Request for Proposal (RFP)

For a Study on the

Africa DNS Market

Pursuant to the Implementation of the ICANN Africa Strategy

November 2015

1.0 Introduction

1.1 About this Document

By issuing this Request for Proposal ("RFP"), the *Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers ("ICANN")* is requesting your best offer to conduct a study on the *domain name market industry in Africa.* In seeking a comprehensive proposal for these services, ICANN is placing maximum emphasis on several key components of value including expertise with similar processes, demonstrated practices, and the ability to work within the guidelines established in this RFP. Additional ideas and suggestions are very welcome.

1.2 Overview of the Africa Strategy and why this Study.

In June 2012, the African community had a historic meeting in Prague (ICANN 44) that was chaired by Steve Crocker (chairman of ICANN Board), Fadi Chehade (ICANN's incoming CEO at that time) and Moctar Yedaly from the Africa Union commission. The outcome was a new approach to Africa that would focus on the following action lines;

 ➢ Develop a framework for ICANN's Africa strategy
 ➢ Support stronger presence for ICANN in Africa
 ➢ Increase Africa's participation in ICANN

The Africa Strategy Working Group (ASWG) which was set up during the meeting came up with the Africa Strategy document (2012 - 2015) which was presented during ICANN 49 in Toronto. The document has now become the cornerstone of ICANN's engagement in Africa

In 2014, the Africa Strategy Review team convened again alongside AFRINIC 21 in Mauritius and came up with a reviewed and realigned document as per the new ICANN 2016-2020 strategic plan, deemed the ***ICANN Africa Strategy Ver 2.0 2016 – 2020***. This revised document was finally adopted in ICANN 52 after presentation to the community.

One of the strategic projects (No 15 & 16) identified in the revised strategic plan states:

 ➢ Commit and conduct a study on business feasibility of growing DNS industry in Africa
 ➢ Commission An observatory to develop new indices for DNS industry growth in Africa

This study therefore seeks to implement these key recommendations and projects in the Africa Strategic plan as expressly identified and approved by the ASWG and the Africa community.

1.3 Overview of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

The mission of ICANN, pursuant to its Bylaws, is to coordinate, at the overall level, the global Internet's systems of unique identifiers, and in particular to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. In particular, ICANN:

1. Coordinates the allocation and assignment of the three sets of unique identifiers for the Internet, which are

   a. Domain names (forming a system referred to as "DNS");
   b. Internet protocol ("IP") addresses and Autonomous System ("AS") numbers; and
   c. Protocol port and parameter numbers.

2. Coordinates the operation and evolution of the DNS root name server system.
3. Coordinates policy development reasonably and appropriately related to these technical functions.

ICANN is dedicated to preserving the operational security and stability of the Internet; to promoting competition; to achieving broad representation of global Internet communities; and to developing policy appropriate to its mission through bottom-up, consensus-based processes.

ICANN does not set policy for the Internet. Rather, it manages the process to facilitate a multi-stakeholder collaborative policy building effort. Please go to https://www.icann.org for more information on its processes and scope of activities.

2.0 DNS Market Study Requirements

2.1 Period of this Study

This is a one-time study. The Draft final report of the study as well as any attachments should be delivered no later than February 22, 2016.

2.2 Scope of the Study

The goal of this study is to identify and define the strengths and weaknesses in the DNS industry ecosystem in Africa, and develop recommendations on how to advance the industry and bring it closer to the opportunities available. This study will document relevant data points and provide further analytical findings in order to enable ICANN and Players in the Africa Names Space develop a roadmap on the scope of needs and priorities for the development and growth of both "ccTLDs and gTLDs"(The DNS Market) in Africa. Its outcomes will feed into setting up an observatory that will continuously monitor the growth, development and emerging needs of DNS market in Africa.

The awarded vendor will have to conduct surveys and interviews in order to collect the data. More specifically the objectives of this study are to:

1. Develop, distribute, follow-up and collate questionnaires and survey forms to gather sufficient and relevant information about the African DNS Market. (Incase of ccTLDs, collected information should include governance models and registry models)

2. Develop a regional / country-base[1] breakdown of domain name registrations including but not limited to: ccTLD vs. gTLD registrations; registrations by business, governments, non-government, research and academic, individuals, etc.; percentage of active domains; and percentage of domains that use private (proxy) WHOIS.

3. Type of content hosted by these domains: commercial, government, educational, etc.; and share of the commercial sites that offer e-commerce services; and whether this content is hosted within country or outside. (And possibly where if outside - general idea of where, could by %)

4. The growth rate of domain name registrations in the past five years, for ccTLDs and gTLDs including IDNs.

5. The current market of local registrars and resellers for ccTLDs and gTLDs.

6. The current market of global registrars and resellers for ccTLDs and gTLDs, to better understand registrants' behavior.

7. The user experience at local registrars and resellers (e.g. support for local language, payment gateway, IDN support – Level of automation).

8. Identify factors that are holding back take-up of domain names (e.g. awareness, infrastructure, policy, and/or regulation, payment gateway).

9. The current understanding of the concept of Premium Domain Names and how to develop the market.

10. Find out what are the benchmarks for registries and registrars in the region by probably comparing the results of the study with results from other parts of the world.

11. Identify market potential for domain names (gTLDs and ccTLDs) sales over the coming 3 - 5 years based on surveyed sample of audience.

12. Define best practices that have made an impact in domain name market growth including those related to business models, regulatory and governance mechanisms, consumer awareness, among others.

13. Look at the broader ecosystem of the Internet infrastructure and online services and describe the impact of such elements on the overall evolution of the domain name industry.

14. Describe and quantify the overall business potential in the domain name industry in this region.

15. Provide suggestions on how to develop the industry and what are the business models that can be adopted in the entire industry chain.

16. Provide information on how to set up a DNS observatory in Africa.

The above list is not comprehensive, and the vendor is strongly encouraged to suggest more items to be included in the study.

2.3 Structure of the Study

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[1] The vendor to propose which countries they will be able to cover, and this will be considered in the evaluation.

The study should include three main sections:

1. **Facts:** This section should provide data on all aspects as described in the Scope of the Study section above.
2. **Analysis:** This section must provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected, and show correlations amongst the various data sets.
3. **Conclusions:** Based on the findings from analyzing the data collected, the report must provide suggestions and recommendations on how to grow the industry in the region.

2.4 Deliverables and Milestones

The following deliverables and milestones have been set for the study.

1. Inception report
2. Methodology Review
3. Draft Final Report of the study
4. Final Report of the Study Report

All the above deliverables will be verified, reviewed and approved by the Client. The final report of the study and any attached outcomes will be submitted in the English language. The report will also be submitted to ICANN as an electronic document.

3.0 Selection Criteria

The selection of the vendor will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated understanding of the assignment
2. Knowledge and expertise
   a. Demonstrated experience in conducting similar types of studies
   b. Good knowledge of ICANN functions, the DNS, and the domain name registration process
   c. Suitability of proposed CVs
3. Proposed methodology
   a. Design approach
      i. Clearly articulated rationale for proposed methodology.
      ii. The methodology ensures that a statistically significant sample of registries and registrars will be examined.
      iii. Data collection, analysis and presentation tools are appropriate and accessible to ICANN.
   b. Implementation approach
      i. Suitable project management plan, including proposed timeline.
      ii. Engagement model requires appropriate levels of coordination with ICANN and community members.
      iii. Level of responsibility for designated key staff.

4. Flexible approach, including but not limited to meeting the timeline by starting the implementation on December 22, 2015 and delivering the Draft Final report by 22 Feb, 2016, and incorporating feedback from ICANN for the final report to be delivered by April 22, 2016

5. Commitment to working with ICANN's multi-stakeholder model, including a demonstrated understanding of and commitment to ICANN's requirements for transparency and accountability.

6. Price, including detailed pricing per item.

7. Conflict of interest (see template).

8. Reference checks (see template); both for applicant and any partner firms.

4.0 Business Requirements

In order to be considered, the vendor must be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the following business requirements:

1) Ability to provide a complete response based on ICANN specifications by the designated due date (see Project Timeline below).

2) Availability to participate in finalist presentations via conference call/remote participation.

3) Ability to negotiate a professional services agreement using ICANN Contractor Consulting Agreement (see attached).

4) Ability to meet the timeline outlined in the Project Timeline and to complete the work on or before 9 October 2015.

5) Conduct periodic status update calls with frequency to be determined.

6) Demonstrated ability to develop work methods, data gathering mechanisms and evaluation/assessment approaches as appropriate for the activity.

7) Ability to conduct thorough analysis considering regional issues and taking into account inputs in multiple languages, where relevant.

8) Ability to conduct examination work using remote tools.

9) Ability to provide the following deliverables
   a. Work plan and timeline.
   b. Working session(s), as necessary, with the ICANN team or it's designate(s) to discuss preliminary findings (via remote participation).
   c. Baseline report to include methodology and approach; data on items identified under the Scope of the Study section as minimum; in-depth analysis of this data; basis for conclusions; suggestions and recommendations.

5.0 Project Timeline

The following dates have been established as target milestones for this RFP. ICANN reserves the right to modify or change this timeline at any time as necessary.

Milestone	Date
RFP published	November 25, 2015
Participants submit any questions to ICANN (use Q&A Excel template in RFP packet)	26 November 2015 by 23:59 UTC
ICANN responds to questions	30 November 2015
Participants submit complete proposals	**5 December 2015 by 23:59 UTC**
Target dates for participant presentations	9 – 11 December 2015
Target dates for evaluation, contracting and award	14 - 18 December 2015
Target start date of implementation	22 December 2015
Vendor delivers first draft of the study	22 February 2016
ICANN provides feedback on the first draft after seeking feedback from community	22 March 2016
Vendor delivers the final report of the study	22 March 2016

6.0 Proposal Components

Proposals should include the following components at a minimum:

1. Completed Business Requirements & Qualitative Questionnaire sections in Excel template
2. Completed Pricing Workbook
3. Signed Non-disclosure agreement (use the template attached in RFP packet)
4. Customer References (use the template attached in RFP packet)
5. Signed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form (use the template attached in RFP packet)
6. Signed Contractor Consulting Agreement (use the template attached in RFP packet), or a redlined version in case your firm is in disagreement with any part of it.
7. Additional attachments as requested in the qualitative questionnaire section.
8. CVs as applicable
9. Support activities expected from ICANN staff.

7.0 Proposal Submissions

Proposals should be electronically submitted to Yaovi.atohoun@icann.org by 23:59 UTC on 4 December 2015. Submissions should be provided using supplied templates, supplemented by additional information, as necessary.

8.0 Terms and Conditions

12.1   General Terms

12.1.1   Submission of a proposal shall constitute Respondent's acknowledgment and acceptance of all the specifications, requirements and terms and conditions in this RFP.

12.1.2   All costs of preparing and submitting its proposal, responding to or providing any other assistance to ICANN in connection with this RFP will be borne by the Respondent.

12.1.3   All submitted proposals including any supporting materials or documentation will become the property of ICANN. If Respondent's proposal contains any proprietary information that should not be disclosed or used by ICANN other than for the purposes of evaluating the proposal that information should be marked with appropriate confidentiality markings. ICANN may return the RFP to the Respondent in the event ICANN is unwilling to comply with a request for confidentiality of any portion of the response.

12.2   Discrepancies, Omissions and Additional Information

12.2.1   Respondent is responsible for examining this RFP and all addenda. Failure to do so will be at the sole risk of Respondent. Should Respondent find discrepancies, omissions, unclear or ambiguous intent or meaning, or should any question arise concerning this RFP, Respondent must notify ICANN immediately in writing via e-mail no later than three (3) days prior to the deadline for bid submissions. Should such issues remain unresolved by

ICANN, in writing, prior to Respondent's preparation of its proposal, they should be noted in Respondent's proposal.

12.2.2 Oral statements made by ICANN's employees, agents, and representatives concerning this RFP are not binding upon ICANN in its consideration of this RFP. If Respondent requires additional information, Respondent must request that the issuer of this RFP furnish such information in writing.

12.2.3 A Respondent's proposal is presumed to represent its best efforts to respond to the RFP. Any significant inconsistency, if unexplained, raises a fundamental issue of the Respondent's understanding of the nature and scope of the work required and of its ability to perform the contract as proposed and may be cause for rejection of the proposal.

12.2.4 If necessary, supplemental information to this RFP will be published on ICANN's announcement for the RFP or provided to the prospective Respondents receiving this RFP. All supplemental information issued by ICANN will form part of this RFP. ICANN is not responsible for any failure by prospective Respondents to receive supplemental information.

12.3   Assessment and Award

12.3.1 ICANN reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw this RFP, make no award, to waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity and to disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.

12.3.2 ICANN may request a Respondent to provide further information or documentation to support Respondent's proposal and its ability to provide the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP.

12.3.3 ICANN is not obliged to accept the lowest priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.

12.3.4 ICANN will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in this RFP, any further issued clarifications (if any) and consideration of any other issues or evidence relevant to the Respondent's ability to successfully provide and implement the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP and in the best interests of ICANN.

12.3.5 ICANN reserves the right to enter into contractual negotiations and if necessary, modify any terms and conditions of a final contract with the Respondent whose proposal offers the best value to ICANN.

Request for Proposal: Study About the DNS Industry and business in AFRICA

25 November 2015

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ("ICANN") is seeking a provider to conduct a study on the domain name industry in Africa . The goal of this study is to identify and define the strengths and weaknesses in the industry ecosystem within the region, and develop recommendations on how to advance the industry and bring it closer to the opportunities available.

The ICANN's Africa Strategic Plan which was reviewed in 2014 defined four key areas of interest as strategic focus for the region. Two of those, namely Capacity Building and Outreach; and Economic Issues contemplate aspects to further develop the domain name industry.

The study at a minimum will

investigate the current state of the Internet and the domain name industry in the region,

Define best practices that have made an impact in domain name market growth, Look at the broader ecosystem of the Internet infrastructure and online services and

Describe the impact of such elements on the overall evolution of the domain name industry,

Describe the business potential in the domain name industry in this region, and

Provide suggestions on how to develop the industry and what business models can be adopted in the entire industry chain.

The study will include data, analysis, and recommendations.

The final report of the study is to be delivered no later than 30th April 2016. An intermediary report should be provided in March 2015

For additional information and instructions for submitting responses please click here .Proposals should be submitted to Yaovi.atohoun@icann.org by 23:59 UTC on 05 December 2015.