

At-Large Report: Supporting the Domain Name Industry in Underserved Regions Workspace

Comment Close Date	Statement Name	Status	Assignee (s)	Call for Comments Open	Call for Comments Close	Vote Announcement	Vote Open	Vote Reminder	Vote Close	Date of Submission	Staff Contact and Email
13.06.2014 (comment period) 30.06.2014 (reply period)	Report: Supporting the Domain Name Industry in Underserved Regions	ADOPTED 12Y, 1N, 0A	Tijani Ben Jemaa Alan Greenberg	18.07.2014	22.07.2014 23:59 UTC	23.07.2014 23:59 UTC	23.07.2014 23:59 UTC	29.07.2014	30.07.2014 23:59 UTC	23.07.2014	Amy Bivins amy.bivins@icann.org

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Brief Overview

This is a report about supporting the domain name industry in underserved regions, prepared by ICANN staff for public comment.

Comment Period: 14 May 2014 - 13 Jun 2014 23:59 UTC

Reply Period: 14 Jun 2014 - 30 Jun 2014 23:59 UTC

[Original Announcement](#)

Section I: Description, Explanation, and Purpose

ICANN is exploring ideas and strategies to help promote the domain name industry in regions that have typically been underserved. In particular, ICANN is looking at existing barriers to Registrar Accreditation and operation and considering ways that these challenges might be mitigated. Public comments on this report will be used to determine next steps to support the domain name industry in underserved regions.

As of 16 April 2014, there were 1,010 ICANN-accredited Registrars. Of those, seven are located in Africa. Fourteen are located in the Middle East.

Barriers to participation in domain name industry business in regions such as Africa and the Middle East are complex and some cannot be addressed by ICANN without coordination with the greater community. Many of these issues have been recognized and discussed for some time. ICANN staff is therefore seeking input to determine how best to transform this discussion into concrete results.

Section II: Background

To encourage participation of developing countries to date, ICANN has, for example, created a fellowship program, participated in many regional meetings and increased the availability of translated materials and interpretation services, engendering participation within ICANN.

Additionally, in August 2012, ICANN announced a new approach to Africa, with the support of AFRINIC, including a new initiative aimed at increasing African participation and influence within ICANN.¹ A working group was created and endorsed by the African community members meeting in Prague. The working group included key players in Internet governance from different regions in Africa to contribute to the development of the new strategy. The working group selected Nii Quaynor of Ghana, a well-respected Internet leader in Africa, to lead its efforts. The working group published its report, EnhancedRegistry Registrar Relationships, on 13 July 2013 (see Annex at the end of this report).

Members of the domain name industry community in the Middle East community have taken a similar approach. Middle East community members created a working group in early 2013 to develop an ICANN engagement strategy for the Middle East. The Middle East strategy identified domain name industry development as one area where more work needs to be done. ICANN has since co-sponsored a number of DNS Forum events in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.²

ICANN recently held a session on this topic at the March 2014 ICANN meeting in Singapore.³ At the session, ICANN solicited considerable input from attendees about the challenges facing the domain name industry in underserved regions and began discussions to explore potential solutions.

¹ See <http://www.icann.org/en/news/announcements/announcement-10aug12-en.htm>

² <http://blog.icann.org/2014/02/first-middle-east-dns-forum-overwhelmingly-successful/> ;<http://www.internetsociety.org/news/africa-domain-name-system-forum-be-held-durban-south-africa-12-13-july-2013>

³ <http://singapore49.icann.org/en/schedule/wed-dns-underserved>

Section III: Relevant Resources

The attached [report](#) [PDF, 601 KB] includes a table that summarizes input that ICANN has received regarding the challenges that face the domain name industry in underserved regions. The table is by no means exhaustive, and ICANN staff welcome input on any issue that you believe poses a barrier to domain name industry growth and participation in underserved regions.

The table identifies the relevant issue, notes where the requirement lies in relevant policies or contracts, lists solutions that have been proposed, and explores how such solutions might be implemented.

As background, the report also includes the July 2013 report, Enhanced Registry Registrar Relationships, developed by Africa Strategy working group.

ICANN Seeks Public Comment: Supporting the DNS Industry in Underserved Regions

- [English](#) [PDF, 601 KB]
- [Français](#) [PDF, 528 KB]
- [Español](#) [PDF, 471 KB]
- [PDF, 676 KB]
- [Português](#) [PDF, 472 KB]
- [PDF, 522 KB]
- [PDF, 599 KB]

Section IV: Additional Information

N/A

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FINAL VERSION TO BE SUBMITTED IF RATIFIED

[Please click here to download a copy of the pdf below.](#)

[Please click here to view the reason for opposition to the ALAC Statement from Evan Leibovitch.](#)

FINAL DRAFT VERSION TO BE VOTED UPON BY THE ALAC

ALAC Statement on the Report: Supporting the Domain Name Industry in Underserved Regions

The ALAC strongly supports the concept of supporting the domain name industry (DNI) in underserved regions.

As many of those who have comments have pointed out, it is not simply a matter of having more registrars. The ecosystem surrounding them must be considered as well. Simply increasing the DNI without corresponding increases in demand will not be helpful.

As the DNI programs evolve, the following principles should be adhered to:

1. Registrant and user rights and expectations must not be lowered in order to increase DNI penetration – we need more suppliers, not suppliers with lower standards;
2. Education at all levels is a key to increasing demand and local suppliers;
3. The processes to become a registrar should be clarified and to the extent possible simplified, and training should be available;
4. The demands placed on registrars should be reasonable based on local cost-of-living and related financial constraints. As a prime example, the insurance required for registrars is a real concern for the underserved regions (e.g. cost, convertibility of the local currency). A solution for this issue should be found to foster the establishment of young registrars in those regions.
5. Given the poor representation of developing economies in the first new gTLD round, the second round should give preference, if not exclusivity, to applicants from developing economies. In line with the concept behind the failed JAS program, fees and requirements must be aligned with the realities of developing economies, while not sacrificing Internet stability and security. It is critical that an outreach program must be undertaken to ensure a better understanding of the program, its benefits (e.g. economic, cultural, linguistic, etc.) and all the requirements for an application.
6. Technical and Legal Support is needed by underserved region applicants for a new gTLD. A program for such support should be developed.

FIRST DRAFT SUBMITTED

ALAC Statement on the Report: Supporting the Domain Name Industry in Underserved Regions

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As many of those who have comments have pointed out, it is not simply a matter of having more registrars. The ecosystem surrounding them must be considered as well. Simply increasing the DNI without corresponding increases in demand will not help anyone.

As programs evolve, the following principles should be adhered to:

1. Registrant and user rights and expectations must not be lowered in order to increase DNI penetration – we need more suppliers, not suppliers with lower standards;
2. Education at all levels is a key to increasing demand and local suppliers;
3. The processes to become a registrar should be clarified and to the extent possible simplified, and training should be available;
4. The demands placed on registrars should be reasonable based on local cost-of-living and related financial constraints. As a prime example, the insurance required for registrars is a real concern for the underserved regions (amount, convertibility of the local currency). A solution for this issue should be found to foster the establishment of young registrars in those regions.
5. Given the poor representation of developing economies in the first New gTLD round, the second round should give preference, if not exclusivity, to applicants from developing economies. In line with the concept behind the failed JAS program, fees and requirements must be aligned with the realities of developing economies, while not sacrificing Internet stability and security. It is critical that an outreach program must be undertaken to ensure a better understanding of the program, its benefit (economic, cultural, linguistic, etc.) and all the requirements for an application.
6. Technical and legal supports are still needed for the underserved region applicants for a new gTLD. A program for such support should be developed.