



Securing the Internet of the Future: Riyadh to host Middle East Network Operators Group Event

Dubai, 2 October 2023: An event will be held from 11-12 October in Riyadh to support regional Internet infrastructure and drive Internet growth in the Middle East.

MENOG stands as a beacon of collaboration and as a space to facilitate knowledge sharing and learning at a time where Saudi Arabia seeks to secure a digital future for the kingdom and the Middle East.

As Saudi Arabia embarks on its Vision 2030 economic plan to become a global digital hub, the Middle East Network Operators Group (MENOG) serves as a crucial forum where the technical community can converge to address pressing issues surrounding Internet operations, infrastructure, and governance.

Highlighting the Kingdom's commitment to its digital future, the Communications, Space, and Technology Commission (CST), the Saudi regulator, reported that the ICT market in Saudi Arabia reached SAR154 billion (**\$41.07 billion**) in 2022, marking it as the most expansive and rapidly growing digital economy in the MENA region.

Saudi Arabia's capital investment in digital infrastructure surpassed SAR93 billion (\$24.8 billion) over the past six years. This investment has led to remarkable advancements, such as mobile Internet speeds exceeding 181 Mbps, placing the Kingdom among the top 10 countries globally for mobile internet speed. The nation's dedication to connectivity is further underscored by fibre optics reaching 3.7 million Saudi homes and daily mobile Internet data consumption per individual tripling the global average.

The Internet has fast become a pivotal tool for fostering growth and innovation across many landscapes and modern life is dependent on fast, robust and reliable Internet connections. This connectivity is further reliant on secure network infrastructure and this in turn depends on peering which is the direct exchange of Internet traffic from one network to another.

The peering and interconnection landscape in the Middle East has significantly evolved and matured but looking to the future, interconnection could still be optimised

across the region. Regional peering, which eliminates the need for expensive third-party intermediaries, can significantly enhance Internet cost and performance in the region. MENOQ provides a neutral environment for negotiating peering agreements, fostering a robust win-win-peering ecosystem where even market competitors collaborate.

Additionally, [Saudi Arabia](#)'s leadership in IPv6 deployment, both regionally and globally, is commendable. This achievement is attributed to the proactive endeavours of the CST, especially following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the RIPE NCC in 2020. This MoU emphasised collaborative capacity-building through training sessions, meetings, and workshops.

Dr. Waleed Al-Orainy, the President of the Saudi Internet Society, stated:" As a co-host of this year's event with Center3, LINX and SAIX, we believe that it goes beyond a gathering of the brightest minds in Internet and networking. Instead, it is a celebration of our shared vision for a digitally empowered Middle East. The kingdom's digital commitment goes with the event objectives, fostering innovation, nurturing collaboration, developing skills and shaping the future of our region's digital landscape. We are thrilled to welcome the local, regional and international Internet community in Riyadh, and together, let's pave the way for a more connected tomorrow."

RIPE NCC Chief Community Officer Hisham Ibrahim said: While trade and economies have historically relied on water routes, our economic and digital future relies heavily on digital routes as trade, commerce and cultural exchange travel through Internet networks. The Middle East is in a unique position to be at the crossroads of this global information highway and can secure the Internet of the future with faster Internet speeds and increased bandwidth. The RIPE NCC hopes the forum will bring about this positive change to enhance Internet operations in the region."

The event is hosted by center3, LINX, the Saudi Internet Society and SAIX and sponsored by the RIPE NCC, AMS-IX, SALAM, Meta, Internet Society, DE-CIX, ICANN and Packet Clearing House. As the Regional Internet Registry for Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, the RIPE Network Coordination Centre has 30 years of experience in bringing together key players from across the technical Internet community.

More information about the event is available at:
<https://www.menog.org/meetings/menog-23/>.

For media enquiries about the event, please contact the RIPE NCC Communications Team at: comms-req@ripe.net.

-Ends-