
Public Comment Summary Report

FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan

Open for Submissions Date:
Monday, 31 March 2025

Closed for Submissions Date:
Monday, 12 May 2025

Summary Report Due Date:
Monday, 02 June 2025

Category: Other

Requester: ICANN org

ICANN org Contact(s): gse.me@icann.org

Open Proceeding Link: <https://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/proceeding/fy26-fy30-middle-east-regional-plan-31-03-2025>

Outcome:

ICANN extends its appreciation for the time, effort and participation of the community for considering the FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan, and appreciates the comments received. ICANN also expresses its gratitude to the Middle East Plan mailing list members for their invaluable input during the creation of the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan.

The Public Comment Proceeding for the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan resulted in three submissions.

All comments received supported the findings in the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan and offered valuable considerations.

After reviewing the comments, ICANN org believes that the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan addresses several of the key points raised in the comments received, while other comments will be addressed in the annual action plans, and through future engagement activities with the regional community.

This document provides a summary of the comments received and ICANN org's initial analysis.

Section 1: What We Received Input On

In line with ICANN's commitment to understanding the needs of its different regions, this Public Comment Proceeding sought community input on the suggested regional activities and desired

outcomes per the Strategic Objectives defined in the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan.

Section 2: Submissions

Individuals:

Name	Affiliation (if provided)	Initials
Abdulrahman Abotaleb	Internet Society (ISOC) - Yemen Chapter	AA
Benson Mugure	STORM Guidance (Mauritius) Limited	BM
Reza Tahan Latibari		RTL

Section 3: Summary of Submissions

ICANN received submissions from three individuals on the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan, highlighted in Section 2 above. This section summarizes the feedback received relating to the various sections of the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan.

Some comments related specifically to the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan, while a few others raised valuable perspectives that extend beyond its immediate scope.

The commenters expressed general support for the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan and acknowledged and appreciated its intention to foster enhanced collaboration among a broad and diverse range of stakeholders.

AA inquired about any mitigation strategies in place because of some goals depending on external factors beyond ICANN's control.

BM commented on measuring the success of the "Desired Outcomes," requested for details on the specific regional platforms and forums ICANN intends to engage with, and sought clarification on the specific outreach strategies which ICANN will employ to ensure its diversity programs reach and benefit underrepresented communities and countries within the Middle East region.

RTL made several comments in relation to Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), the New gTLD Program: Next Round, and the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan in general.

More details on the comments received can be found on the relevant [Public Comments webpage](#).

Section 4: Analysis of Submissions

The comments are generally supportive of the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan. The following analysis attempts to respond to the comments received, categorized into three main themes: regional engagement needs, measuring outcomes, and evolution of the unique identifiers.

Regional Engagement Needs *(Addressing comments related to regional engagement activities, programs targeting underrepresented communities, and collaboration with other stakeholders)*

ICANN's Middle East regional engagement strategy is shaped by regional needs, and built on collaboration with all stakeholder groups.

When developing the annual action plan for the Middle East, the GSE Middle East team seeks input from the regional community to better understand their needs. The GSE Middle East team then aligns these needs with ICANN org's priorities for that fiscal year to ensure effective delivery.

When promoting the Fellowship Program and Nextgen@ICANN program, mainly in underrepresented communities and countries within the Middle East region, the GSE Middle East team shares these programs where relevant, via mailing lists and through encouraging regional contacts to share within their respective relevant networks.

The Middle East DNS Forum is an annual event organized by ICANN in collaboration with diverse stakeholder groups. It provides a regional platform for stakeholders to exchange views and share expertise on a wide range of ICANN-related topics.

The GSE Middle East team also collaborates with Internet organizations operating in the region; organizations such as the Internet Society and the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs). The Middle East and Adjoining Countries School on Internet Governance (MEAC-SIG) is one event that is a collaboration between the Internet Society, RIPE NCC, and ICANN.

The Middle East Space is another example of a platform where the regional community comes together to discuss topics of shared interest. The GSE Middle East team provides the necessary support for this work.

Measuring Outcomes *(Addressing comments related to measuring progress and outcome)*

The draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan outlines ICANN's engagement priorities for the region, whereas the annual action plan includes specific actions and metrics that enable clearer measurement of outcomes.

The annual action plan is reviewed quarterly and updated annually, review cycle, and made available on the [ICANN community space](#).

Public events attended by the GSE Middle East team are published on the [ICANN master calendar](#) for community visibility.

Evolution of the Unique Identifier Systems *(Addressing comments related to IDNs, the New gTLD Program: Next Round, and input from the regional community)*

Regional engagement on IDNs, UA, and the New gTLD Program: Next Round is a priority for the Middle East.

ICANN has been working with the Arabic script community to develop the Root Zone Label Generation Rules (LGRs) as well as the Second Level Reference LGRs for Arabic script. These community-led efforts allow for secure and stable use of Arabic domain names at top and second level of the Domain Name System (DNS) and provide a consistent means of implementation for the registries. Work is also underway to enable Universal Acceptance (UA) of Arabic domain names. ICANN has been supporting UA Day events, Hackathons, and training in the region to create further awareness and capacity. Additional input on what further efforts may be required is welcome and appreciated.

Root Zone Label Generation Rules, as well as the Second Level Reference LGRs, incorporate community input to make the code points which are “same” in any way as variants of each other for Arabic script. This caters to any similarities. Additionally, ICANN is also collating data for visual similarity cases, as per the different policy recommendations. If there are any specific additions which need to be made in these analyses, ICANN welcomes the opportunity and will share your input with the community for further discussion.

The New gTLD Program: Next Round is the first opportunity to apply for a new generic top-level domain (gTLD) since the 2012 round. The goal of the New gTLD Program: Next Round is to foster diversity, encourage competition, and enhance the usefulness of the DNS. The round comes at the request of ICANN’s global multistakeholder community, which developed the program over several years, and is being implemented by ICANN in line with community developed policy recommendations.

The anticipated launch date of the next round is April 2026. Until then, there is a considerable effort injected by the community in relation to the different elements of the program. And to ensure that the global south can benefit from the program, programs such as the Applicant Support Program (ASP) are there for this purpose. The ASP is intended to make the New gTLD Program attainable to applicants that want to apply for a new gTLD but are unable to do so because of financial constraints and lack of other resources.

To make the New gTLD Program as accessible to as many eligible entities as possible, ICANN is providing financial and non-financial assistance to qualified applicants through the ASP.

Section 5: Next Steps

Following the publication of this summary report, ICANN org will take into consideration the Public Comments received, and where relevant, incorporate the input received into the Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan. Thereafter, ICANN will publish the Final FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan.

Additionally, efforts are also underway to finalize the fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Action Plan for the Middle East Regional Plan, which will be published once it is ready.