

# AFRALO Policy Hot Topics

## 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 realizing Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) mission and shaping the future of the Internet.

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

## 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 signed Country Code Top-Level Domains (ccTLDs) in Africa.

#### References

- See: [We Are Social 2018 Digital Report](#)
- See: [AFRALO on the At-Large Website](#)
- See: [AFRALO on the At-Large wiki workspace](#)

### 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.

#### References

- See: [82 related policy comments on new gTLDs](#)
- See: Current public comment on [Initial Report on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process \(Overarching Issues & Work Tracks 1-4\)](#) and related [At-Large wiki workspace](#)
- See: [At-Large Community Policy Issues – Why End Users Should Care?](#)

### 3. Registration Directory Service (RDS) and WHOIS

These are pertinent issues related to the ownership of domain names. Information on domain name ownership is currently published publicly via WHOIS. The European 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 little input from AFRALO so far.

Better documentation of the violation of WHOIS records is needed. Currently, this is publicly limited.

#### References

- More information on the RDS/WHOIS can be found at: <https://www.icann.org/resources/reviews/specific-reviews/whois>
- See: [46 related public comments on WHOIS/GDPR](#)
- See: Current Public Comment on: [ICANN Seeking Community Feedback on Proposed Unified Access Model](#) and related [At-Large wiki workspace](#)

### 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.

## References

- See: [65 related public comments on Accountability/Transparency](#)

## 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 individuals. 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.

## References

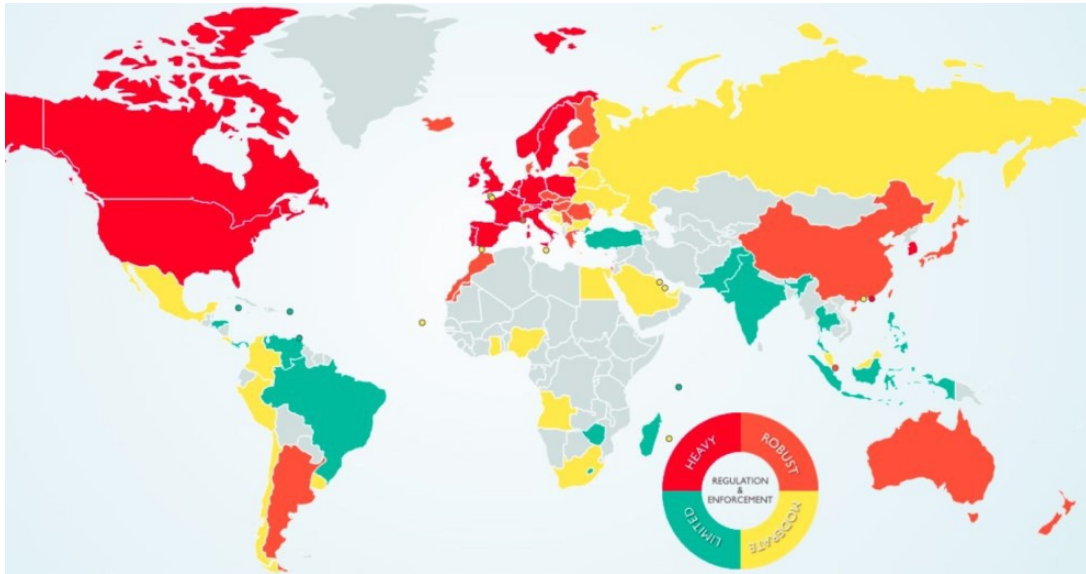
- See: [ICANN Diversity and Participation Survey Report](#)
- See: [At-Large Community Policy Issues – Why End Users Should Care?](#)

## 6. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Privacy Issues

The current state of GDPR, which came into effect on 25 May 2018, and privacy regulation have been neglected 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.

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

## References

- See: [Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Statement on General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\), 27 June 2018](#)
- See: [At-Large Community Policy Issues – Why End Users Should Care?](#)

## 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.

<sup>1</sup> Map: <http://dataprivacysite.com/2017/01/30/data-protection-laws-interactive-map/>

## References

- See: [12 related public comments on Internet Governance](#)
- See: [IGF 2017 home page](#)
- See: [AFRALO Activities at ICANN59 Policy Forum](#)

## 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 for 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.

## References

- See: [AFRALO Outreach Strategic Plan](#)
- See: [At-Large Capacity Building Working Group](#) with Chair, Tijani Ben Jemaa
- See: [AFRALO Activities at ICANN59 Policy Forum](#)

**With your help, the African Regional At-Large Organization (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 [here](#).**

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.

ICANN At-Large on [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#) / [YouTube](#) / [Flickr](#)  
AFRALO [At-Large Structure \(ALS\) application form](#)  
[AFRALO Individual Membership application form](#)  
[AFRALO on the At-Large website](#)  
[AFRALO wiki workspace](#)