

# Domains in Africa: An Update

April 2013



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# Background

- .za name space administered by ZADNA per ECT Act
- UniForum operates .co.za SLD
- UniForum renaming to ZA Central Registry (ZACR)
- Intention to move other SLDs under .za to ZACR
- ZACR has applied for 4 new gTLDs from ICANN under new gTLD programme



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# Some Terms

- gTLD – Generic Top Level Domain
- ICANN - Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a California non-profit public benefit corporation which administers the internet.
- Registry – an entity mandated by ICANN to operate a domain space like .com. .co.za or (soon) “.africa). The registry itself is essentially a database of all domain names in a domain space
- Registrar – an entity which manages domain names on behalf of end-users (registrants) and updates the registry accordingly
- Registrant – the “end-user” or “holder” of a domain name



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# New gTLDs

- Programme by ICANN to introduce new set of gTLDs
- About 1900 applications (closed June 2012), 1400 expected new gTLDs
- Internationalised Domain Names allowed (e.g. Arabic script)
- ZACR applied for:
  - .africa
  - .capetown
  - .durban
  - .joburg



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# dotAfrica

- Support of the African Union and over 60 % of African states
- “.co.za” / “.com” for Africa
- Advantages of registering .africa domain name:
  - Makes commercial sense – Africa is developing rapidly
  - Protect rights – get in early to avoid disappointment!
  - As Africa “comes online”, likely to see the same landrush as happened with “.com”
  - Prevent speculation
- Cost: about USD 18 per annum



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# Pioneers

- Support dotAfrica (or the dotCities) in pre-launch phase
- Draw attention to the pioneer's dotAfrica domain name and place "I support .africa" logo on website, as well as any other marketing collateral.
- In exchange:
  - first rights to their chosen name
  - Register the name free for 5 years



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# Timeline

- Applications closed June 2012
- Currently in initial evaluation stage
- Expect first gTLD approvals 27 April 2013
- Launch around August 2013



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# gTLD Launch Phases

- The launch will take place in phases:
  - **Pre-Sunrise** – African governments can populate a Reserved Names List (RNL) – either names to reserve or to block
  - **Sunrise** – a period when rights holders can register domain names before the gTLD is opened to registrations by the general public. Preference for African rights holders. Contention resolved by auction.
  - **Landrush** – domain name registrations are opened to the public but contended names are settled by auction
  - **Open Delegation** – domain name registrations are open to the public on a first-come-first-served basis
- All gTLD launches include the last three phases



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# TMCH Services

- The Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH) is a central database of trade marks (word marks only)
- Mandated by ICANN, administered by Deloitte, operated by IBM
- This data is used to provide two important services:
- **Sunrise service**
  - as each gTLD is launched, the TM owner is automatically informed – no need for TM owners to monitor each gTLD launch
  - Proof of right and of use required
  - TM owner can then participate in Sunrise period for each gTLD should it wish
- **Trade mark Claims Service**
  - In landrush and open delegation, the TMCH automatically informs TM owners of registrations in particular gTLDs
  - Only proof of right required
  - This allows the TM owner to enforce its rights if necessary
  - At least 90 days after sunrise starts



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# Mark Validation Service (MVS)

- The Mark Validation Service (“MVS”) will be operated by ZACR and fulfil a similar function to the TMCH for these gTLDs:
  - .africa
  - .capetown
  - .durban
  - .joburg
- Applicants for domain names in these gTLDs could use either TMCH or MVS
- Following categories of marks accepted:
  - Registered trade marks
  - “Common-law” marks – with court order
  - Company / trust names
- Proof of use not required



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# Benefits of MVS

- Applicable only to the four ZACR gTLDs
- Far cheaper than TMCH (rates to be confirmed)
- Not necessary to prove use of the trademark for Sunrise applications
- Trade Mark Claims Service “always on” – not just for first 90 days after gTLD launch



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