



AFRICAN REGIONAL  
AT-LARGE ORGANIZATION

# AFRALO

## Policy Hot Topics

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# About AFRALO

The African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO) is the home of the Internet end user community in Africa. It provides essential information and interactive resources for those interested in shaping the future of the Internet and realizing the mission of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

AFRALO consists of a growing number of At-Large Structures (ALSes) and individual members.

THE AT-LARGE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	
5 REGIONAL AT-LARGE ORGANIZATIONS (RALOs) — OVER 230 AT-LARGE STRUCTURES (ALSes)	
<p>The At-Large Structures form the basis of the At-Large community, representing the interests of individual Internet users worldwide. The five RALOs unite our ALSes based on their geographic regions, namely: Africa (AFRALO); Asia, Australasian and Pacific Islands (APRALO); Europe (EURALO); Latin American and the Caribbean Islands (LACRALO) and North America (NARALO).</p>	
AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ALAC) — 15 MEMBERS	
 SEAT #15 ON THE ICANN BOARD IS SELECTED BY THE ALAC AND THE AT-LARGE COMMUNITY	 10 selected by RALOs to serve on the ALAC (2 from each RALO)  5 selected by NomCom to serve on the ALAC (1 from each region)

# Current Policy Hot Topics

## 1. PROMOTING DNSSEC IMPLEMENTATION AMONG AFRICAN TLD REGISTRIES

Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) provides security to the Domain Name System (DNS) by validating DNS responses, specifically providing origin authority, data integrity, and authenticated denial of existence.

This is important to Africa, which has the fastest rate of Internet end user growth globally, yet a low rate of DNSSEC implementation compared to the rest of the world.

To date, there are only 19 Country Code Top-Level Domains (ccTLDs) in Africa that have implemented DNSSEC.

## 2. NEW GTLDS AND GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

Today, Africa has its own top-level domain (TLD), .africa, and several geographical TLDs (GeoTLDs). The protection of geonames raises many technical and public policy issues. There are multiple discussions related to the issue of geonames at ICANN that also involve the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC).

GeoTLDs face challenges related to jurisdiction and ownership. To constructively participate in the ICANN Policy Development process, the African Internet user needs to be aware of:

- Issues related to GeoTLDs.
- The process of managing gTLDs.
- The effect of ownership rights or use of geographical names on the Internet end users.

### **3. REGISTRATION DIRECTORY SERVICE (RDS) AND WHOIS**

There are many pertinent issues surrounding the Registration Directory Service (RDS) and WHOIS. Information on domain name ownership is currently published publicly via WHOIS. The Europea Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) initiated by European data regulators came into effect on 25 May 2018. With this new regulation, there is a strong global drive to protect registration data, improve access to generic top-level domain registration data, and implement safeguards for protecting such data.

The following needs to be taken into account by AFRALO and African Internet end users:

- There is a need for greater awareness of WHOIS/GDPR-related issues and further discussion within the ICANN policy development processes as these issues will impact Registration Directory Service (RDS) implementation in Africa.
- This is a relevant issue to the regional Internet and Domain Name System. Yet, the ICANN RDS and WHOIS Working Group has had little input from AFRALO so far.

Better documentation of WHOIS records violations is needed. Currently, this is limited.

### **4. ICANN ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

Increased engagement from the region in the policy development process is needed. To that end, AFRALO and Internet end users in Africa need to better understand the ICANN multistakeholder process and how it supports accountability and transparency:

- ICANN's core mission is to coordinate and ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifiers.
- ICANN operates on a multistakeholder model that brings all interested parties together to discuss policy issues that fall within ICANN's areas of responsibility. It follows a bottom-up model of policy development and relies on consensus from its stakeholders.
- For this model to operate effectively, ICANN encourages participation, instills trust, provides resources, and maintains sound dispute and review procedures.

Transparency and accountability are the foundations that support ICANN's execution of the multistakeholder model.

## 5. GENDER DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION WITHIN ICANN

From 9 June to 8 July 2017, ICANN org conducted a community-wide survey on Gender Diversity and Participation, with the participation of 584 people. On 12 October 2017, a report on the survey was released, aiming to:

- Provide insight into current perceptions of gender diversity within the ICANN community.
- Help identify potential barriers to participation.
- Gather data to help inform ongoing community discussions on diversity.

The report noted that ICANN org is committed to promoting greater diversity and supporting broad, inclusive participation. It also underscored the importance of increased and active participation from AFRALO and the African Internet end users in ICANN policy development processes to bridge the low participation gap from the region.

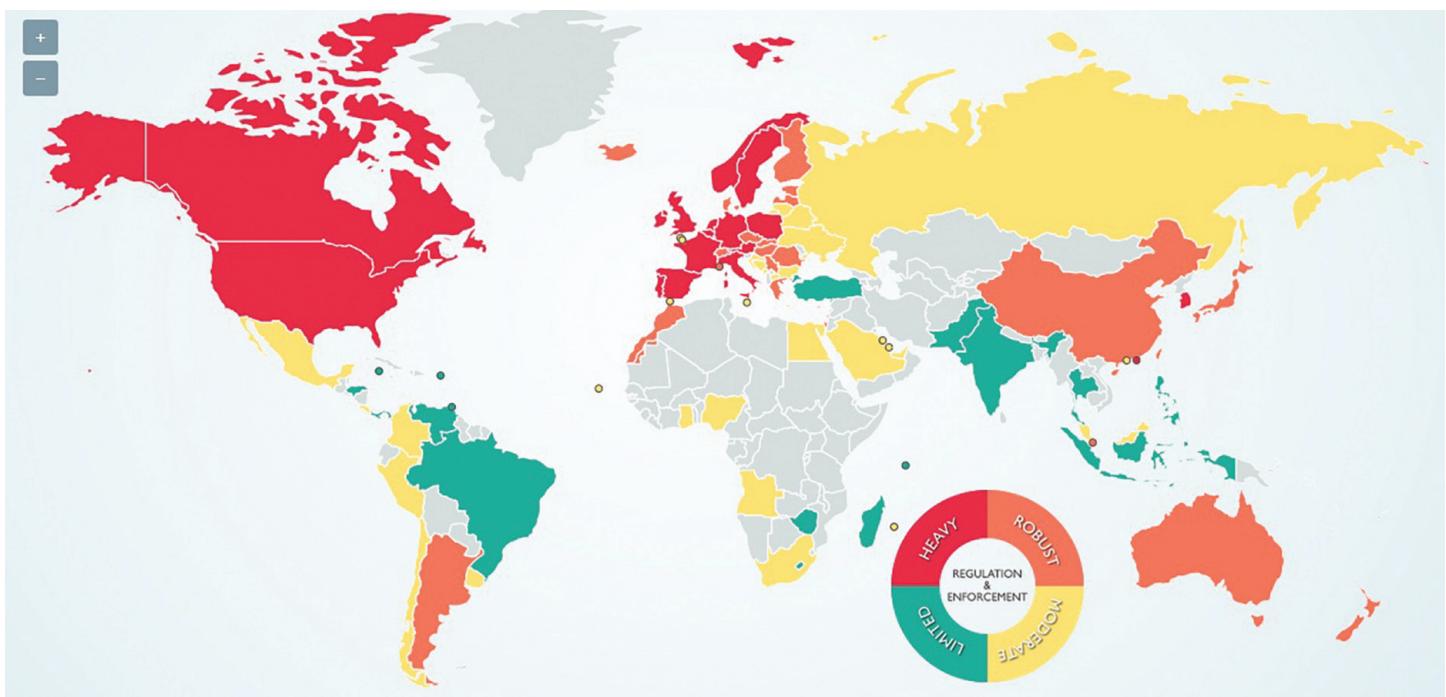
*AFRALO members at ICANN59 Policy Forum in Johannesburg, South Africa.*



## 6. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) AND PRIVACY ISSUES

Compliance with GDPR, which came into effect on 25 May 2018, and privacy regulation in general have not been robust in Africa. In response, the AFRALO-AfrICANN Joint Statement on GDPR was ratified during the ICANN62 Policy Forum in Panama. According to this statement:

- AFRALO encourages African Internet businesses and countries that are trading partners of the EU to consider adopting relevant measures needed to ensure compliance.
- More importantly, it encourages registries and registrars that are serving non-EU regions like Africa, to ensure implementation does not have damaging implications for their non-EU customers.
- This will ensure that cross-border transactions with the EU are not affected. There are both financial and non-financial implications of ensuring compliance under this comprehensive regulation.
- As a result, the AFRALO community needs to be alert to the impending impacts of the GDPR and its effect on the African economy, especially African economies of scale.



### REGULATION & ENFORCEMENT COLOR KEY:

- Red = Heavy;
- Orange = Robust;
- Yellow = Moderate;
- Green = Limited;
- Grey = Little or none.

Grey areas in the map indicate countries, many of which are in Africa, that have little to no standard privacy laws and require some level of adoption.

Map: <http://dataprivacysite.com/2017/01/30/data-protection-laws-interactive-map/>

## **7. INTERNET GOVERNANCE**

Internet governance encompasses a range of issues, actors, stakeholders, and issues discussed at multiple technical and policy forums.

Enhanced regional engagement in Internet governance is imperative. Involvement in activities and issues of concern to the region provides a solid platform for policy discussions and engagement from the Internet end user community.

Since the emergence of the Internet, problems necessitating solutions and, more importantly, the potential for better Internet governance exist. The AFRALO community participates in the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF), as well as the Africa DNS Forum, Africa Internet Summit and AFRINIC every year. AFRALO community members deliver presentations, lead panel discussions and engage with the broader community at these events.

## **8. CAPACITY BUILDING AND OUTREACH IN AFRICA**

Following the development of the ICANN Africa Strategy in 2013, an Engagement Office was opened in 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, to further deepen ICANN presence in the region and relations with African stakeholders.

Over the past five years, the African community's participation in ICANN has begun to increase. More is needed. Effective involvement in ICANN activities is essential.

To this end, the following have been identified as key steps to foster awareness and capacity-building around ICANN and its work in the region:

- Provision of more ICANN resources to enable AFRALO and African Internet end users to better understand the global domain names and numbers ecosystem.
- Enhancement of outreach among various communities and stakeholders in Africa to increase awareness of ICANN within the regional Internet industry.

# With your help

AFRALO will take concrete action in all Policy Hot Topics to ensure African Internet end user interests are represented!

Join us by applying to become an AFRALO member. To find out more about membership, additional resources, and AFRALO activities, please scan the QR code below.



If you have questions, please contact At-Large staff at  
**[staff@atlarge.icann.org](mailto:staff@atlarge.icann.org)** who will put you in contact with  
the AFRALO leadership team.

## ENGAGE WITH ICANN AT-LARGE

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