

Draft FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan

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Executive Summary

In line with ICANN's commitment to understanding the needs of its different regions, the Global Stakeholder Engagement team for the Middle East (GSE Middle East) collaborated with the Middle East community to develop a regional plan for the Middle East for fiscal years 2026–2030 (FY26-FY30). This regional plan tailors ICANN's FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan to align with regional needs and priorities, while ensuring it remains within ICANN's mission.

This FY26-FY30 regional plan identifies three of the four strategic objectives as the drivers for ICANN's engagement in the Middle East. Each strategic goal under each strategic objective defines activities to be undertaken, and desired outcomes from organizing these activities.

The five-year regional plan will be executed through annual action plans, which will include specific initiatives, projects, and engagement efforts aligned with the region's priorities.

ICANN's FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan

ICANN's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2026-2030 identified four strategic objectives as follows:

1. Evolve and promote ICANN's multistakeholder model to sustain its inclusive approach to Internet governance
2. Enhance organizational excellence
3. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to evolve the Internet's unique identifier systems
4. Strengthen the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems

Each strategic objective included multiple strategic goals, with each goal supported by several strategies.

To ensure alignment with ICANN's FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan, ICANN's Middle East Regional Plan adopts the same strategic objectives and goals, identifying engagement activities under each.

More about ICANN's FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan can be found in the [official document](#).

Past Middle East Regional Plans

The FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan is the fourth iteration of ICANN's engagement plans for the Middle East. The three previous plans were:

1. FY13-FY16 Middle East Engagement Strategy ([online space](#))
2. FY17-FY20 Middle East Engagement Strategy ([online space](#))

3. FY21-FY25 Middle East Regional Plan ([online space](#))

Each regional plan was developed by a regional working group that collaborated through face-to-face meetings, virtual calls, and a dedicated mailing list. Minutes of meetings and call recordings were posted on the [regional plan online space](#).

Regional plans from previous years were executed through an annual Action Plan that combined ICANN's priorities with the needs of the regional community. Community needs were gathered through email communication and calls. To report progress, the GSE Middle East team distributes a document to the working group members on a quarterly basis. At the end of each fiscal year, ICANN reports on the year's work and publishes a blog highlighting key achievements.

Developing the FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan and Work Modalities

To ensure alignment with ICANN's FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan, the Middle East Regional Plan will span over the same time period, and adopt the same strategic objectives and goals.

To facilitate the development of the Middle East Regional Plan, the GSE Middle East team issued an open call inviting interested regional community members to join a dedicated mailing list and contribute to the plan's formulation.

To commence the work, the GSE Middle East team shared samples of current regional work aligned with each strategic goal, and requested that the mailing list members propose activities for the upcoming five-year period that would fulfill ICANN's Strategic Plan.

Following several calls and email exchanges, the mailing list members agreed that the FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan would comprise three strategic objectives:

1. Evolve and promote ICANN's multistakeholder model to sustain its inclusive approach to Internet governance
2. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to evolve the Internet's unique identifier systems
3. Strengthen the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems

The mailing list members determined that the second strategic objective, "Enhance organizational excellence," is primarily focused on ICANN's internal matters. Consequently, the mailing list members and ICANN GSE Middle East team agreed it does not have a regional engagement element to it and should be removed from the Middle East regional plan.

This five-year regional plan will be executed through annual Action Plans, with each plan starting on 1 July and concluding on 30 June of the following year.

ICANN's FY26-FY30 Middle East Regional Plan

The following section shows the suggested regional activities and desired outcomes of each based on strategic goals under each strategic objective.

Strategic Objective 1 - Evolve and promote ICANN's multistakeholder model to sustain its inclusive approach to Internet governance

Strategic Goal	Regional Activities	Desired Outcomes
1.1 Ensure Inclusive Stakeholder Representation and Enhance Collaboration	1.1.1 Encourage the regional community to actively participate in processes that focus on integrating new and diverse stakeholders into ICANN community groups	* Greater regional participation, with regional community members who are well-informed and actively participating in processes that focus on integrating new and diverse stakeholders into ICANN community groups
	1.1.2 Utilize existing regional platforms to foster collaboration amongst the regional community	* Regional community members contribute to ICANN's PDPs and processes through valuable discussions and statement submissions * More regional community members interested and actively participating in ICANN constituencies, processes, and initiatives
	1.1.3 Promote ICANN diversity programs (Fellowship and NextGen programs) and learning platforms to regional community members	* An increased number of new community members attend ICANN meetings through the Fellowship and Nextgen programs
	1.1.4 Engage with Fellows and NextGen alumni beyond ICANN meetings, and explore ways to include them in our regional	* Number of new Fellowship and Nextgen alumni from the region become active in ICANN's work, either regionally, globally, or both

	activities	
	1.1.5 Execute ICANN's Academic Engagement Plan regionally	* More regional academic community members – including students, faculty members, and staff – become aware of and actively engage with ICANN * Enhanced collaboration with academic institutes, including universities and research centers
	1.1.6 Engage with stakeholders from underrepresented communities and countries to raise awareness of ICANN and its mission	* New audiences from underrepresented communities and countries become aware of ICANN and its mission
	1.1.7 Explore the need to develop country-specific engagement plans with local stakeholders in countries where travel is not feasible for ICANN	* Stronger engagement in countries where travel is not feasible for ICANN
	1.1.8 Participate in relevant national public consultations where ICANN can provide added-value expertise	* Promote ICANN's initiatives through government processes (e.g., Public Comment proceedings)
	1.1.9 Participate in engagements with governments, regulators, and intergovernmental organizations to address issues related to ICANN's mission	* Keep governments in the region informed about ICANN, its mission, and its initiatives * Seek opportunities to facilitate dialogues on legislative initiatives in the region, and discuss any potential impact such legislations may have on ICANN's mission

1.3 Expand Strategic Alliances to Advocate for the Multistakeholder Model of Internet Governance	1.3.1 Support and participate in multistakeholder forums at the national and regional levels	* More regional stakeholders understand ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance, as well as potential participation and involvement in ICANN's work and activities
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Strategic Objective 3 - Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to evolve the Internet's unique identifier systems

Strategic Goal	Regional Activities	Desired Outcomes
3.1 Facilitate Digital Inclusion	3.1.1 Speak about Universal Acceptance of domain names (UA), Email Address Internationalization, (EAI), and the importance of their adoption	* More stakeholders understand UA and its objectives * Increased UA and EAI adoption
	3.1.2 Encourage and promote the hosting of UA Day national and regional events	* Regional entities organize UA Day events
	3.1.3 Collaborate with academic institutions on integrating UA into the curriculum	* More regional academic institutes have UA as part of their educational curriculum
	3.1.4 Engage regularly with registries and registrars, and encourage them to adopt and implement UA	* Registries and registrars understand the importance of UA adoption, and explore making their relevant systems UA-ready
	3.1.5 Engage with regional governments on initiatives and projects related to UA	* Governments have better understanding of the importance of UA and encourage adoption at the local level
	3.1.6 Organize and	* Increased awareness and

	participate in events and one-on-one meetings to discuss the New gTLD Program: Next Round and its subprograms	communication around the New gTLD Program: Next Round
	3.1.7 Engage with applicants to the New gTLD Program: Next Round	* New gTLD Program: Next Round applicants become community members actively participating in ICANN policies and processes
3.2 Evolve the Assessment of, and Responsiveness to, Technological Developments	3.2.1 Promote and utilize technical publications authored by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO), Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC), and Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)	* More regional community members are exposed to ICANN's technical research and publications
3.3 Deliver and Enhance the IANA Functions to Meet Evolving Community Needs	3.3.1 Share information on the work undertaken by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA)	* More awareness and better understanding of the role of IANA and its functions

Strategic Objective 4 - Strengthen the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems

Strategic Goal	Regional Activities	Desired Outcomes
4.1 Strengthen Partnerships with Relevant Stakeholders to Reinforce the Shared Responsibility of Ensuring	4.1.1 Continue to organize the Middle East Domain Name System (DNS) Forum annually, and explore ways to evolve and organize it alongside other relevant events	* Increased and sustained engagement from regional community members in the Middle East DNS Forum, recognizing it as the primary regional platform for all ICANN and domain name-related discussions

Secure and Stable Internet's Unique Identifier Systems

	4.1.2 Collaborate with various stakeholders to raise awareness on issues and develop capacities in areas related to the DNS	* More regional community members are aware and trained on DNS Operations, Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC), and DNS Security * More DNSSEC signed ccTLDs and IDN ccTLDs * DNSSEC validation rates grow higher at the local and regional levels
	4.1.3 Participate in regional technical forums to discuss ICANN's technical work	* Increased exposure of ICANN's technical work within the regional technical community
	4.1.4 Promote OCTO programs and initiatives at the regional level, such as Knowledge-sharing and Instantiation Norms for DNS and Naming Security (KINDNS) and Domain Metrica	* More awareness of and interest in ICANN OCTO programs and initiatives * More operators willing to participate in the KINDNS assessment
	4.1.5 Identify relevant regional events organized by the Regional Internet Registries and regional top-level domain (TLD) organizations, and consider participating in them to raise awareness of ICANN's technical work	* Better understanding and increased cooperation amongst the regional technical community on the Internet's unique identifiers
	4.1.6 Work with telecom operators and government agencies in charge of the telecom sector on promoting ICANN's technical projects and initiatives, and explore the need for developing	* Increased cooperation and collaboration with governments to promote ICANN's technical initiatives and projects

	technical engagement strategies with them	
	4.1.7 Collaborate with RIRs operating in the region on joint events and projects	* Enhanced collaboration with regional Internet organizations operating in the region
4.2 Strengthen DNS Root Server System	4.2.1 Raise awareness and understanding of the Root Server System (RSS) and its instances at relevant events	* Better understanding of how the RSS works
	4.2.2 Coordinate the deployment of new – or the renewal of expired – L-Root server instances with network operators in the region	* Number of L-Root instances deployed in diverse geographies increases * Expired L-Root instances are renewed and operational



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