

FY19 Middle East Engagement: Survey Report

17 July 2019



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Executive Summary

As part of our commitment to engagement with our stakeholders in the Middle East¹, a survey was conducted to assess the satisfaction levels of ICANN's engagement across the region. Initial highlights of the responses are as follows:

- ⦿ 70% found regional engagement efforts to be either effective or extremely effective.
- ⦿ 74% showed satisfaction or extreme satisfaction with the engagement efforts during FY19.

The initiatives that attracted the highest participation rate from the region included the Middle East Space at ICANN Public Meetings, the Middle East Domain Name System Forum (MEDNSF), webinars, capacity development activities, and the Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG).

Participants indicated that in FY20 they would like to see more: workshops related to policy development at ICANN; onboarding of new stakeholders while enhancing the skills of current stakeholders; geographic and gender diversity; ICANN Fellowship Program diversity and more non-technical content in languages other than English. Participants also want to see more engagement at the national level and targeting of countries less involved in ICANN's work. Lastly, they are seeking better visibility of ICANN's regional office priorities for the region; more emphasis on hot topics during regional events and webinars; more financial support for the different working groups; and supplemental notification of the events taking place across the region.

Overall, the survey showed great satisfaction with the work undertaken, the level of friendship and professionalism of ICANN org members, and eagerness to continue working with the regional stakeholders.

Survey Analysis

RESPONDENT PROFILE AND BACKGROUND

The survey was completed by 49 respondents, with 33% taking the survey anonymously.

The respondents who identified themselves came from 19 countries, of which 16 are in the Middle East.

Almost 47% identified themselves as having been involved in the ICANN community for more than 5 years.

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the length of respondent involvement at ICANN.

¹ For ICANN, the Middle East is defined as the 22 states of the Arab League as well as the nations of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan" or "ICANN's Middle East region is the 22 member states of the Arab League as well as Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

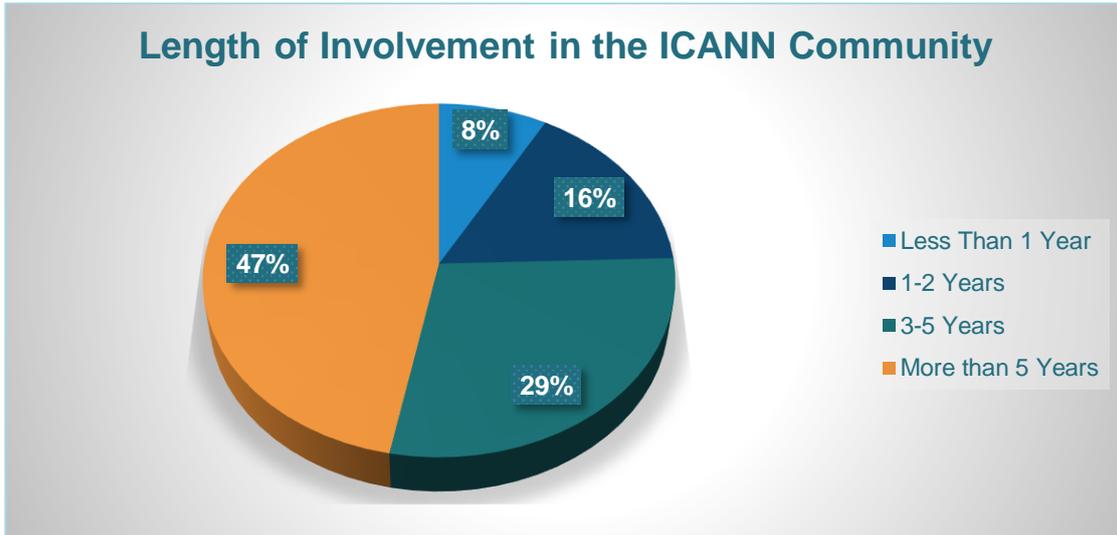


Figure 1: Length of Involvement in the ICANN Community

In terms of engagement and participation, 48% identified themselves as either “Leaders” or “Active Contributors” while the remaining 52% identified themselves as either “Members”, “Observers”, or “Newcomers”. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of engagement and participation levels.

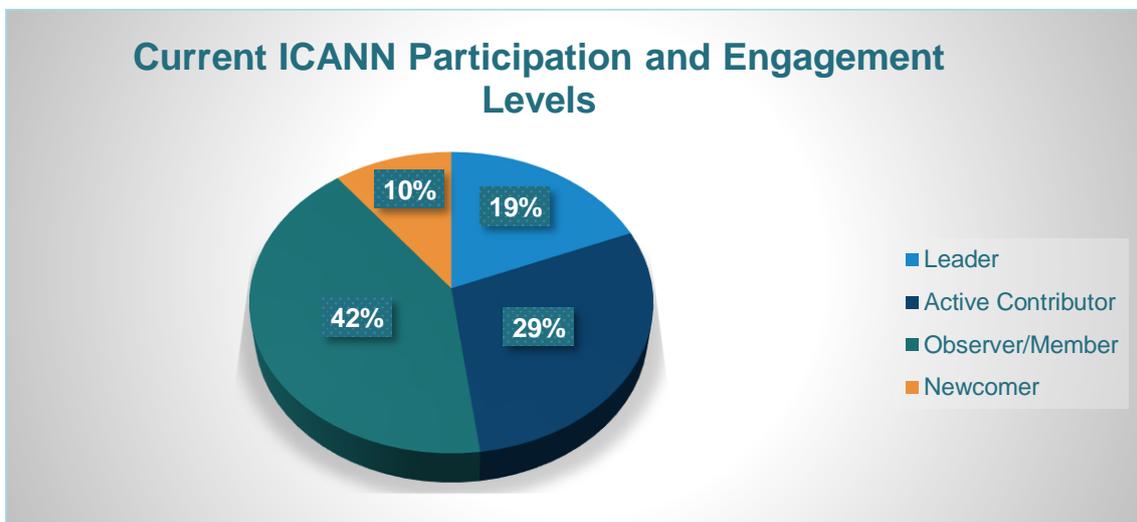


Figure 2: Current ICANN Participation/Engagement Levels

On activities respondents have been involved in, Table 1 below summarizes the responses:

Activities and Initiatives Involvement in the Middle East	Number
Middle East Space at ICANN Public Meetings	26
Middle East DNS Forum	24
Attending Webinars (including ICANN Public Meetings Middle East Readout sessions)	21
Capacity Development Activities (DNS Operations, DNSSEC, Handling Internet Identifiers Abuse and Misuse, and the GNSO PDP)	21
Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG)	20

1-on-1 meetings and communications with other community members regarding ICANN's work	18
Local events and workshops with different ICANN stakeholders	17
MEAC School on Internet Governance (MEAC-SIG)	16
Task Force on Arabic Script IDNs (TF-AIDN)	9
Other regional activities that ICANN org has taken part in	8
Remote engagement with communities in areas where travel is considered risky	6
DNS Entrepreneurship Center (DNS-EC)	5
None of the above	5

Table 1: Activities and Initiatives: Involvement in the Middle East

According to Table 1, the top five activities and initiatives that drew participation from the region are:

- ⦿ Middle East Space at ICANN Public Meetings (initiated at ICANN60 in 2017)
- ⦿ Middle East DNS Forum
- ⦿ Webinars (ICANN has been holding regional webinars more frequently in the past two years)
- ⦿ Capacity Development Activities
- ⦿ The Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG)

Respondents were asked about other regional activities they participated in, with relation to ICANN org. Responses included bilateral meetings, specific trainings for country code top-level domains (technical, marketing, and policy), workshops on Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC), DNSSEC Train-the-Trainer programs, Pakistan School on Internet Governance (pkSIG), Asia Pacific Internet Governance Academy (APIGA), Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APRIGF), Asia-Pacific Top-Level Domains Association (APTLD), Asia-Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), and South Asian Network Operators Group (SANOG).

EFFECTIVENESS OF ICANN'S MIDDLE EAST ENGAGEMENT

With regards to engagement effectiveness, 70% found it to be either effective or extremely effective. Figure 3 summarizes the effectiveness levels as indicated by the respondents.

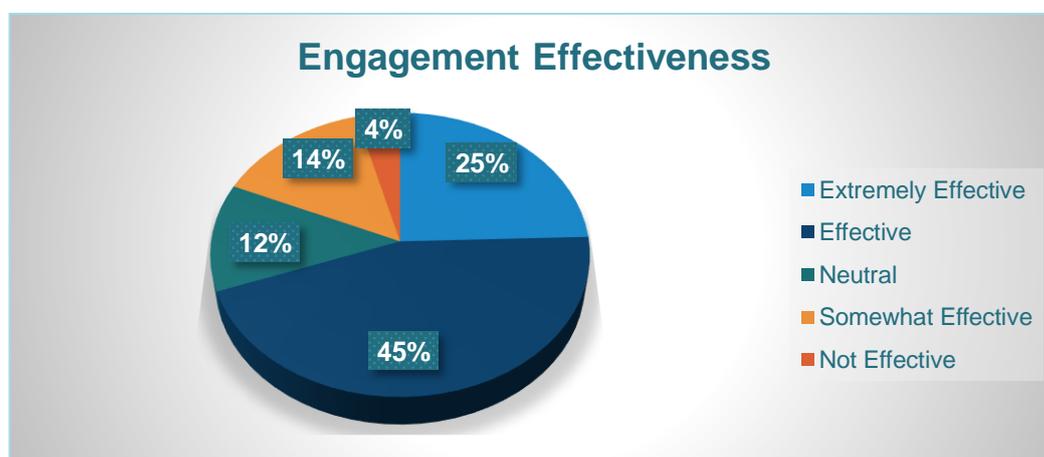


Figure 3: Engagement Effectiveness

The following points were expressed as part of the feedback and suggestions from respondents on the effectiveness of our engagement efforts:

Positive Feedback

- ⦿ ICANN activities in the region have brought in new stakeholders who might have not otherwise been involved. It has helped educate new stakeholders on Internet governance and DNS-related matters, but the impact remains small.
- ⦿ ICANN org members distribute relevant information, and actively engage with relevant stakeholders in a timely manner. Sufficient briefings are provided, and the level of support is high.
- ⦿ ICANN org's engagement has improved over the past year, particularly with regards to the MEDNSF. Far better panels with better speakers have been put together, raising awareness of the regional community on important ongoing issues in the ICANN ecosystem.
- ⦿ An event organizer expressed appreciation for ICANN's partnership with events.
- ⦿ The MEAC Strategy is well formulated, and hope that its implementation will be effective. Good events happening in the region (GNSO PDP Workshop, ME DNS Forum, etc.). The dynamism is there to capitalize on the potential available in this region.

Suggested Areas of Improvement

- ⦿ The GSE Middle East team is too small, and needs to be expanded to be able to cover more tasks. They have done a remarkable job though, and they work hard.
- ⦿ While meetings and events are very useful, they have little effect if no follow-up is undertaken.
- ⦿ The policy and technical initiatives that were held to help community members contribute to ICANN's activities are appreciated. Sustainable support such as dissemination of ICANN news, periodic webinars and calls, and response to specific inquiries is needed.
- ⦿ ICANN does not give the region enough attention.
- ⦿ The number of regional events should be increased.
- ⦿ Capacity development sessions are very effective and needed, and translation is needed.
- ⦿ ICANN needs to have a community catalyst and be more effective in organizing and sustaining a powerful end-users voice to ensure that all individuals and communities can influence the local, state, and national decisions that affect DNS policies. There is a need to build capacity, and to influence governments and local organizations to bring more voices to Internet policy change.
- ⦿ Diversity in participation is required; e.g., diversity not only in interests and countries, but also in backgrounds and working environments.
- ⦿ There is a need for a multilingual ICANN portal (Arabic, French, and English), good communication of events via mailing lists, and for good involvement of ICANN regional representatives in the many ICANN activities targeting the region.
- ⦿ ICANN's engagement is becoming somewhat effective, but it has to be reflected in the community as a whole. ICANN needs to do more to attract more involvement and conduct awareness programs to actually make people understand domain names and its rules and regulations, keeping in mind that regional knowledge of technology is very shallow (only limited knowledge of smartphone and PC usage).

LOOKING AHEAD: SUGGESTIONS FOR FY20

With respect to the future, we asked participants what they would like to see as new activities or evolving projects in the ICANN Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20). Suggestions were as follows:

- ⦿ There must be more specialized workshops, educational programs, webinars, and discussion forums on topics of interest to our region.
- ⦿ More ICANN policy development workshops should be organized.
- ⦿ There is a need to have online pages with a clear structure for each activity undertaken. So far, there is one webpage on the ICANN community wiki, and it needs to be well-structured into different pages according to the different activities.
- ⦿ More focus on countries that are less active at ICANN is needed.
- ⦿ Regional players should be encouraged to think more globally.
- ⦿ Projects of At-Large Structures in the region should be supported (similar to how the Internet Society supports regional chapters).
- ⦿ ICANN does not deal with governments as it should. ICANN's activities carry the same themes, and do not raise the awareness required in the area it is responsible for (the Domain Name System industry).
- ⦿ People from the region should be given the opportunity to participate in the accomplishment of ICANN's mission by bringing them to ICANN Public Meetings and holding events related to ICANN's work in their countries.
- ⦿ Better follow-up with stakeholders is needed through face-to-face events, newsletters, and early notification by email about meetings and events.
- ⦿ Formation of relevant communities of effective stakeholders in each country is needed.
- ⦿ The right partners in local communities should be found, and new partners should be onboarded all the time.
- ⦿ More participation from private and nonprofit sectors is needed.
- ⦿ The focus on industry-relevant actors, including gTLD and ccTLD Registry Operators, Registrars, Resellers, and Registrants should be increased.
- ⦿ ICANN should reach out to new circles and focus on making use of the existing personal skills of the participants rather than trying to develop new ones.
- ⦿ Financial and technical support from ICANN is needed to organize one or two events a year targeting the youth within the academic community.
- ⦿ Workshops on Arabic Script Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance, for capacity building and awareness of stakeholders who want to engage with ICANN's work should be organized. There is also a need to reach out to African communities for Arabic Script IDNs.
- ⦿ The number of national and local events related to ICANN's core mission (e.g. DNSSEC) should be increased.
- ⦿ Teaching materials should be adapted to be more people-specific so that local people can be more knowledgeable. Such material must be easy to understand, and not solely focused on technical topics.
- ⦿ Student organizations and workshops may be useful to disseminate ICANN activities.
- ⦿ ICANN's regional collaborations (e.g. DNS Entrepreneurship Center in Cairo) are very effective for the region but should expand their work and team because some countries in the region have low visibility in ICANN.
- ⦿ Participation of ICANN representatives in local Internet governance-related events have a good impact. It not only provides endorsement for the event, but also gives support, guidance, and facilitation for future direction.
- ⦿ More diversity and openness are needed.

OVERALL SATISFACTION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In terms of overall satisfaction levels of ICANN's regional engagement in the Middle East, 74% showed satisfaction or extreme satisfaction. Figure 4 below shows the results.

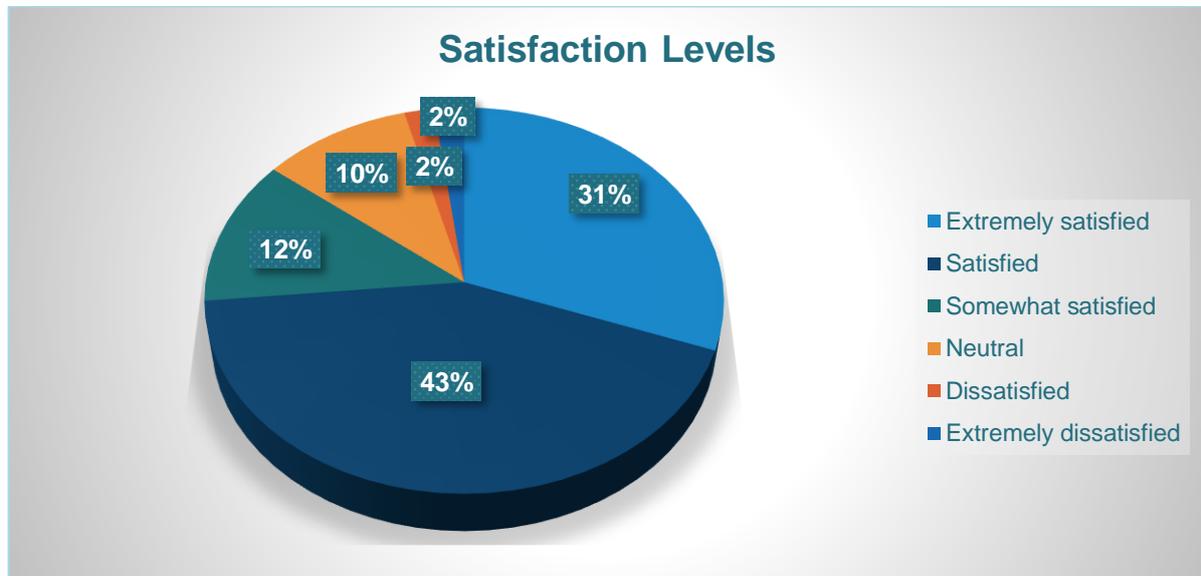


Figure 4: Satisfaction Levels in ICANN Middle East Engagement

Respondents were asked about their personal level of satisfaction and for examples of what worked well and what did not. Answers were as follows:

Positive Feedback

- ⦿ ICANN org members in the Middle East are extremely receptive, easily accessible, responsive, and open to stakeholder involvement. They work closely with the community, and the community members feel welcome and appreciated.
- ⦿ The regional team, despite being very small, has been doing a lot in this challenging region.

Suggested Areas of Improvement

- ⦿ There is a lack of active and diverse participation, which indicates either lack of interest or lack of knowledge on how to get involved.
- ⦿ While the level of service and support provided to the Task Force on Arabic Script IDNs (TF-AIDN) has been much appreciated, the resources are limited, affecting the Task Force's work greatly.
- ⦿ Stakeholders would like more visibility of the efforts undertaken by the ICANN regional office.
- ⦿ ICANN events need to focus on the regional hot topics and give them the attention that they deserve.
- ⦿ ICANN org should reach out to as many countries in the region as possible so as to ensure wide range of engagement.
- ⦿ ICANN org should explore better communication channels for early notification about events.

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- ⦿ More work should be done on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance (UA) with a focus on domain names and email addresses in Arabic script.
 - ⦿ More work should be done on regionally-specific policies for Data Privacy Regulation.
 - ⦿ ICANN org should raise awareness on New gTLDs and potential future rounds.
 - ⦿ More workshops and seminars on DNS and DNSSEC needed.
 - ⦿ ICANN org should provide more work on case studies of emerging trends in the DNS.
 - ⦿ There have been visible improvements in the planning of regional events, yet there is a need for further emphasis on industry actors and key performance indicators to demonstrate areas of increased regional engagement.
 - ⦿ There is opportunity for people to initiate ideas, select leaders, genuinely disagree and explain positions during decision-making processes.
 - ⦿ ICANN org should involve student clubs.
 - ⦿ More engagement is needed with an emphasis on academia.
 - ⦿ More diversity, openness, and transparency is needed in the ICANN Fellowship Program

Finally, there was a question on any final remarks regarding ICANN's overall engagement in the Middle East. Responses are summarized as follows:

Positive Feedback:

- ⦿ The GSE Middle East team is very responsive and supportive, and this is much appreciated.

Suggested Areas of Improvement:

- ⦿ More work should be done with the youth and students in the region because they are the future leaders of the Internet. More sessions, seminars, webinars, etc. are needed to build awareness.
- ⦿ Current steps taken are important and worthwhile, but more needs to be done in supporting grassroots activities through funding small scale projects through At-Large Structures, which are somewhat underutilized.
- ⦿ More support is needed for local initiatives such as ICANN Public Meeting outreach and Schools on Internet governance.
- ⦿ ICANN should support local start-ups.
- ⦿ More events are needed in the region.
- ⦿ ICANN engagement in the region is better than before, but more engagement is needed.
- ⦿ GAC meetings are not very active as only few members express their views. GAC discussions and meetings need to be more interactive and engaging. The GAC also needs to actively advise and encourage capacity building programs by attracting newcomers to play leading roles within 2 years of joining.
- ⦿ There should be monthly online meetings for the Middle East community to share information and experiences.
- ⦿ There is room for improvement through different engagement programs.
- ⦿ Focus ICANN's efforts on capacity building.
- ⦿ There should be more diversity in community members, openness, and collaboration.

Appendix 'A' – Survey Questions

The purpose of this survey is to seek feedback from the Middle East community on the various activities that ICANN org has conducted during FY19 (1 July 2018-30 June 2019). The survey intends to capture the satisfaction levels on the work undertaken by ICANN org in the Middle East, and to obtain suggestions for any further improvements.

Part 1 – General Information

Unless you prefer to stay anonymous, please provide the following data:

Name: _____

Employer: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

1. Since when have you been part of the ICANN ecosystem, or involved in ICANN's work?

2. How would you rate your overall engagement levels at ICANN?

- Leader - I am currently holding, or have held a leadership position in the community
- Active Contributor - I actively participate in working groups
- Observer or Member - I have joined a Stakeholder Group or Constituency
- Newcomer - I am aware of ICANN but not yet involved

Part 2 – Engagement Activities in the Middle East

3. During FY19, ICANN has engaged with the regional community in several ways:

1. The Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG)
2. Middle East DNS Forum
3. MEAC School on Internet Governance
4. Attending Webinars (including the ICANN Public Meeting Middle East Readout sessions)
5. DNS Entrepreneurship Center (DNS-EC)
6. Task Force on Arabic Script IDNs (TF-AIDN)
7. Middle East Space at ICANN Public Meetings
8. Local events and workshops with different ICANN Stakeholders
9. Capacity Development Activities (DNS Operations, DNSSEC, Handling Internet Identifiers Abuse and Misuse, and the GNSO PDP)
10. Remote engagement with communities in areas where travel is considered high risk
11. One-on-one meetings and communications with other community members regarding ICANN's work
12. Other regional activities with ICANN org
13. None of the above

4. Please specify which other regional activities with ICANN org you have participated in.

5. Based on your involvement with the above events and initiatives, please assess the effectiveness of ICANN org's engagement in the region

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Neutral
- Somewhat Effective
- Not Effective

6. Please elaborate on your above response, giving examples of what did and what did not work well regarding ICANN org's engagement in the region

7. Looking forward to FY20 (1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020), what suggestions would you make to ICANN org in order to improve its engagement in the Middle East?

8. How would you rate your personal level of satisfaction with ICANN org's engagement in the region throughout FY19?

- Extremely satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

9. Please elaborate on your personal level of satisfaction by providing examples of what did or did not work well.

10. Please enter any final remarks regarding ICANN org's engagement in the region during FY19.



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