.IN INTERNET DOMAIN NAME

Policy Framework

&

Implementation

Government of India
Ministry of Communications & Information Technology
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POLICY FRAMEWORK & IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Background**

1.1   Globally, there are approximately 60 million Internet domain names registered.   Of these, about 40 million are in generic top level domain   (gtld) category, while the remaining 20 million are in country code top level domain (cctld) category. The administration of gtld rests with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), an internationally organized non profit corporation, with membership from different countries and experts in the field. The responsibility for administration of cctld, on the other hand, has been entrusted to the individual countries who in general follow the guidelines provided by ICANN. These Internet domain names are used by the user entities to identify them in the networked Internet space. In the gtld category, .com and .net domains are the most popular, and have registered in   largest numbers. In recent times, the cctld domain registrations are growing with the countries playing active role in the Internet space

1.2   The system of registration of Internet domain names can facilitate the proliferation of Internet in a country. The number of registrations of Internet domain names in a country is also a measure of its popularity in the Internet space.   Many countries have therefore adopted liberal and market friendly policies to register large number of Internet domain names under their country code, broadly consistent with global policy and procedures of domain registration. Recently, some of the countries have brought about significant changes to their registration policies & procedures, which has led to a substantial increase in the number of domains registered in a short period of time.

1.3   In India, just under 7000 domains have been registered by the Registry at 2nd and 3rd levels under .IN country code over the past decade or so. In addition, the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have registered about 500,000 .IN domain names at the 3rd level. This number does not truly represent the penetration of Information Technology (IT) in India when compared with a number of companies and public institutions engaged   in IT and IT enabled services (ITeS). The slow growth of .IN domain has been adjudged to be largely due to the absence of contemporary processes and infrastructure, and an over cautious registration policy followed.

1.4   The National Centre for Software Technology (NCST), now merged into the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), was the de facto Registry for .IN domain up to 1997, and became de jure Registry subsequently.

1.5   It is widely recognised that .IN domain name has untapped growth potential. A proactive policy for .IN domain proliferation can establish the .IN as a globally recognized symbol of India's growth and developments in the area of information technology.

2.   Adopting New Policy Framework

2.1   Internet domain names have assumed greater significance in the recent times with Internet increasingly being used as an effective medium for commerce, education, governance and communication. In order, therefore, to have a larger presence in the Internet space, a forward looking policy for registration under country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) will help in its proliferation as all Indian residents, government entities, public service organizations and businesses will be able to establish their Indian identity in the Internet space with a short and unique domain name.

2.2   A policy would mainly determine how conveniently a cctld name could be registered and maintained for the large number of Internet subscribers and addresses. It will need to address, among other questions, the following:

- What are the domains available for registration?
- Are there any restrictions in registering domain names?
- Where can domain names be registered – including whether there is a single source or a distributed chain of Registrars?
- What prices are charged for registration, and what services do registrants receive in turn?
- Why a registrant would prefer to register in cctld - rather than a gtld?
- Is the process of registration simple, efficient, and reliable?

2.3   Apart from the policy, any Registry would also need to meet the following criteria:

Security   Registries should be resistant to hacking, and must also withstand denial-of-service (DoS) attacks. The hardware and software requirements for such secure systems are high.

Reliability   Various user entities – government, businesses, citizens – rely on the Web sites and e-mail messaging that domain names enable. A Registry should provide reliable service, with 100% uptime.

Scalability	The Registry infrastructure should accommodate growth without interruptions.
Adherence to Technical Standards	The Internet functions well only when the concerned agencies collaborate to create and maintain interoperable technical standards. Registry should adhere to such standards and practices announced by ICANN.

2.4   Other countries of comparable size and exposure to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have adopted a decentralized organizational structure, liberal policies, and a comprehensive dispute resolution mechanism, deployed state-of-the-art infrastructure, and used the private- public partnership to market Domain Name Registration Services (DNS), resulting in phenomenal growth of their country code domain name.

2.5   In order, therefore, to proliferate .IN domain name, a policy framework is instituted, which is open and market friendly, to help brand .IN in a big way and achieve its rightful place in the Internet space that it deserves.

3. .IN Domain Name Policy Framework & Implementation

3.1   The policy under the new framework for implementation of .IN Registry focuses on creating liberal, efficient and market friendly processes and a distributed organizational structure.

3.2   The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI), a not-for-profit company under Section 25 of Indian Companies Act 1956 promoted by the Department of Information Technology (DIT) in association with the Internet Service providers Association of India (ISPAI), has been entrusted with the responsibility of setting up the Registry for .IN country code top level domain name (ccTLD). For this the NIXI will create the .IN Network Information Centre (INNIC) to operate as a Registry for .IN domain in India.

3.3   With the implementation of the new policy by INNIC under NIXI, a 100,000 .IN domain name registrations at the end of 1st of its operation year has been targeted , with an average annual growth of 50% over a couple of years thereafter.

3.4   **Major Policy Elements**

The major elements of the new policy are as follows:

3.4.1   Unlimited generic .IN registration will be open to public at 2nd level

3.4.2   Unlimited generic 3rd level registrations will also be open to public, e.g. in certain popular zones like .co.in, .net.in, .org.in, etc.

3.4.3 The zones .gov.in, .mil.in and .ac & .edu.in will be reserved for the Government, Defence and Educational institutions respectively. The registrations at the 3rd level in these zones will be carried out by the Government, or an institution identified by the Government. Taking into account the Internet services offered in their respective sectors, .gov.in registration will be handled by NIC, .ac.in & .edu.in by ERNET and .mil.in by a Defence organization suggested by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), as Registrars in these zones.

3.4.4 State Governments and Union Territories can register under .gov.in category. They are also free to register at 2nd level using a two letter nomenclature adopted by the Transport Department. The City administrations will be open to register at 3rd level either with the State or under .gov.in category.

3.4.5 One or two character domain registration will not be allowed at the 2nd and 3rd levels for use by the general public.

3.4.6 Prior to the opening of registration at 2nd/3rd levels, following category of names will be reserved.

- Constitutional Authorities
- States/ Union Territories/ Cities
- Specific Names for Registry use

3.4.7 Trademark owners, registered companies and owners of intellectual property have a legitimate interest in protecting their brand. In the Internet domain, it is achieved by having a "Sunrise Period". A Sunrise period of 90 days from the opening of registration at 2nd/3rd levels will be announced during which genuine registrations with proper verification will be allowed as per the policy for these registrations, with first preference given to Indian entities. Thereafter, the registrations will be open to public on first come first served basis.

3.4.8 The .IN Registry will have authority to deny or suspend the registration to any one if it conflicts with the sovereign national interest or public order.

3.4.9 The .IN Registry may also open newly created generic top level zones, e.g .biz, .info, .coop, .pro, for offering registrations under these categories under .IN domain name.

3.4.10 A comprehensive Dispute Resolution Policy (DRP) will be adopted in line with internationally accepted guidelines prescribed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and Universal Dispute

Resolution Policy (UDRP) adopted by the ICANN. This will be in line with the relevant provisions of the Indian IT Act 2000.

3.4.11 Any dispute involving the .IN Registry will be considered by a duly appointed Dispute Resolution Committee.

3.4.12 The .IN Registry would also appoint Arbitrators, through a process of open selection, who can be approached by any aggrieved party (ies) for redressal of grievance with the Registrars. The decision of the Arbitrator shall be binding on both the parties. A Service Fee will be prescribed which will be required to be paid to the Arbitrator by the aggrieved party for such arbitration.

3.4.13 Government of India will be the final authority for .IN domain name policy. This will ensure its administration in accordance with the public interest and relevant laws of the country.

3.5   **Institutional Framework**

The following will be the institutional framework of the .IN Registry:

3.5.1   The .IN Registry will be a Not-for-Profit organization, and will function as an autonomous body, accountable to the Government.   Its responsibility will be to maintain .IN domain to ensure its operational stability, reliability and security.

3.5.2   An executive order through a gazette notification will be issued by the Department of Information Technology (DIT), Government of India according a legal status to the Registry for .IN domain in India. It will also mention the role of National Informatics Centre (NIC), ERNET and the nominated Defence Organization as Registrars for handling .gov.in, .edu.in & .ac.in and .mil.in registrations respectively.

3.5.3   The .IN Registry by itself will not carry out registrations. It will do so through a number of Registrars to be appointed by it through an open process of selection on the basis of transparent eligibility criteria.

3.5.4   The Registrars will either be an ISP themselves who are connected to the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI), or use the services of such ISP who is connected to NIXI.

3.6   **Implementation Mechanism**

The implementation mechanism for registration by the .IN Registry will be as under:

3.6.1 The Registrars appointed by the Registry will pay a one time non-refundable entry fee of Rs. 50,000/-.

3.6.2 The Registrars will, in addition, deposit a minimum amount of Rs. 25,000/- in their account with the Registry based on which they will be authorized to perform domain name transactions, and continue to do so as long as they had amount in their account with the Registry. Once the amount deposited is exhausted, they would automatically be disabled to perform transactions until they have replenished their account. The minimum amount for replenishment will be Rs. 25,000/-.

3.6.3 The Registrars will be charged Rs. 500/- per domain name for 2nd level and Rs 250/- for 3rd level domain name by the Registry for registration valid for a period of one year. A Registrar may also register a domain name up to a maximum of 5 years by paying the applicable registration amount of Rs. 2500/- or Rs 1250/- respectively to the .IN Registry.

3.6.4 The .IN Registry in consultation with the Government will review the .IN domain name pricing structure as and when necessitated.

3.6.5 The Registrars, on the basis of their agreement with the Registry, will market and sell the .IN domain name, and provide requisite services to the registrants using competitive pricing policy and best market practices.

3.6.6 The entire registration process will be online, including any document submission, and payment for registration. The .IN domain name will be registered within 24 hours of the request from the registrant, and the .IN Registry will put in place procedures to ensure that the Registrars do not unduly delay transmission of registration requests from the registrants to the Registrar.

3.6.7 The .IN Registry will have a 24/7 state-of-the-art technical infrastructure for .IN domain name registration for maintenance of data bases and providing requisite registration services in conjunction with the Registrars.

3.6.8 The .IN Registry will approach Government Departments, service organizations, businesses etc. to progressively adopt .IN domain name by them for their websites and personnel.