

ZA Central Registry wins .africa domain battle, ready to launch

The Superior Court of California has denied DotConnectAfrica's (DCA) legal battle to stop the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' (ICANN) delegating the .africa generic top level domain to the ZA Central Registry (ZACR).



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According to Bernadette Versfeld, a partner at Webber Wentzel, it means that ZACR is now the official registry operator of the .africa generic top-level domain. It will be launched in three phases:

- **Sunrise Period** (4 April 2017 - 2 June 2017) - during the Sunrise Period, trademark owners can secure domain names matching their registered trademarks before .africa is made available to the public. A Trade Mark Clearing House (TMCH) must first validate the registered trademarks. Alternatively, and specifically for the .africa gTLD, a system called Mark Validation System (MVS) will be used to validate trademarks which are not yet registered, company names, trust names and common law trademarks (as well as registered trademarks for trademark proprietors who do not wish to validate through the TMCH)
- **Landrush Period** (Phase 1 = 5 June - 9 June; Phase 2 = 12 June - 16 June; Phase 3 = 19 June - 23 June; Phase 4 = 26 June - 30 June) - this registration is open to everyone around the world without any restriction, but the registration is sold at a higher price than the regular price.
- **General Availability** (4 July 2017) - registration will open to the general public and works on a "first come, first served" basis.

"The .africa generic top level domain is an essential domain name extension for any business trading in Africa. It is anticipated that the .africa domain name extension will be in high demand and businesses are advised to include this domain name extension in their branding strategy. The cost of registration is minimal compared to the risks of failing to register," Versfeld concludes.