
ICANN83 | PF – ccNSO: Breaking Barriers: How Governments & ccTLDs Advance UA
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CLAUDIA RUIZ

Hello and welcome to the ccNSO Breaking Barriers: How Governments and ccTLDs Advance Universal Acceptance session. My name is Claudia Ruiz and I, along with my colleagues, Joke and Julie, are the remote participation managers for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

During this session, questions or comments submitted in chat will be read aloud if put in the proper form, as noted in the chat. Interpretation for this session will include English, Spanish, and French. If you would like to speak during the session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak, if you are speaking a language other than English. And please speak at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. Thank you very much, and with this, I will now hand the floor over to Abdalmonem Galila, moderator for this session. Thank you.

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ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you, Claudia. Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. This is Abdalmonem Galila for the record. I am the Director of Numbering at the National Telecom Regulatory Authority of Egypt, and it's my pleasure for today to chair the session of the Universal Acceptance Committee as one of the most cultural, historical, and vibrant city parishes. I will share the session for today on behalf of the Universal Acceptance Committee members, and my colleague, Regina, at my left side will help me with all of that.

Actually, sorry, could you go for the slide? Ah, that's fine. Actually, the main theme for today's session is related to how government and ccTLDs overcome the Universal Acceptance barriers in order to drive broader of digital inclusion. What was highlighted here is digital inclusion. The goal of WSIS+20 is to build a people-centric, inclusive, and development-oriented information society where everyone can create, assess, utilize, and share information. For the declaration for Tunisia 2003 and Geneva 2005, the term digital inclusion or multilingualism appeared many times, maybe seven or eight times during this statement.

So, for the session for today, we have the topic related to how government and ccTLDs advance Universal Acceptance, and of course, the importance of Universal Acceptance is related to achieving a multilingual and inclusive, truly internet for government, for ccTLDs, and for the end user. Actually, it is collaborative work. For this session, also, we'll start by looking back for ICANN82, where we discussed what are the keys and the

drivers for Universal Acceptance readiness. One of the keys and the drivers that was mentioned there is the term digital inclusion. And the other words that repeated a lot while we were at ICANN82 is the term government. So, government has a crucial role here for adopting Universal Acceptance.

Actually, the second thing is related to, for ICANN82, that we need to motivate ccTLDs, and how to motivate them in order to go broader for Universal Acceptance adoption. And of course, for this session, we will go for identifying the barriers. What are the barriers that prevent for more Universal Acceptance adoption? What are the keys that are required by the government and ccTLD in order to cooperate for the future development of Universal Acceptance, starting from policy advocacy to changing the technical requirement for achieving Universal Acceptance?

Of course, we don't have only government and ccTLDs in this world. We have other stakeholders. So, we need to strengthen or encourage other stakeholders, end users, government, ccTLDs, in order to go for Universal Acceptance world. And during this session as well, we will have real-world examples from the government and ccTLDs that have taken steps towards Universal Acceptance readiness, including both successes and lessons learned. We have two testimonials here, successful testimonials here, we have .bh Bahrain, we have .fo Faroe Island.

Next slide, please. What is Universal Acceptance? Universal Acceptance is the concept that all domain names, all email

addresses, whatever the language, whatever the script, are all treated equally, accepted, validated, stored, processed, and displayed correctly by all internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems. At the right side of this slide, you will find some types of TLDs. For Universal Acceptance, we not only care about IDNs, we don't care only about ERs, but we care also about the new generic top-level domain names.

For this right side, you will find that .asia has more than two letters. At the same time, it is English letters. We have .masr, the IDN ccTLD of Egypt, the TLD no longer to be only ASCII characters. We have more than two or three letters. We have .photography. Actually, what is the main goal behind all this variety of top-level domain names? We need to promote its choices. We need to improve competition. We need to give the customer broader choices. I could go and select one of these TLDs. Maybe it is gTLD. Maybe it is ccTLD. Maybe it is IDN. Maybe it is English.

Next slide, please. Before going for this slide, I would like to mention and highlight that recently, by the end of April 2025, ICANN declared that they will support the communities that have the topics that are related to IDNs and Universal Acceptance and will continue the work that are related to Universal Acceptance through Universal Acceptance expert work group that have nominees from advisory committees, that have nominees from supporting organizations, as well as inviting members. And ICANN will no longer add any support for UAG after June 2025, whatever it is financially or whatever it is staff, resources as a staff. Actually, this

adds a lot of commitments and a lot of work for the communities, advisory committee and supporting organization in order to lead the world towards a fully inclusive and multilingual Internet.

As usual, we are going to have a session in an interactive way. So, we will start by Mentimeter question. For a few seconds, you could scan this QR code or go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and add this access code to open the question for you. Yeah, I will leave you for a small second in order to open this link. Just scan the QR code by your mobile or write this domain name www.menti.com and add this access code. Yeah, it's fine. The question now is here, "Please select how much you agree or disagree with the statement: My ccTLD is currently engaged in initiatives related to Universal Acceptance or Internationalized Domain Names." You have scrolls about. 15 seconds left.

Fine, let's go for the next slide. Now, I will leave the floor to my colleague Regina to speak about what are the most important drivers for Universal Acceptance Readiness where we discussed at ICANN82. Regina is a Universal Acceptance Committee vice chair. Regina joined .eu registry in 2007. Regina was involved in the introduction to IDNs under .eu in 2009, as well as .eu in Cyrillic and Greek. By the way, Regina is based in Barak. Regina, the floor is yours.

REGINA FUCHSOVA

Thank you very much, Abdalmonem. Thank you for the introduction and bringing us into the topic of Universal Acceptance

and its relevance for ccTLDs particularly. Before we dive in the topic of barriers and how these could be broken, please let me briefly guide you through the results of a consultation which we were running at the last ICANN meeting 82 in Seattle, where the topic was what are the most important drivers for Universal Acceptance readiness.

Can I ask you for the next slide, please? One of the questions we asked was about if the ccTLDs who were present and participating in the session, if they are currently working or planning some initiatives related to both Universal Acceptance but also Internationalized Domain Names. The answer was that half of the respondents responded positively, and the other half was equally divided between a no and those who were not sure by one quarter each.

Next slide, please. Can I ask for the next slide, please? I think it's one slide more than now. One back, please. I'm sorry that I'm so demanding. Perfect. So, then we asked more specifically what motivates ccTLDs to work on Universal Acceptance. And the answer was that actually it was interesting because it almost reflects the results of service which were run in '22 and '24 and shows a stability over the time of the motivators of ccTLDs. The biggest number voted for support to local language communities followed by local stakeholders and customer needs. So, it was mainly everything about local communities. And as I mentioned, the interesting thing was that this is stable over the three years.

Then in the next question, we asked for other important factors and motivators. If I can ask for the slide with Q3. And here we clearly saw that the answers are around digital inclusion in different forms, either digital inclusion as it is or bridging digital divide or inclusive digital development and national policy. And actually, this is a very important motivator for ccTLDs, and this is also relevant for the governments and their role in digital transformation in individual countries. So, it also brought us to the idea to have a look a bit more closer on the role of governments and their role in Universal Acceptance in the individual countries. And of course, the countries with multiple languages, more languages being used in the territory, they found it also more relevant to work on the Universal Acceptance and IDNs.

And then as a concluding question, if I can ask for the next slide, we asked the members if their ccTLD will expand-- With a Q4, if I can ask for the slide. Ah, it's a bit delayed, right? I'm too fast or the technology is too slow, but we will align eventually. So, we concluded with a question if the ccTLD plans to expand its effort in Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names. And the mark, it was a similar slider what you experienced earlier today. And the final mark was 3.8 out of 5. So, I think this gives an overview about the main motivators and the status or the mood of the ccTLDs who participated in this consultation. And now we can move to the barriers of the Universal Acceptance. And I'm passing the word back to our chair, Abdalmonem. Thank you.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you, Regina. We could accept one question from the participants here online for Regina. Any questions? It's okay. Thank you. Actually, now we'll go for the barriers to Universal Acceptance Readiness. It's a kind of consultation. Now we'll go for Bart, who is the Vice President of Policy Development and ccNSO Relations of ICANN. Bart joined ICANN since October 2025. Bart, the floor is yours.

BART BOSWINKEL

Not 2025. If you want to do it, it's very bad. October 2005. But I thank you to look at me as so young. Yeah. So, starting, this is Bart, and I'll give you a little bit of background why you see the results of the survey. The working group intended to do a survey as well around UA readiness. And this is, as Abdalmonem said and Regina said, the second session in a kind of consultation around UA readiness.

When the working group prepared and started to prepare for the survey, conducting a survey with the ccTLD community was considered very difficult at the time. There were too many areas, so we came up with the idea, or the working group came up with the idea of doing these types of consultations, knowing that you were in the room and that we have more qualitative feedback than quantitative feedback, because that's more important at this stage

and we can always do a survey to really validate the outcomes. But this is really about getting your sense of people who are interested.

And one of the reasons why it was difficult is there were already surveys around UA readiness, one from ICANN in 2022 around ccTLD UA readiness. Maybe some of you will recall that survey. And the results of that survey you see in front of you. And as you can see, the reasons or the barriers vary. They go from other priorities. So, UA readiness is not a high priority from a ccTLD perspective. No need to support UA readiness for whatever reason. So, there is no real need in the area of service of the ccTLD. Lack of expertise, dependence on third parties, whether supporting the services or vendor issues. So, it's in both sense.

And then the interesting one, I think from a committee working group perspective, are the other reasons. So, lack of demand, which is more specific, so no need for UA readiness. The political situation in the region, no trust in open resources and maintenance of service and more manpower needed. As you can see, some of these areas are really technical, operational. Others are really in the sphere of the economic, political environment the ccTLD operates in. So, this is the outcome of the ICANN survey.

Next slide, please. In 2024, there was a second report. Again, and this was from the Universal Acceptance Steering Group, which is a group of people interested in UA, Universal Acceptance, which was established by ICANN and launched with volunteers. And I think it will close at this meeting, the UASG. Yeah. And it will be succeeded

by what is called the Universal Acceptance Expert Working Group. They will have a far more technical operational focus than the UASG and assist ICANN org in further implementation.

If you have questions around it, and I don't want to put you on the spot, but I know you're in the room. Sarmad Hussain is one of the leaders in that effort. So, if you have questions about its role, the Universal Acceptance Expert Working Group, please contact Sarmad either offline or in the hallways. He can explain a little bit more.

Going back to the UASG report. Again, there were barriers identified. And so, this is two years after the first one. And again, they were in the area of technical limitations, software issues, again, both technical operational, and now it becomes interesting, especially for a group like the UASG, lack of awareness and education, resistance by companies to assist or implement third-party dependencies and policy-related hurdles. So, in a way, there is an overlap. They touch upon the same areas. There are some differences, of course, and the percentages, etc., are different. But it's interesting to see that you see from two groups, two fairly comparable barriers have emerged.

Can we go to the next slide, please? So, for today's session, the committee tried to summarize the results of both surveys in a combined list. So, the combined list from 2022 and 2024. So, that's lack of UA technical expertise, that's at the level of the ccTLD itself, third-party dependencies. So, that's either the vendors, service

providers, software developers, policy-related hurdles, lack of demand in the country, the political situation in the region, no trust in other priorities.

And as you may imagine, now it's time for Mentimeter to check which of these barriers would be applicable to you. So, we'll give you a few seconds to enter again. So, this is the same Mentimeter address for, again, a series of questions. So the first one is, and this should be multiple choice, "What are the biggest barriers your ccTLD faces regarding Universal Acceptance?"

So, this is really your ccTLD so from your own experience even if you don't do it. The results of this will be shared after this session again of course but also it will be used by the working group or the committee going forward and see what where it can influence what is happening. I'll give you a few more seconds. I see just 23 of 54. And here we go. Lack of demand. I think it's fairly stable now. So, thank you for responding.

Can we go to the next slide please? Just to check whether the group has covered most important barriers. This is again one of the more open questions. "What other challenges does your ccTLD face to become UA ready?" So, if you have other challenges, please type them. Again, we'll give you some time. Some are overlapping I can see. Maybe you can go to and just touch the space bar, yeah, and so we can see the other responses as well. Yeah. And I see some interesting responses. We are too small and there is very little demand. For the person who typed this, I think one of the

testimonials today will address that point, so that's going to be interesting.

At policy level, we haven't opened up to things like gTLDs. Again, the other one is interesting as well and I think the discussion around digital inclusion is very interesting. What I found-- I don't know. Can we just recapture this and you will see them back? I saw one response about the lack of ICANN support. Whoever is the person who entered this, can they allude a little bit to this one? Because I think that's an interesting one for Sarmad and for others within ICANN, but also it's-- Yeah, we're talking about ccTLDs, that comes with responsibilities and pleasures. The person who-- do you want to speak to this lack of ICANN technical support? Is it online? If not, now we continue, thanks, but it's good to note. It might be interesting to--

Okay. Then we go to the next question, and this is really thinking about you, yeah, you want to do it. And this is the question is, if you could change one thing, really one thing, to accelerate your ccTLDs UA readiness, what would that be? Again, this is an open one. So, think, what do you really, what do you think needs to change to make you--? And I may ask you if you type something in, if you don't want to, that's fine, but I may ask to allude to some of the responses. Here you go to the other responses as well. Press the spacebar. Thanks.

And I think what is interesting, at least from observing these responses, again, some of them really go into the role of

government and potential for cooperation, collaboration between government and the ccTLD, that clearly stands out as well, on one hand. The other one, which, again, stands out for me, at least, is the reference to ICANN, ICANN needs to improve support to UA. I think, again, the person who has entered this response, is he or she willing to speak to it? Because I know there is a lot of work going on. Is it awareness of the work that's going on, or really the kind of work that's going on?

No, not willing, I don't see a hand up. Okay, then we scroll down, please. So, the government, we're going to talk to it in some of them. And then the importance, yeah, and I think the UA readiness of the broader world as well. Local language and content, again, that's part of the digital inclusion agenda as well. This was discussed in Seattle. So, thank you. Is there anybody who wants to speak to any of the submission and what is entered? No? This is more a monologue. Yeah, go ahead, go ahead.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Actually, from my perspective, all digital inclusion or digital transformation project carried out by the governments, by any government, the main goal is to reach out to all the citizens, to have all the services offered by the government to be available for all the citizens. Once the government is aware enough that they couldn't reach the citizens without using their own local languages, for example, for Arabic, it will be an issue. So, if the government is aware enough that they need to use IDNs to access services online

and communicate with these people who are away from using English in their own local language, it will be better.

Actually, look, for example, during COVID-19, we were all blocked, most of the services were blocked. We need to have more services to become online. How could your younger child go to e-learning system and have his or her classes online? How could you go without having an email address? How could this younger child use English email address at the time he couldn't speak English, couldn't write English at all? That's the concept. Thank you.

BART BOSWINKEL

One more observation, which I find interesting being around now for so long, it's the lack of need. And I think there is another argument like this, it is like revisiting the discussion around DNSSEC, why it wasn't implemented. Again, that was lack of need, there's no demand, etc. So, you see, in this area, you see the similar kind of arguments surfacing, so that might be something to consider as well going forward. Thanks.

Can we go to the next slide, please? And again, this is, I believe this is the final one, is just, please, yeah, respond to both. Thank you. Sorry, we're still receiving responses, so I'll wait a few more seconds. And just as an observation of what I really like about this one, you can see the distribution. It's a little bit lukewarm. Yeah, okay, thank you. We can go to the next slide and the results will be - Yeah, we'll print the results and we'll post them together with the

slides later today, early tomorrow, so you can check yourself. With this, I give it back to you, Abdalmonem.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you, Bart. Actually, our next presenter for .bh is Sami, Sami Mohamed Ali. Sami is one of the champions of Universal Acceptance. He is a quality-of-service expert at TRA of Bahrain, and also the president board of directors of Bahrain and member of board of directors of APTLD as a treasurer. Actually, Sami will lead us to the taking steps in cooperation between the government and ccTLD .bh toward Universal Acceptance readiness and will explore the successes and lessons learned. Sami, the floor is yours.

SAMI MOHAMED ALI

Thank you, Abdalmonem. As Abdalmonem explained, I will be sharing the experience we have with .bh. Can we go to the next slide, please? So, .bh and البحرين in Arabic language is the ccTLD or country code for the Kingdom of Bahrain. It's a small island near Saudi and Dubai, and we have a population of around 1.8 million people in the Kingdom. So, .bh, if you want to read about the rules and regulations, you can visit domain .bh, and to check for the domains that are available and the registrars we have, you can search it on register .bh. And this was launched in May 2022 for the public.

Can we go to the next slide? A brief explanation on the Universal Acceptance industry. I'm sure a lot of people would have read it on

the ICANN website as well, and the industry that is under the Universal Acceptance is expected from the 2017 study to be 9.8+ billion opportunity for business in the Universal Acceptance. And in Bahrain, we are exploring that as the Kingdom's vision is to become a digital kingdom, and there is a lot of work going on in developing all platforms across all sectors to be digitalized and be available online.

Can we go to the next slide, please? So, this is a brief explanation on the launch of .bh and البحرين to public. So, we went out with the resolution in October 2018, and .bh is under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of Bahrain, so it's a government entity. And due to government policies and the procedures, it took us almost four years to launch it to public. And in May 2022, we managed to launch it, and it was available for anybody around the world to be able to book .bh. And we have more than 100 registrars, international and local, available to reserve .bh and البحرين, both domains.

Can we go to the next slide, please? So, this is just a brief stat on how many domains we have currently. We have around 8,000. Before the launch in 2022, we were 5,000 domains, so it was a good jump for us in over three years. We had more than 50% increase in domains when it went public. Of course, we have a control in terms of reserving certain domains which are not culturally acceptable for the kingdom, but other than that, everything else is available on

the .bh ccTLD. So, coming back to the topic, this was just a brief on what we have in .bh and البحرين.

Can we go to the next slide, please? So, these are the certain things we have just discussed, and Bart has explained as well earlier the barriers that we have seen from our Universal Acceptance study of the experts. And in Bahrain as well, we face the same issues when it comes to DNS industry. So, it's the technical compatibility that is the main generic barrier across all IDNs or Universal Acceptance promoters around the world. When it comes to the ease of registration of IDN domain and standardization of all these platforms to use domain IDNs. For example, when a registrar is unable to provide the IDN service due to some incompatibility of their system to the registry service provider, it's always an issue for the end user, which creates a lot of unpleasant user experience.

So, standardization and operability between the different registrars, registry service providers, and other local IT solution providers is a major challenge that we have seen or a major barrier, as I would say. Awareness and education. People are still not aware that they can use other languages when it comes to the Internet. They are still using English. They are only aware of English being the main language on the Internet. So, it's a key barrier that is very important to be broken down in terms of when we have to engage with the community and teach them about the ease of having different languages on the Internet. So, this is one of the major challenges.

Policy and regulatory challenges. We did manage to overcome these through the government engagement as we launched it to the public in 2022, but it is a major factor in terms of promoting the Universal Acceptance when it comes to the community. Security and stability, of course, that's the main factor whenever you're using the security of your citizens and the stability of the Internet infrastructure in the country is a key factor of supporting the promotion of .bh or البحرين or any IDN or domain names.

Can we go to the next slide, please? So, now sharing the Bahrain experience when it comes to ccTLD and government relationship impact. Educate the stakeholders. So, in Bahrain, what we have done recently is we did partner with the local universities and schools, and we are proud to say that we are one of the first countries to adopt the Universal Acceptance curriculum created by ICANN, and we have been promoting it across six universities. One of them has started teaching it already, and three are partially adopting and using the same material that is shared by ICANN. And because we were government institute, it helped us push it through the Ministry of Education into down the channel in terms of supporting the adoption of the Universal Acceptance curriculum.

Access to different stakeholder sectors for collaboration is another benefit we have from the ccTLD part of the government relationship because we do manage to send it across to all the government ministries, Central Bank of Bahrain, and all the different entities that we have, and this supports in terms of promotion of domain. Initially, it was to push the .bh adoption, and

now we are doing it by sending out invites to all the government entities to take on the Arabic domain name as their second domain, which will be visible on all ministries hopefully by end of the year.

Capacity building for the community. Again, being a government entity, it helps us do because we are not very much driven by the revenue. It's more of educating and empowering the community and the citizens of Bahrain, so we do a lot of work with workshops. ICANN does a lot of workshops with us. We have done the workshop for the instructors and teachers and the university, professors in the university. We have done workshops for across the different IT companies and solution providers to build the capacity in terms of they can work on solutions and they can be sharing their experience of using Arabic language on the internet.

And the benefit that we had from the last year is the adoption of IDNs as part of the cultural, a UN cultural association, so that gave us a lot of push in terms of government sector that now UN is involved in adopting the Arabic language and they want to promote and maintain the cultural aspect of the language. This gave us a lot of push and supported our push for the Universal Acceptance across all government sectors.

Challenges. As I just showed you, the process is very lengthy when it comes to a government organization. It's not revenue driven, so it takes a lot of effort in terms of getting approvals through the cabinet and through the ministries and ministers, so it takes a longer period. Management prioritization. As we are a telecom

regulatory authority, it's always more focused on telecom rather than ccTLD, so it's a major challenge we face every time to get them convinced to work on IDN or ccTLD related projects when it comes to DNS.

Citizen acceptance. When it's a government initiative, as Abdalmonem explained as well, it's more about reaching the citizens and to giving them the satisfaction of using their own language online, but sometimes they are not very accepting of the fact that it is being pushed through the government. They like it to come from the citizens themselves, so it's a pull and push kind of factor when it comes to pushing it down or waiting for the people to ask for it and then government supports it.

Can we go to the next slide please? So, this is the, what do I say, main points that would benefit in terms of effective mechanism that we have adopted in Bahrain and has helped us being a government organization and the ccTLD at the same time to build a standardization. So, we have come with the ICANN support, we have been sharing the standing email setup for all the IT companies and solution providers. We have given them all the basic requirements and information so to build a standardization in terms of all government entities should be able to send out and receive emails in Arabic.

Technical ecosystem. Again, we are doing that through building awareness workshops throughout the year with support of ICANN and promoting the overall ecosystem in Bahrain. Education and

awareness. As I mentioned earlier, we have incorporated the UA curriculum in the universities and we are also doing workshops and awareness for the schools to be able to teach them the use of different languages on internet. Community engagement and collaboration is again part of the same workshops that we conduct with all different organizations and entities and we are planning to continue that throughout the year with more universities adopting the curriculum.

Policy supporting Universal Acceptance is very important and here in Bahrain, we did manage to launch it in 2022 which gave us the support that was required to promote the registrars and to help them get this UA awareness. And security and stability is very important when we talk about the cyber security impact of the Universal Acceptance and IDN. And we are working with all the key stakeholders in the country to make sure when we are having a lot more IDNs working, there is no challenges when it comes to cyber security.

Can we go to the next slide please? So, we have been conducting a hackathon with the ICANN for the last three years and it's purely focusing on Universal Acceptance and developing the skill set of the youths that will be graduating every year and coming out to the industry with the right kind of idea of what Universal Acceptance or IDN is. But this year we did it with AI addition to the Universal Acceptance.

Can we go to the next slide? I will just quickly show you a quick video. This was how we conducted. And we had Teresa, Dr. Sarmad from ICANN and Bahir from ICANN visiting us and attending the hackathon and there were six universities, almost 100 students participating in the hackathon. Can we play the video please?

CLAUDIA RUIZ

One moment.

SAMI MOHAMED ALI

This was just a brief on this year's hackathon. And as I told you, over the three years, we have had a lot of good solutions and good ideas coming around in terms of how to work on Universal Acceptance. And we do incorporate those when we work on next year's plan on how to engage with the community and other people and promote. So, in this, we had the judges were from the industry, from the academia and from ICANN to support the overall process. Thank you. And that was the brief description of what we are doing in Bahrain and how we are promoting the IDN and Universal Acceptance.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you, Sami. Actually, you have one hand and another question inside the chat room. Actually, I will give the floor for Anil Jain, the UASG chair. Anil, go ahead, please.

ANIL JAIN

Thank you, Abdalmonem. Anil for the record. Sami, First of all, I would like to congratulate Bahrain and you specifically in taking UA and IDN in a small kingdom, which has become an example for other countries to take it further. As we have seen in the various surveys also, there is a need for awareness which you are leading definitely. Now, my question is that in one of the slides, you have said that you have or government has put strategic placement of UN IDN use within digital framework of the country. Can you please elaborate what is happening in the various government systems to promote UN IDN?

SAMI MOHAMED ALI

So, as I explained, what we are doing is, once it was adopted by the UN Cultural Authority, it became a part of the Bahrain Cultural Authority to maintain and preserve the Arabic language online. And due to that initiative or that engagement with the United Nations, because it's very important to be part of the United Nations framework WSIS, it has been asked of TRA to help in terms of arranging the Arabic Language Universal Acceptance part for all ministries and all cultural authorities, as well as the technical institute, you would say, or universities to have Arabic domain and visibility of Arabic language online to ensure that this language is there.

So, that's the reason we are pushing a lot more when it comes to workshops and working with all the different entities to promote Arabic. So, that's the placement of Universal Acceptance or Arabic

language online. Sorry, I forgot to mention. We did manage to get first intern from Bahrain with ICANN due to this hackathon program we have had for three years for a one-year-long placement with ICANN.

ANIL JAIN

Great, thank you. Thank you, sir.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you, Sami. Actually, I will have only one question that is already in the chat, and I will postpone the other question that is in the hand from Mr. Mohamed Al-Mosai, till the end of the session of Guðrun. So, the question for you, Sami, at the moment from Masha, could you share some details in what way AI was used for UA during the hackathon?

SAMI MOHAMED ALI

Sorry, can you repeat the question?

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Yeah. Could you share some details in what way AI was used for UA during the hackathon?

SAMI MOHAMED ALI

So, there were two aspects for AI that were used. One was to create a website and to create the Arabic coding AI was used, and the second one was to use-- The solution should have an AI element.

So, the idea was to summarize the legal documents of TRA, Telecom Regulatory Authority body, on the website into the Arabic language. So, anybody can ask a question in Arabic, and the website should read from the TRA directly and give them the answer of any regulation or any policy that is there. So, it was mainly to make it easier for the citizens to understand what these regulations or policies mean.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you, Sami. For the sake of time, let's go for the next presenter for today, Guðrun Poulsen. Guðrun Poulsen is the CEO of the .fo ccTLD and has been in this industry for the last seven years. She is very passionate about IDNs and will give a presentation about a case study that was conducted together with IDN World Report, as well as she will explain what motivates her ccTLD to be active in the area of IDNs and Universal Acceptance. Poulsen, the floor is yours.

GUÐRUN POULSEN

Thank you very much. Hi, everyone. First and foremost, thanks for giving me the opportunity to present our case here today. And my name is Guðrun, and I'm the managing director for the Faroe ccTLD .fo. And when you have an IDN in your name, you have to be passionate about IDNs and Universal Acceptance. So, my name is not Gudrun, but it's Guðrun. So, the D, it's not pronounceable.

Next slide, please. This is the Faroe Islands. It is a remote country in the North Atlantic Ocean. We have a population of almost 55,000 people. The land area is very small. It's 1,400 square kilometers. But in comparison, the ocean area is very big. It's bigger than Denmark, and we belong to the Kingdom of Denmark. And today we have 9,650 domain names. And per capita, it's 17.6%, which is a rather high amount in comparison to the European medium.

Next slide, please. The ccTLD .fo is a non-profit organization and we are under the Ministry of Trade and we work very closely together with the government. And we use a combined registration model and approximately 80% of all our domains are registered directly through us. And when you come from a place as small as the Faroe Islands--

Sorry, next, next slide, please. Key initiatives to promote Universal Acceptance. What we did is that we wanted to promote the Faroese language online. And we also wanted to increase the number of .fo domain names. And we wanted to encourage the Faroese people to use their native language on the internet. And when you come from a place as small as the Faroe Islands, it's very easy to reach the people. And also, almost everyone knows everyone in the Faroe Islands.

So, when we opened up for IDNs back in 2020, we did a campaign. And we also changed our brand from nic.fo to Økisnavn.fo, which means domainnames.fo. And it has an IDN in the spelling. And now I will show you a campaign. It's a very short campaign. It is in

Faroese, so you won't understand, but there are subtitles. So, Joke, can you please play the campaign? If it doesn't work, you can send the link in the chat or something, and you can watch it after the presentation.

ABDALMONEM GALILA Yeah, we could go for the questions raised from one of the hands at the remote participation until we open the video.

GUDRUN POULSEN Does it work, Claudia?

CLAUDIA RUIZ Technical difficulties. Give us one moment. Sorry that there's no sound, but we will add the link to the chat. Thank you.

GUDRUN POULSEN Let's continue with the slides. Well, you wouldn't understand the video because it's in Faroese, so you can watch it online and read the subtitles. Can you go back to the slides? Next one and the next one. The previous one. As you can see in this slide, we have eight IDNs in our language, and we opened up for all eight IDNs.

And next slide, please. And overnight, we registered 1,680 domain names. And we did it like this. So, everyone who had a domain name that could be spelled with Faroese letters got the IDN domain name for free into their account for six months. And after these six

months, the customer had to renew the domain name if they wanted to keep it. And what we saw is that almost everyone kept their domain name, the Faroese domain name. And I think it's relevant to mention that a Faroese domain name is rather expensive. It costs around €60 for one domain name. Well, it was a good campaign.

I don't know if anyone is a James Bond fan. Well, this is the mountain where he actually dies in the latest movie. So, visit Faroe Islands. They even set up a gravestone. So, it's a very high tourist attraction at the moment. Next slide, please. So, this is our website today. And as you can see on the website, almost every word has an IDN in it.

Next slide. Yeah, and what we did after launching the campaign is that when you write an IDN domain name, when you search for an IDN domain name, you get the option to buy both, both the IDN domain name and the other one, and they cost the same. And we see that everyone who finds a Faroese domain name, they buy both or they register both, which is good for us.

Next slide, please. Once we did the case study for the IDN World Report, we also did some testing. And today, I believe every browser shows a domain correctly, an IDN domain correctly. But in terms of emails and IDNs, we're still not there. As you can see, if you write an IDN domain name, it comes up as XN--. And this is with Google, and it's the same with Microsoft. You can go to the next

slide. You can register the email, but it still shows as XN--, which is so annoying, according to me.

Next slide, please. And we also did some testing with the social media platforms, both Facebook and Instagram. And if you use an IDN email address with Facebook, you are not allowed to set up an account. And with Instagram, if you use an IDN username, you can't.

So next slide, please. So, the future of Universal Acceptance. According to me, collaboration is key, and native languages, they really matter, and we need global frontrunners. And the last slide, it just has the link to the IDN World Report, where we did the case study about the Faroe Islands, and you're welcome to read more about it if you want to. Thanks very much.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you. Guðrun. And thank you, Sami, for having Mohamed Salah, the famous football player, at his presentation. Thank you for that. Actually, we have an old hand in the Zoom room. So, Mr. Mohamed, are you online? Okay. For the sake of time, let's wrap up the session for today. Bart, do you have something to say? Go ahead, please.

BART BOSWINKEL

Alejandra, do you want to do the case study of the ICANN grant now? I don't know if Margarita is in the room. She's in the room.

MARGARITA VALDEZ

Hello, everybody. Oh, I'm sorry. You wake up, I think. Hello, everybody. My name is Margarita Valdez. I'm from .cl, and I'm very happy to share with you some news about the ICANN Grant Program that was published a few days ago. The good news is that if you see the list that is published in the ICANN website, there is a very interesting program, project. It's called Legal Assistance for Registrants at the UDRP System.

The good thing is that this model was designed for me in Chile, and is currently working quite well, this idea. And I remember Barcelona, we were the first ICA meeting that we shared this project and mobile. And basically, the idea is to give a legal, free paid legal assistance for registrants in the UDRP system, because there is an asymmetry of information that probably are impacting the results of the disputes when the registrant is the defendant at this dynamic, in this kind of dispute and also in the system providers, because UDRP have four or five providers.

And normally, people do not have the opportunity to have legal assistance or legal aid in order to understand what is happening, what is their rights, what is the position that if they are in good faith, and so on. My perception was that normally, the defendant has been labelled by cyber squatter, but there is another phenomenon that is called reverse domain name hijacking, and don't have enough visibility to be considered as a good faith and the opportunity to defend their rights. Especially in these times after

the pandemic, because domain names help a lot of people to go to the Internet, do their small businesses, for example, or initiatives that they have.

And we have more people with less information about how internet is used and domain name is well used. And we found the opportunity to leveling the field in terms of asymmetries of information. So, the good news is that University of Catholic of North is a Chilean university that my colleague, Humberto Carrasco, who is very well known at the At-Large community from Latin American and Caribbean region, we built this idea from the experience under .cl to do this under UDRP. And we need partners. Because the idea is to make capacity buildings at the level of law schools and academic and students and how these capacities could connect with the interest underserved for the registrants, and they could face better information or better defending at the UDRP disputes.

So, we are very happy with this. We are very keen in order to spread this model. We think that the end users and registrants' community have to have this kind of help. And we have two years to work very hard in order to prove that the results of the disputes are different when the registrant is better informed and defended by a kind of legal assistance with the proper information about disputes under domain names. So, that's the news. If you want to know more about this project, feel free to connect me and ask me and whatever. And thank you so much.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you, Margarita.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

This is to get you in mood for the ccNSO party tonight. So, already some music here. You can start slowly dancing and getting ready. We hope to see you all in the evening.

ABDALMONEM GALILA

Thank you very much. Let's go for the last two minutes for the session for today. Actually, the first minute was related to the wrap-up of the session, what we have said. we explored the key drivers for Universal Acceptance readiness since ICANN82. And we were talking today also about the barriers for Universal Acceptance readiness, and we had two main testimonials about the success stories between the government and ccTLD for .bh. and for .fo.

Actually, we have now an immediate survey about how it goes for today's session. And after that, we will have a post-survey about the session at all. Your input will help us to make fine tuning to what we said and what is organized for the agenda and for others. Thank you. Just scan the QR code and add your input here. Your inputs matter. Thank you very much. Don't forget to fill in the survey. Thank you. Bye-bye.

BART BOSWINKEL

Maybe one final announcement again for this evening. If you still need your sticker, please go to the back of the room.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]