

RrSG response to Draft Final Report of the 2023 Africa Domain Name Industry Study

<https://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/proceeding/draft-final-report-of-the-2023-africa-domain-name-industry-study-21-12-2023>

1. Does the study identify and define the strengths and weaknesses in Africa's Domain Name System (DNS) industry ecosystem?

Yes, the Registrar Stakeholder Group (RrSG) believes that the study does identify and define the strengths and weaknesses in Africa's Domain Name System (DNS) industry ecosystem. Based upon feedback from a Nigeria-based RrSG member, the study recognizes Nigeria as one of the DNS leaders in Africa with a substantial number of country-code top-level domains (ccTLDs) and highlights a significant improvement in internet performance since 2016.

The analysis also acknowledges challenges within Nigeria's DNS industry. One prominent weakness is the relatively low internet penetration rate in the country, along with a limited number of ICANN-accredited registrars. The study explores various factors contributing to these challenges, offering a detailed understanding of the obstacles faced. Overall, the research aims to present a comprehensive view, covering both the positive advancements and existing challenges within Nigeria's DNS industry ecosystem.

The RrSG supports the strengths and weaknesses identified in this Africa DNS Study, and supports initiatives to continue strengthening Africa's DNS.

2. Does the study develop recommendations to advance the industry and bring it closer to realizing its full potential?

Yes, the study provides recommendations to advance the industry and bring it closer to realizing its full potential. Some key recommendations that the RrSG supports include:

- Simplify, Automate, and Expedite Domain Registration Processes:

There is a strong emphasis on the need to simplify, automate, and expedite domain registration processes to make them more efficient.

- Lower Cost of ccTLD Registration:

The study recommends lowering the cost of country-code top-level domain (ccTLD) registration, suggesting that an ideal price range would be between \$5-\$10. This aims to make domain registration more accessible.

Wider Environment Recommendations:

- Address Internet access constraints by stimulating the rollout of infrastructure and encouraging the deployment of advanced technologies like LTE/4G/FTTx.

Support initiatives for digital literacy and e-government services, promoting e-learning and e-health. Reduce prices, especially for data, to make internet access more affordable. Support the deployment of undersea cables, cross-border fiber, and domestic backbones to enhance connectivity.

Domain Name Industry Recommendations:

- Implement cost-based (but not zero) fees for registering a domain, ideally between \$5-\$10.

Eliminate manual intellectual property rights evaluation before domain registration. Encourage the presence of multiple registrars (at least 20) to ensure healthy competition. Establish a simple, quick, and cheap dispute resolution system such as UDRP (Alternative Dispute Resolution - ADR). Ensure effective business models, consumer awareness strategies, and appropriate regulatory and governance mechanisms for domain registries. Basic Internet Infrastructure Improvement:

- Address issues related to poor market access and network provisioning models to encourage competition.

Improve spectrum management to allow for the use of the latest technologies by new providers. Invest in public access facilities such as libraries and telecentres for those who cannot afford private Internet access. Encourage the licensing and use of satellite systems like Starlink to connect remote and unconnected areas. These recommendations cover various aspects of the industry, from domain registration processes to broader environmental factors and fundamental improvements in internet infrastructure. They are designed to enhance the overall performance and accessibility of the domain industry in the African context.

3. Does the study document relevant data and provide further analytical findings? This information is essential for ICANN and other stakeholders involved in the Africa namespace to develop a roadmap that outlines the specific needs and priorities for the development and growth of both country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) and generic top-level domains (gTLDs) in Africa.

Yes, the RrSG believes that the study documented relevant data, which is confirmed using Nigeria as a case study.