

Request for Proposals No. zaDNA/05/09:

Consultant Assistance for the Establishment of a .ZA Central Registry

1. BACKGROUND

The .za Domain Name Authority is a section 21 company founded in terms of Chapter X of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (ECTA) of 2002. Section 65 of the Act stipulates that the Authority should:

- (a) Administer and manage the .za domain name space;
- (b) Comply with international best practice in the administration of the .za domain name space;
- (c) License and regulate registries;
- (d) License and regulate registrars for the respective registries;
- (e) Publish guidelines on—
 - the general administration and management of the .za domain name space;
 - the requirements and procedures for domain name registration; and
 - the maintenance of and public access to a repository, with due regard to the policy directives which the Minister (of Communications) may make from time to time by notice in the *Gazette*.
- (f) Enhance public awareness on the economic and commercial benefits of domain name registration;
- (g) Conduct such investigations as it may consider necessary;
- (h) Conduct research into and keep abreast of developments in the Republic and elsewhere on the domain name system;
- (i) Continually survey and evaluate the extent to which the .za domain name space meets the needs of the citizens of the Republic; and
- (j) From time to time, issue information on the registration of domain names in the Republic.
- (k) When so requested by the Minister, make recommendations to the Minister in relation to policy on any matter relating to the .za domain name space; and
- (l) Continually evaluate the effectiveness of the ECT Act and things done in terms thereof towards the management of the .za domain name space.

The Authority has a Board of Directors and its daily operations are managed and led by a General Manager. The Authority is currently finalizing licensing regulations for .za registries and registrars in terms of the ECTA, and implementing complimentary measures to improve the standard of the .za namespace.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As an entity entrusted with the administration and management of the .za domain namespace, the Authority is dealing in a dynamic and rapidly growing environment, and is compelled to implement the best business model for the .za namespace. In particular:

- (a) There are imminent threats and opportunities presented by the introduction of new generic top level domains (gTLDs) and the introduction of Internationalised domain names (IDNs) for those languages that scripting and programming languages other than ASCII.
- (b) The ever-increasing threat of hackers and attacks domainers directed at the global Internet domain name system (DNS) and at the .za namespace shows a need for a more robust infrastructure within .za.
- (c) The multiplicity of dormant .za domains has meant that people interested in registering .za domain names are only aware of a few .za domains (such as co.za and org.za) and have not been given an opportunity to consider other lesser known or dormant .za domains. The absence of broader choice is seen as a negative factor.
- (d) As a result of multiple domains, the technical and other standards differ from one domain to another, with the majority of the domains not operated according to global best practice. For example, most .za domains do not have public online name query (Who-is) system to check the availability of names for registration. This is not in the interest of a secure and stable .za DNS.
- (e) Less than 700 000 domain names are registered in .za, while the need for increased access to the Internet services has become a priority in the national ICT programs.
- (f) The ECT Act requires the Authority to license registries and registrars, but licensing cannot be effective without the promotion and enforcement of similar regulations, policies and procedures across the .za namespace.

The Minister of Communications directed in Parliament in 2007, after consultation with the Authority, that the Authority should establish a single / central registry which should operate all open and willing, restricted domains, as well as new domains which may be added into .za, and bring the .za namespace on par with other leading registries.

3. PROJECT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The Authority seeks to appoint a suitably experienced consultant (who may be an individual or an organisation) to assist it in establishing the central registry (CR). Such assistance will include:

- (a) Scoping the CR project, which scoping should include preparing a detailed project plan to guide the establishment of the CR. The plan must set out achievable timelines and identify required or estimated financial, human, technological and other resources;

- (b) Assembling and coordinating a suitable project team which must establish a CR system, which establishment should include some or all of the following:
- i. Designing technical, business and other specifications for the CR system. This may include doing an overview of data models inherent in the current .za domains, and the development of a suitable data model for CR.
 - ii. Assessing and recommending a suitable open source or proprietary registry system (software) for the CR.
 - iii. Collection and updating of data in .za domains to fit with the .za registry data model and to populate the .za central Whois therewith.
 - iv. Implementation of the selected registry system and suitable add-on systems (e.g. financial and administration systems), including relevant software.
 - v. Development and implementation of suitable registry policies and guidelines, including pricing, Whois and other policies.
 - vi. Implementation of suitable security technologies and processes for the effective protection of the .za namespace and its customers.
 - vii. Implementation of suitable business processes in interfacing with the .za customers (registrars), which should support the CR's competition strategy.
 - viii. Handing over the CR operation to the operator licensed by the Authority to operate the CR.
- (c) Advising ZADNA regarding a suitable model and platform of the CR.
- (d) Overseeing the training of personnel appointed by a CR operator licensed by ZADNA, and overseeing the eventual transfer of the operation of the CR system to such personnel.

Due to the ongoing work of defining a business model for .za, the amount of work the consultant is appointed to do may be reduced or increased.

The envisaged consultant should have an extensive experience in domain name registry management, preferably with experience in managing a registry of at least 100 000 domain names.

The provider should ideally have a strong local South African presence and experience or show a good understanding of the .za namespace and local capacity building needs.

This project is anticipated to run for a maximum period of 12 months and the project team will therefore be required to hand over the CR operation to .za DNA during this period. .za DNA may, at its own sole discretion, consider extending the consultant's and/or project team assignment for an additional period.

4. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be succinct and clear, providing best ways in which the project objectives could be achieved. In particular, each proposal should contain the following:

- (a) A methodology and/or plan outlining how the aforementioned work should be carried out, including, where possible:
 - Key technical and other considerations to be addressed in the establishment of the CR.
 - An outline of effective policies and business processes that should form part of the CR.
 - Key requisite financial, human and other resources, skills and expertise required for the project team.
 - Key deliverables and deadlines.
- (b) An outline of experience in the domain name registry management. ZADNA may require contactable referees.
- (c) A proposed project team (where the bidder is not an individual consultant).

In addition, bidders should show how their appointment would support Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) or empower the personnel that the Authority will employ to assume full management of the CR upon the end of the project.

4.1 Proposal format

Each proposal should be submitted by email to gm@zadna.org.za before the deadline. Proposals should not exceed 20 pages (excluding cover letter and appendices). **Hard copy versions are not necessarily required.**

5. PRICING

Each proposal should provide hourly rates of the bidder. Where possible, bidders are encouraged to provide across-the-board rates for the entire project team plus indicative overall monthly project costs.

The hourly rates should remain fixed for a period of 12 months from the commencement date of the project.

Both the hourly rates and indicative monthly project costs must include VAT (Value-Added Tax).

6. PROJECT DURATION

The CR establishment project is expected to be completed within 12 months. The appointment may be extended upon the Authority's sole discretion, taking into consideration the performance of the service provider.

The Authority reserves a right to review the scope of the project and reduce or add activities upon written notification to the appointed bidder.

7. PRIMARY SELECTION CRITERIA

The table below outlines how proposals will be evaluated:

Factor	Weighting
Price	35
Functionality (methodology)	35
Project team experience	20
BBBEE promotion / .za DNA employee empowerment	10
Total	100

The Authority may, if it deems it necessary, require shortlisted bidders to make presentations to its evaluation panel. Should this be the case, the bidder shall bear its own cost for preparing for and attending the presentation.

8. CLOSING DATE

The closing date for the submission of proposals in soft or email version is **12h00 (GMT)** on **Thursday, 24 December 2009**. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

9. PROPOSAL COSTS

The Authority shall not be liable for the costs incurred by service providers in preparing and submitting proposals, and in attending any presentation that the Authority requires service providers to attend as part of the evaluation process. Such costs will be borne by service providers.

10. STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY

Service providers are required to confirm in their proposals their availability to commence the work within 20 working days of having been awarded the contract.

11. SERVICE-LEVEL AGREEMENT

The selected service provider should be prepared to enter into a service level agreement that defines performance targets and requirements.

12. AWARDING OF TENDER

The Authority reserves the following rights in respect of awarding this tender:

- (a) Right not to make an award on any of the responses to this RFP (Request for Proposals);
- (b) Right to award only parts of this bid and re-bids for other parts;
- (c) Right to award different parts of this bid to different bidders; and
- (d) Right to enter into negotiations with short-listed bidders.

13. LOBBYING

Service providers are prohibited from trying to solicit the input of the members of the Board of Directors or the staff of the Authority, and from lobbying them. All questions should be directed to the General Manager.

14. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact Vika Mpisane (General Manager) at telephone number +27 11 275 0082, fax number +27 11 234 5022. Alternatively, he can be reached at mobile number +27 82 880 7513 or via email at gm@zadna.org.za.