

ICANN approves dotAfrica launch dates

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has given dotAfrica the green light to move forward with its launch plan and dates as Africa's new home on the web gets ready for its long-awaited entry.



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“Final and confirmed” is how the CEO of the dotAfrica gTLD (generic Top Level Domain) Registry Operator, Lucky Masilela, described the launch dates approved by ICANN this week. ICANN is the US non-profit tasked with maintaining the efficient functioning of the worldwide web.

ICANN's approval of the dotAfrica Launch Plan has triggered a final countdown process starting on 4 April 2017 leading to General Availability on 4 July 2017, when the public can apply for dotAfrica domain names.

“This is when the gates to the most desirable African real estate in cyberspace will be thrown open,” said Masilela.

The delegation of dotAfrica to ZA Central Registry Non Profit Company (ZACR NPC) has ensured that the online economic journey of the continent will finally be realised.

Confirmation of the dotAfrica launch dates follows the delegation by ICANN of the rights to administer the new, pan-African dotAfrica gTLD to ZACR on 15 February 2017. Delegation means dotAfrica names can be published on the web.

The Sunrise Phase, where trademark holders and other intellectual property (IP) rights holders can apply for dotAfrica domain names associated with their IP, will take place from 4 April to 3 June 2017. The Landrush Phase, where anyone can apply for premium dotAfrica domain names with auctions likely featuring here, has been confirmed for the month of June 2017. General Availability, commencing on 4 July 2017, will see members of the public registering their own dotAfrica domain names for the very first time.

“We are extremely grateful to the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African public for their unwavering support throughout the long journey to launch dotAfrica. It began as far back as the OR Tambo and Abuja Declarations where it was resolved to use ICT to ensure the development of Africa. It is now time to create the next chapter in the dotAfrica story as we focus firmly on making General Availability a reality in July,” Masilela said.

The AUC many times underscored the importance of dotAfrica as a vehicle for African socio-cultural activities in the digital era that will allow the continent to contribute to the global digital economy. The entire continent can now be united together as one Internet community; enabling e-commerce, technology and infrastructure to flourish under a single African umbrella.

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