ICANN

MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL REPORT

1 JULY 2021–30 JUNE 2022

ONE WORLD, ONE INTERNET

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Middle East DNS Forum 2022

Middle East Domain Name System Forum

The eighth edition of the Middle East DNS Forum was held virtually from 16–18 May 2022. The three-day event covered technical, business, and legal topics and drew more than 200 participants from across the region and beyond.

Rich discussions resulted in some key takeaways. The region continues to have huge potential. The COVID-19 pandemic did provide a push for more advancement in remote outreach, and this is still a work-in-progress, mainly among ccTLDs.

The forum featured the launch of the new Middle East DNS Forum website. Content related to the forum can be found online at **https://mednsf.org/**.

Reaching New Audiences

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, ICANN's Middle East GSE team successfully engaged with new audiences from the region.

In Saudi Arabia, continuous stakeholder engagement resulted in fruitful collaborations during this fiscal year. Notably, ICANN organized several technical workshops and webinars on various DNS-related topics. ICANN also worked closely with the Internet Center of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology on areas of collaboration.

In Pakistan, ICANN org successfully worked with Gemnet Enterprise Solutions, an ISP, to enable DNSSEC validation on its network. The ISP's keen interest in increasing network resilience made this possible.

In Somalia, ICANN had a strong presence at the Somalia Network Operators Groups 2021 (SOMNOG) event. ICANN presented the first technical hands-on workshop for the local technical community on DNS operations at this event, along with other presentations.

EVENTS AND PROJECTS

This table lists ICANN org's events and projects in the Middle East throughout FY22, organized by how the activities furthered ICANN's strategic objectives and goals.

EVENTS	PROJECTS
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN THE SECURITY OF THE DNS AND THE DNS ROOT SERVER SYSTEM	
Goal 1.1: Improve the shared responsibility for upholding the security and stability of the DNS by strengthening DNS coordination in partnership with relevant stakeholders	
• Organized a hands-on DNS operations workshop and another hands-on DNSSEC workshop for the Saudi Arabian technical community. • Organized a hands-on DNS operations workshop for the Somali technical community during SOMNOG 2021. • Gave a talk at the Middle East Technical University on the DNS and its Importance. • Organized a thematic webinar on DNSSEC validation. • Organized a webinar for the Pakistani technical community on DNS operations, DNS security threats, and DNSSEC. • Organized a presentation on the Knowledge-sharing and Instantiating Norms for DNS and Naming Security (KINDNS) initiative during the annual Middle East DNS Forum 2022.	• Organized calls with 10 different network operators on DNSSEC validation. Work eventually started with four of them to enable DNSSEC validation on their respective networks. • Encouraged DNSSEC signing by two ccTLDs.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ICANN'S MULTISTAKEHOLDER MODEL OF GOVERNANCE	
Goal 1.2: Strengthen DNS root server operations governance in coordination with the DNS root server operators	
	• Coordinated the installation of two new IMRS in Erbil, Iraq. These are the first IMRS instances in the country. • Currently coordinating the deployment and functioning of four new IMRS instances, one in Morocco, one in Libya, and two in Saudi Arabia.
Goal 1.3: Identify and mitigate security threats to the DNS through greater engagement with relevant hardware, software, and service vendors	
• Delivered a talk on DNS security threats to students studying cybersecurity at the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences in Saudi Arabia. • Delivered a talk on DNS security threats for lawyers with the Ankara Legal Hackers. • Delivered a workshop on DNS security threats during the Fifth International Conference of the Arab Society for Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine. • Organized a panel on DNS security threats during the annual Middle East DNS Forum 2022.	Promoted DAAR among seven ccTLDs.

(continued)

EVENTS	PROJECTS
Goal 2.2: Support and grow active, informed, and effective stakeholder participation	
• Organized the Middle East Space sessions during ICANN72 and ICANN73. • Organized a Middle East Readout session for each of the ICANN72 and ICANN73 public meetings. • Organized the annual Middle East and Adjoining Countries School on Internet Governance 4–8 July 2021.	Organized an ICANN general training for stakeholders from Pakistan. The first portion of the training, the Basic Track, covered topics on ICANN and ICANN's Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees . The second track; the Advanced Track, was tailored to the interests of attendees (technical, IDNs and UA).
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: EVOLVE THE UNIQUE IDENTIFIER SYSTEMS IN COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH RELEVANT PARTIES TO CONTINUE TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE GLOBAL INTERNET USER BASE	
Goal 3.1: Foster competition, consumer choice, and innovation in the Internet space by increasing awareness of, and encouraging readiness for Universal Acceptance, IDN implementation, and IPv6	
• Organized the eighth Middle East DNS Forum 16–18 May 2022. • Organized webinars on UA for communities in Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Iraq.	Contributed articles to the Arab ICT Organization's magazines.
Goal 3.2: Improve assessment of, and responsiveness to, new technologies which impact the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet's unique identifier systems by greater engagement with relevant parties	
• Disseminated publications authored by ICANN's Office of the CTO and the SSAC. • Disseminated publications authored by ICANN's Government Engagement Team.	
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: ADDRESS GEOPOLITICAL ISSUES IMPACTING ICANN'S MISSION TO ENSURE A SINGLE, GLOBALLY INTEROPERABLE INTERNET	
Goal 4.1: Identify and address global challenges and opportunities within its remit by further developing early warning systems, such as ICANN org's Legislative and Regulatory Development Reports	
	Engaged with various regional stakeholders to stay abreast of new laws and regulations that relate to ICANN's mission, and reported on them internally.
Goal 4.2: Continue to build alliances in the Internet ecosystem and beyond to raise awareness of and engage with global stakeholders about ICANN's mission and policymaking	
• Organized a presentation on data privacy and protection legislation in the Gulf Cooperation Council during the Middle East DNS Forum 2022. • Organized a session entitled "Maintaining One Single Global Internet" during the Arab IGF 2021.	

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