

ZA Central Registry launches awareness programme

Launched on Tuesday, 7 May 2013, the .africa Pioneer Programme aims to encourage a premier set of early adopters to lend their support to Africa's new space on the web.

The ZA Central Registry (ZACR) has embarked on an awareness programme targeting Africa's best-known brands, as it believes it will be the likely administrator of the new .africa generic Top Level Domain (gTLD).

"We're encouraging African movers and shakers in the arts, commerce, government and other sectors to sign up for the .africa Pioneer Programme which will entitle them to certain rights and rewards relating to the proposed .africa gTLD," said Octavia Kumalo, PR & Marketing head for the dotAfrica project.

First rights

By lending their support to the call for African brands to register their .africa domains when they become available later this year, participants will potentially have their desired .africa domain name placed on a reserve name list. Once the name is delegated, they will have first rights to it.

"As with everything, certain rights bring certain responsibilities. The .africa pioneers will be required to use the .africa domain name actively and they will also be required to make use of the 'I support .africa logo' across their different marketing platforms," explained Kumalo.

She further explained that .africa is the new Top Level Domain (TLD) for the African continent and it is fully endorsed by the African Union (AU) and has widespread support across the continent. African governments, the business sector, civil society and the technical community are all supporting the drive for Africa's own space on the web, and in particular, for this space to be managed by the ZACR. It is important to note that a multi-stakeholder steering committee from across the African continent leads the ZACR .africa initiative.

"The ZACR bid for .africa is easily one of the leading examples of pan-African cooperation."

The .africa TLD application is still with ICANN, undergoing assessments, with a further evaluation set to be chalked up on 15 May 2013. The delegation of the new gTLDs is planned for the third quarter of this year - subsequently the .africa TLD will be available for launch and registration.

The .africa TLD will be launched in two phases, namely: Sunrise and Landrush. During the Sunrise phase, trademark and brand names will be given priority for sales. Thereafter, the open delegation or landrush phase will commence. Trademark holders, such as the envisaged participants in the ZACR Pioneer Programme, will need to register their trademarks with the

Trademark Clearing House or through the Mark Validation System (MVS). The latter is a ZACR initiative modelled on the Trademark Clearing House, which will be used to validate African trademark holders and have the advantage of much lower fees.

The above will ensure that .africa Registry Operators sell .africa domains to the rightful intellectual property holders.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>