

# ACIP Comment on Draft Final Report of the 2023 Africa Domain Name Industry Study

February 8th, 2024

## About The Africa Community Internet Program (ACIP)

The Africa Community Internet Program (ACIP) is an initiative born out of a collaboration between the Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation and Syracuse University, New York, United States. The goal of ACIP (pronounced ‘A sip.’) is to provide everyone anywhere with at least ‘a sip of the Internet. This ambitious endeavor received crucial backing and support from the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Africa Telecommunication Union (ATU), and the African Union, affirming the belief in the transformative potential of community-driven connectivity. The Africa Community Internet Program (ACIP) team comprises diverse stakeholders from across Africa and around the globe.

The Africa Community Internet Program (ACIP) objectives are to bridge the last mile connectivity and accessibility to a safer internet. ACIP, through the humanitarian technology known as internet backpacks supports ICANN's mission to connect the next billion. The Internet backpack project will be a driver to connect millions of unconnected people across Africa, which we believe will be a driver for domain name uptake in Africa. Hence the interest in providing input to ICANN on the Africa domain name system study.

ICANN plays a critical role in protecting the internet, its openness, and security. Hence the importance of the study to understand a broader DNS ecosystem in Africa. ACIP therefore thanked the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) for initiating a study to understand the DNS landscape in Africa and its challenges, which would facilitate interventions that bridge access and connectivity to the last mile.

## **Our comment on the Draft Final Report of the 2023 Africa Domain Name Industry Study.**

The current study has thoroughly identified factors that we think can serve as mechanisms that can help to develop interventions to increase domain name system uptake in different parts of Africa, especially when it comes to ccTLDs, gTLDs, and international domain names (IDNs).

ACIP believes that overall, the report does address all the key objectives of the study. The recommendations in the report will certainly help move the domain name industry forward.

ACIP is particularly impressed to see the report cover the contribution and challenges of non-traditional methods of Internet broadband such as satellites and TV White Spaces (TVWS) for remote communities, including the recommendations on how to improve these types of access for remote communities by looking to better broadband policies and updates to regulations. As the report notes, without infrastructure and service providers, there is no DNS industry.

However, ACIP notes that there were no findings in the report on how community networks contribute to or impact the domain name industry.

**Our observations and recommendations:**

- We would love to see the report also address community networks, which is a crucial solution for remote rural communities.
- To get a broader understanding of the DNS study in Africa, there is a need for broader stakeholder participation beyond technical to incorporate the views of business, civil society, and entrepreneurs.
- The study identifies the challenges of internet access and digital adoption in Africa; regional variations need more in-depth analysis.
- The study should include the experiences of domain name users. Evaluation of registrants across Africa can further give insight into potential areas for improvement in service delivery, bottlenecks beyond infrastructure, and awareness of the influence of digital society.
- To understand more about the current industry trends and impact on the DNS market, an examination of the rise of new domain names and domain name security would have further made the report forward-looking.

Thank you.

ACIP Policy Team.

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