



Draft dormant domain deletion policy and procedures

1. Policy

The .za Domain Name Authority, a section 21 company established in terms of the ECT Act to administer and manage the .za namespace, is embarking on efforts to improve the .za namespace with a view of making it competitive against other top level domains (TLDs).

The dormant domain deletion policy specifies how the Authority intends to handle the deletion of those second level domains that are no longer operational and do not accept new registration (i.e. that have no active registrations).

2. Procedure for deletion

The procedure for the deletion shall be as follows:

(a) Key factors for deletion

- (i) There must be clarity that the domain to be deleted is not operational i.e. the Authority must have done some testing that reveals that the domain's nameservers are no longer resolving or answering any queries, and therefore the domain has not a single active registration.
- (ii) Where there is an active registration, the domain shall not be deleted
- (iii) The listed administrator of a domain must be contacted and be given a period of 7 days to have the nameservers operating. In the case of a restricted domain, contact with the administrator shall include the moderator (i.e. the person who checks if a domain name application complies with the eligibility criteria of that restricted domain) of the domain where the moderator is a separate person from the administrator.

Failure to have operating nameservers within the 7 day period shall entitle to Authority to render the domain inactive for 3 months with a view of eventually deleting the domain in the absence of any objection from the users or the public that has an active domain name in the listed domain.

- (iv) Where, in addition, to the domain not operating, attempts to contact the administrator prove unsuccessful for more than 20 days, the domain must be rendered inactive and listed for deletion for a period of 3 months, unless an objection is received.

(b) Public notice

The Authority must announce its intention to delete a listed domain through a public notice, which shall be publicized in a government gazette and at least one national newspaper. In addition, it must be published in the Authority's website, and the Authority's members must be made aware of the notice through the members' mailing list. It should also be published in relevant discussions lists.

The notice must make it clear that the Authority intends to delete the listed domains, and that interested parties such as registrants in such domains, may submit any objections to the Authority by a set deadline. Objections must be in writing and must provide reasons why the domain/s must not be deleted.

The comment and objections period must not be less than 30 days.

(c) Consideration of objections

Once an objection is received, the GM must assess its merits and forward it to the Techcomm with recommendations on how it must be treated. The main factors that the Authority must consider in assessing an objection are:

- (i) Whether or not the listed domain still has an active registration. The Authority is not obliged to relinquish a deletion simply because there is an objection.
- (ii) Whether or not the domain name servers are still operational.

There may be other factors that the Authority may find to be valid to uphold an objection. The objection must provide convincing reasons for the objection to be valid and for a deletion to be cancelled.

An objection by an administrator that the administrator still intends to receive registrations in the domain is not sufficient ground for an objection to be upheld.

Likewise, an interest by another party to make the domain operational is not a ground for the Authority to abandon its planned deletion.

(d) Actual deletion of domains

Once the deadline for objections passes and the Techcomm has decided on objections received, or no objections were received, the GM must commence the deletion of listed domains.

- (i) .za DNA must render the listed domains inactive for 3 months. This “grace” period is important in case a need arises to restore a domain urgently.
- (ii) A public notice must be posted to the Authority’s website announcing which of the listed domains will indeed be deleted and which ones, if any, will no longer be deleted.

After the 3 months’ grace period, .za DNA must delete the listed domains totally from the active .za zone file.

END.