



Creating a level playing field

**POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF
ZIMBABWE (POTRAZ)**

GUIDELINES AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR

APPLICATION FOR A LICENSE AS A

DOMAIN NAME SYSTEM (DNS) REGISTRY IN ZIMBABWE

GLOSSARY:

AUTHORITY refers to POTRAZ

DNS refers to Domain Name System.

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1. Preamble

The Postal and Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (hereinafter referred to as “**POTRAZ**”) is a statutory body responsible for regulating the postal and telecommunications sector, established in terms of the Postal and Telecommunications Act [*Chapter 12:05*]. The regulator is mandated to promote the development of the sector and further the advancement of technology amongst other functions. POTRAZ is also the designated Data Protection Authority in Zimbabwe according to the Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07] of 2021.

As Zimbabwe accelerates its transition into a digital economy, POTRAZ recognizes the strategic importance of modernizing and managing the national Internet infrastructure in a secure, efficient, and inclusive manner.

In line with this vision, POTRAZ is inviting **Applications for Licensing as an Application Service Provider** (DNS Registry) responsible for the establishment of a **Domain Name System (DNS)** in terms of S.I. 111 of 2023.

These Guidelines and Specifications are intended to provide guidance to applicants as they prepare their applications.

Objectives for the Establishment of the Registry

The objective of this effort is to establish a Registry, to be known as the National Domain Names Registry (the Registry), to facilitate the registration and management of Domain names under the .zw country code top level domain (ccTLD).

Promoting Local ICT Industry Growth and Service Innovation (Registrar)

The **Registrar** layer introduces licensed entities that interface between the registry and end-users, providing domain registration and associated services. This model:

- Stimulates the local ICT sector by creating new opportunities for internet service providers, web hosting companies, and tech startups.
- Encourages **competition and innovation** in service delivery, pricing, and support for digital platforms.
- Supports the development of **value-added services** such as website hosting, SSL certification, digital identity management, and e-commerce solutions.

Functions of the Registry

The Registry shall be responsible for:

- (a) creation of an interactive Domain name management platform based on the current Extensible Provisioning Protocol (EPP), or any standards provided as directed by the Authority from time to time.

- (b) accreditation of Domain name resellers.
- (c) in consultation with the Authority, development and publication policy and guidelines concerning the .zw country code.
- (d) development of a comprehensive dispute resolution mechanism in consultation with the Authority.
- (e) activation and de-activation of Domain name reseller's right to use the system.
- (f) protection of personal data and information of Domain name holders from loss, misuse, unauthorised access or disclosure, alteration, and destruction.
- (g) keeping records of all Domain names registered in Zimbabwe.
- (h) providing technical support services to Domain name resellers.
- (i) keeping a record of reserved name list, that is, the list comprising names that cannot be registered by the public, unless there is express authorisation by relevant authorities such as—
 - (i) countries.
 - (ii) cities.
 - (iii) constitutional authorities.
 - (iv) provinces.
 - (v) government departments.
 - (vi) specific geographically significant names; and
 - (vii) national monuments, dams, mountains.
- (j) facilitating efficient communication between the Registry and that of Domain name resellers and in particular ensuring:
 - (i) Session management.
 - (ii) Domain registrations.
 - (iii) Domain updates.
 - (iv) Domain renewals.
 - (v) Domain deletions.
 - (vi) Domain queries; and
 - (vii) Domain transfers.
- (k) enhancing public awareness on the benefits of Domain name registration in Zimbabwe.
- (l) conducting research and keeping abreast with international developments on Domain Name Systems management.

2. Key Attributes of the DNS Service

The following attributes are to be expected of the DNS system:

- I. A robust network of Primary and Secondary DNS servers each serving .zw and all its second level domains.
- II. Efficient and secure system that permits for adding, modifying and deleting against the DNS servers.
- III. A Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) service with basic information about holders of DNS entries.
- IV. Implementation of Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC).

- V. Offer different levels of support.
- VI. A way of collecting fees from name holders. An integrated funds collection system with a payment gateway is preferred and will get maximum marks on evaluation.
- VII. Backup servers are a must. Any other implementation of complimentary backup services will offer more marks to respondent on evaluation.
- VIII. Proposal on revenue sharing by the interested Registry.

3. Envisaged Architecture

- I. The proposed domain name management ecosystem is to operate on the 3R model which has 3 key players, namely, the Registry, Registrar and Registrant.
- II. DNS lookup functions that are part of the core infrastructure of the Zimbabwe Internet are provided by one primary and several secondary servers.
- III. A registration interface that is used to add, change and/or delete names must also support the Extensible Provisioning Protocol (EPP). In addition, an RDAP service is available for the .zw domain.

IV. Domains

The following classification and assignment of Domain Names shall apply:

Sub-domain	Assignment
(a) .zw	shall be open to the general public
(b). co.zw	shall be open to the general public
(c). gov.zw	shall be reserved for government
(d). ac.zw	shall be reserved for educational institutions
(e). edu.zw	shall be reserved for educational institutions
(f) .net.zw	shall be reserved for network service providers
(g). org.zw	shall be open to the general public

The .gov.zw second level domain will be also administered from the registry run DNS system but will be exclusively run by a government appointed agent.

4. DNS Infrastructure Expectations

- I. The infrastructure includes the operation of primary and secondary servers, and provision of an RDAP service. The infrastructure is critical to the reliable operation of the Internet in Zimbabwe. This service must be provided by a single organisation, and it must also be designed to provide robust and resilient service.

5. Further Terms

1. The DNS records are the property of POTRAZ, a backup copy must be updated and submitted to the Authority once every month, without fail.
2. POTRAZ is the principal, and the Licensee/Registry will act as POTRAZ's agent and as an agent full disclosure of all transactions pertaining to the operations of the DNS is expected.
3. POTRAZ shall keep an escrow of the DNS data, and the escrow should be updated monthly by the REGISTRY.

6. Eligibility

This invitation is open to wholly owned Zimbabwean companies registered in terms of the Zimbabwe Companies Act; and operating in the Information and Communication – Technology (ICT) sector.

7. Licence Tenure

The Licence will operate for a period of 10 years. The AUTHORITY reserves the right to renew the licence or to open the floor to new submissions.

8. Customer Relations

- I. The Registry would be required to maintain adequately trained personnel to receive and respond promptly to complaints from customers. The Registry shall take all commercially reasonable action to promptly remedy and avoid the recurrence of the cause for customer complaints.
- II. The Registry shall be required to establish efficient procedures, including helpdesk services which duly consider the predominant local languages so that customers can receive assistance from its personnel.

9. Quality of Service

The following DNS Quality of Service (QoS) Standards shall apply.

Parameter	QoS Standard
DNS Service Availability	99.999%
Name Activation Time from time of receipt of application	Less than 1 hr, during weekdays, and 3 hrs during weekends.

10. Publication of Tariffs

The Registry will publish tariffs approved by the Regulator.

11. Tariffs and Revenues

- I. The Registry shall propose tariffs for the various DNS services, which shall be approved by the Authority beforehand.
- II. The Authority requires the Registry to maintain separate audited financial data and accounts for the Services and to submit on request this data and accounts to the Authority for inspection.

12. Evaluation of Proposals

The Quality Based evaluation methodology shall be used to evaluate proposals, as detailed below:

Preliminary examination to confirm that all documents required have been provided, to confirm the eligibility of applicants and to confirm that the applicant has accepted all terms and conditions without material deviation or reservation.

Technical evaluation to assess the technical quality of proposals against the criteria below and to determine if the applicant's proposal meets the required standards and minimum score.

The AUTHORITY may or may not call for oral presentations which shall be graded. In the event that presentations are expected, invitations will be extended to shortlisted applicants.

No.	Item	Score
	Mandatory Requirements	
1	Company Registration Documents	Mandatory
	Certificate of Incorporation	Mandatory
	Document listing company directors and secretaries (CR6/CR14)	Mandatory
2	Valid ZIMRA tax Clearance Certificate	Mandatory
3	A compliance statement on S.I. 111 of 2023	Mandatory

	Indicate with a “yes” or “no” whether you comply or not. Note that it is mandatory that you provide a compliance statement, section by section to S.I. 111 of 2023.	
4	Key Laws: - Adherence to Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07] (No. 5 of 2021) is a must: - Adherence to Postal and Telecommunications Act [Chapter 12:06] (of 2000) is a must: Indicate with a “yes” or “no” whether you comply. Note that this is also mandatory	Mandatory
5	SYSTEM ESCROW Establish an Escrow System with POTRAZ. Indicate compliance with yes or no	Mandatory

6	Business Plan	Weight
6.1	The applicant shall submit his/her company profile – The company profile shall include key members of the business and the organisational structure (organogram). <i>Explain the functions of each functional area. In compliance with the cyber and data protection ACT, we expect mention of a DPO in this section).</i>	10
6.2	The applicant shall present a brief business plan – Clearly indicating the proposed (1) business model, (2) strategies, (3) operation modalities etc.	10
7	Financials	Weight
7.1	At the end of every financial year, <i>audited</i> financial statements must be submitted to POTRAZ.	10
7.2	Financial Viability: - Can the registry demonstrate financial stability and investment in infrastructure? - Provide proof of Funding for the Project.	10

	<i>The applicant shall provide a cash flow analysis (financial projections) indicating the estimated capital expenditure, future inflow and outflow for a business over five (5) years</i> <i>The applicant shall provide a Pricing & Fee Structure which we expect to be transparent and sustainable?</i>	
7.3	• Growth Strategy: How does the registry plan to expand ccTLD adoption while keeping prices reasonable?	10
7.4	• Public Awareness: What efforts will be made to promote local domain registrations and digital identity?	10
8	Project Delivery	Weight
8.1	• The applicant shall provide the project Implementation timeline from licence award to commissioning. A Gantt Chart should be submitted <i>(We expect to see activity breakdowns, Gantt charts etc. and plan overview)</i>	10
9	Technical Proposal.	Weight
9.1	• Explain your system (<i>Give a brief description of your system. Detailed description may be attached to the document and clearly labelled</i>)	10
9.2	• Explain your proposed robust and secure network of Primary and Secondary DNS servers	10
9.3	• Explain your proposed ICT infrastructure and configuration for .zw, ac.zw, co.zw and org.zw; (servers, partitions etc.)	10
9.4	• Explain your proposed efficient and secure Extensible Domain Provisioning Protocol (EPP) system for entering, adding, changing and deleting records. An RDAP system with basic information about the holders of DNS entries in a standard format;	10
9.5	• Explain your proposed customer support system/module	10
9.6	• Explain your proposed Disaster Recovery Backup system to ensure data availability and continuity in the event of a disaster.	10

9.7	Explain your proposed DR and Business continuity policies	10
9.8	Explain your proposed initiatives to establish a speedy information system that minimizes processing time.	10
9.9	Explain your system reports, what you will report on and the proposed reports format	10
9.10	Registry Monitoring System (<i>Explain how and what you will monitor</i>)	5
9.11	DNS Infrastructure & Performance: Can the registry ensure 24/7 uptime, low latency, and high-speed resolution of domain names? Explain.	5
9.12	Anycast DNS Deployment: Does the Registry use Anycast DNS to improve redundancy and resilience? Explain	10
9.13	Support IPv6	10
9.14	Scalability & Modularity: Can the infrastructure handle increasing domain registrations and traffic demands? Explain	5
10	Operational & Service Excellence	
10.1	Technical Support & Registrar Training: Does the registry provide ongoing support and training to Registrars?	5
10.2	Domain Lifecycle Management: How does the registry handle domain registration, renewal, transfer, and expiration processes?	10
10.3	Explain how you will manage special names (<i>premium domains</i>)	10
11	Abuse Mitigation & Monitoring	
11.1	Provide processes that will be put in place to detect and act against abusive domain registrations.	10
12	Policy & Governance Framework	
12.1	Domain Dispute Resolution Mechanism: What policies are in place for resolving domain name disputes?	10
13	Security & Compliance	

13.1	DNSSEC Support: Is the registry fully compatible with any implementation of DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC)? Explain	10
13.2	Incident Response & Security Audits: How often does the registry conduct security audits and penetration testing?	10
13.3	Cybersecurity Measures: How does the registry mitigate cyber threats such as DDoS attacks, phishing, and malware distribution	10
14	Pricing & Payment systems	
14.1	Explain your proposed payment system that allows for the payment of service fees both to the Registry & Registrar <i>(An integrated payment system with platforms like Ecocash, OneMoney, TeleCash, PayNow, PayPal, ZimSwitch is preferred. We prefer payment systems which instantly reflect)</i>	10
15	Qualifications & Experience:	
	- Key technical personnel to have a minimum of a relevant tertiary qualification (Diploma/Degree). Attach the qualifications, certifications & CVs - Provide CVs of at least 2 permanent technical personnel.	10

13. Prompts for Judgement per each item of evaluation

Score	Prompt for Judgement
0	Failed to address issue/meet minimum requirements
1	A detrimental response/answer/solution – limited or poor evidence of skill
2	Less than acceptable answer/solution/response/lacks evidence of skill or experience sought/medium risk that relevant skills will not be available
3	Acceptable response/answer/solution to that aspect of the requirements and evidence of some level of skill
4	Above acceptable response/answer/solution demonstrating adequate understanding of requirements and ability to meet it
5	Excellent response/answer/solution gives confidence that the consultant will add value

14. Submission of Proposals

Proposals should be submitted at POTRAZ or through the Mail and arrive at POTRAZ Head Office, clearly labelled with the Application for Licensing as an Application Service Provider on or before the closing date.

Date for Submission: 6 January 2026 at 10:00 hours.

15. Withdrawal, amendment, or modification of Proposals:

Proposals may not be withdrawn, substituted or modified after they have been submitted.

Proposals can be submitted physically at:

**1110 Performance Close
Mt Pleasant Business Park
Harare**

Or Email:

dns@potraz.zw