking opportunities, workshops, and training programs. Much of this work has been undertaken by the UASG through its ambassador Abdalmonem Galila from Egypt.

Egypt has been notably active in raising UA awareness. Five different training workshops in different cities attracted more than 180 participants. A three-day UA Hackathon was also organized between 25–27 August by the National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA) of Egypt, including an UA ambassador and an UASG vice chair. Abdalmonem Galila is also working with some computer science students at Ain Shams University on UA graduation projects.

In Pakistan, the Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registry and a group of academics came together to develop an Email Address Internationalization (EAI) testbed. Their objective was to create awareness on EAI locally and develop training materials for its deployment. The work on the testbed concluded in December. The next steps revolve around raising awareness.

In Turkey, a group of academics have built the initial foundation for some UA work in the country. In June, Cengiz Acarturk was approved as a new UA ambassador. He is the second UA ambassador from the Middle East.

A workshop on EAI was supposed to take place in Bahrain on 17 March during the Middle East Network Operators Group 2020 (MENOG20) week, but the event was postponed due to COVID-19.

Work on Universal Acceptance falls under focus area two of the FY16–20 ICANN Middle East Strategy which aims to promote a healthy and competitive domain name marketplace in the region. More specifically, this comes under the objective to have broader and better advanced professional skills and expertise to further develop and grow the domain name marketplace.

COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

During FY20, ICANN org collaborated with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Internet Society (ISOC), and the RIPE NCC on several fronts. Collaboration with regional organizations falls under focus area three of the FY16–20 ICANN Middle East Strategy which prioritizes engagement with the regional community and sets an objective for stronger collaboration with Internet organizations in the region.

The following events were organized:

- Rabat, Morocco, hosted the 2019 edition of the Middle East and Adjoining Countries School on Internet Governance (**MEAC-SIG**) during 8–12 July. This is a joint project that involves ICANN, Internet Society, RIPE NCC, and others.

- ICANN made presentations on DNS security at a series of three seminars organized by the Internet Society (ISOC) across the Middle East in Jordan on 26 August, in Lebanon on 29 August, and Bahrain on 29 September.

- The ITU organized a three-day workshop entitled "Strengthening Capacities in Internet Governance in Arab Region" in Manama, Bahrain, on 1–3 October. The ITU worked closely with ICANN and other partners in developing the agenda and executing the event. This was the first collaboration of its kind between ICANN and the ITU in the region.

Capacity-Development Activities in Middle East

Note: The FY20 training calendar was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

TRAINING FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNITY	TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES	TRAINING FOR NONTECHNICAL COMMUNITY
ICANN org held technical workshops and webinars on DNS Network Security, DNSSEC, and Universal Acceptance across the region.	*ICANN org provides training for law enforcement agencies so that they can better handle abuse and misuse related to Internet identifiers.*	*ICANN org also regularly helps to build capacity for the nontechnical community such as accredited registrars and registry operators, and reaches out to the larger community to help stakeholders better understand ICANN policies and processes.*
Total number of workshops in FY20:	**Total number of workshops in FY20:**	**Total number of workshops in FY20:**
5	3	2
Total number of workshops in FY19:	**Total number of workshops in FY19:**	**Total number of workshops in FY19:**
6	4	13

Middle East Community Leaders

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Rafik Dammak — MEAC Strategy Working Group Chair and Vice Chair of the EPDP

UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE AMBASSADORS

Abdalmonem Galilla — Egypt

Names in bold = Newly Appointed in FY20

You can find the complete list of community leaders from all regions **here**.

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