The ICANN GNSO "Business Constituency"

Comment on ICANN Middle East and Adjoining Countries 2016-2019 Strategy

Status: FINAL

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20-Nov-2016

Business Constituency Submission

GNSO//CSG//BC

Background

This document is the response of the ICANN Business Constituency (BC), from the perspective of business users and registrants, as defined in our Charter:

> The mission of the Business Constituency is to ensure that ICANN policy positions are consistent with the development of an Internet that:
> 1. promotes end-user confidence because it is a safe place to conduct business
> 2. is competitive in the supply of registry and registrar and related services
> 3. is technically stable, secure and reliable.

Middle East and Adjoining Countries draft 2016-2019 MEAC Strategy Document

The BC welcomes the opportunity to review and comment on the draft 2016-2019 MEAC strategy document aimed at developing ICANN's regional engagement strategy for the Middle East and adjoining countries.

This document designed to identify and define the strengths and weaknesses currently inherent in the DNS ecosystem within the Middle East and adjoining countries, and to develop recommendations on how to advance the industry and bring it closer to the opportunities available.

We support ICANN's motivations for the development of this strategic plan for the Middle East and recognize that the initiative to develop a plan for the growth and effectiveness of the DNS industry in the region advances ICANN's remit.

We want to underscore that the ultimate intended beneficiaries of ICANN's activities are the registrants and users of unique identifiers. The BC believes that any ICANN strategy paper would be made much stronger if it included more discussion of the ways in which the proposed actions serve the interests of business registrants and business users. The BC also encourages ICANN to pursue more work in future to better understand the role of business registrants and business users in the Middle East and Adjoining Countries and their impact on regional development.

General Comments and Recommendations

The BC appreciates the goals and breadth of developing this strategic plan for the Middle East and adjoining countries DNS marketplace. The plan explores many areas contributing to the current adoption and use of the DNS marketplace for a wide range of stakeholders.

The BC generally agrees with the scope provided by ICANN that the development of the strategic plan follow the ICANN 2016-2020 strategic plan laid down in the ICANN bylaws, addressing five strategic objectives in the region, which are;

- Evolving and further globalizing ICANN;
- Supporting a healthy, stable, and resilient unique identifier ecosystem;
- Advancing organizational, technological and operational excellence;

- Promoting ICANN's role and multistakeholder approach;
- Developing and implementing a global public interest framework bounded by ICANN's mission.

The stated purpose of this study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Middle East and adjoining countries DNS industry ecosystem, and develop recommendations on how to advance the industry and bring it closer to the opportunities available.

In the view of the BC, the plan cohesively outlines many of the factors affecting the DNS, but the BC recommends bolstering the recommendations portion of the report by considering the following:

1. Providing a global context in which to examine the Middle East and adjoining countries DNS.

    a. Comparing MEAAC DNS figures to the broader DNS landscape would allow readers to generate conclusions on whether trends are specific to MEAAC or reflect the global norm. For example, the ccTLD registration fees can be compared to Europe, the Asia Pacific, and the initial findings of the study to examine the DNS environment in parts of Africa.

    b. The BC thinks it could also be valuable to consider how the small number of ICANN accredited registrars and limited channels might impact the growth and sustainability of the DNS business environment in this and other regions.

    c. The BC notes that registrants in the region may be well served by registrars located outside the region as well as inside the region. From the perspective of current and potential registrants, ICANN should assess the quantity and quality of registrars offering websites displayed in languages and scripts used in the Middle East and offering domain registrations in the TLDs that are popular in the region.

2. Disaggregating broader socioeconomic trends from DNS policy, to the extent possible.

    a. The plan details the technical, economic and development factors affecting the MEAAC DNS ecosystem and provides recommendations on how to improve penetration. The BC is in agreement that enhanced training, infrastructure, and connectivity would bolster the DNS.

    b. The plan should consider to what extent the current condition of the DNS is a result of the socioeconomic factors mentioned, or whether specific policy decisions have had a stronger impact on the DNS ecosystem. Delineating what portion of the strengths and weaknesses can be linked to development factors versus policy factors would enhance ICANN and other regional stakeholders' ability to make policy decisions that could strengthen the MEAAC DNS ecosystem.

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This comment was drafted by Lawrence Olawale-Roberts and Andrew Mack, with edits from Marilyn Cade and Steve DelBianco. It was approved in accord with our charter.