



Project Title:

Strengthening ccTLDs in Africa

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Background

The rapid growth of the Internet and its widespread impact on social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of society has implications for Africa's development. The internet has become an essential public tool and as a result the debate relating to policy and decision making that contributes to shaping the development and allocations of the internet its resources, technologies and related systems is of growing importance. With the increased access to broadband infrastructure in the East Africa region and the continued spread of sophisticated mobile services, understanding and addressing Internet policy issues has become a priority. African countries therefore need to engage in meaningful participation in the various internet governance processes by identifying, prioritizing local internet governance issues, conducting research and building capacity to enable effective participation.

The goal of the EA-IGF is to create a Community of Practice that will be a sustaining foundation for meaningful participation of East African stakeholders in Internet public policy debates at the national, regional, and international level. The EA-IGF model allows for the informed participation, contribution, and engagement of community members through the sharing of experiences and skills, solving common problems and challenges, the creation of new knowledge by conducting research, and increasing local capacity and talent.

The East Africa Internet Governance process follows four main steps:

- a) **National online discussion;** takes place at the national level for a period of about 1-2 weeks, moderated by the national animators
- b) **Face- to- face National Internet Governance Forums;** from the online discussions, face-to-face meetings are organised involving and engaging all stakeholders to validate the online report, build consensus on national IG issues, challenges and recommendations and contribute to developing the regional EA-IGF programme. The national IGFs provide the building block for the regional EA-IGF.
- c) **The EA-IGF;** the regional EA-IGF brings together the national IGFs and provides an opportunity for national issues to be debated and discussed at the regional level. The regional process also involves identification and consensus building around five regional issues that would benefit from research, increased advocacy, and/or development of policy. For example strengthening country code to level domain (ccTLDs) cyber crime, consumer issues.
- d) **Research** on issues identified by the EA-IGF to increase knowledge, inform advocacy campaigns as well as policy making.

During the second EA-IGF in 2009 a session for parliamentarians was included. The aim was to begin to encourage participation and contribution of members of Parliament to the internet governance policy debates and to begin to discuss a more concrete role for them in the national, regional, and global IGFs.

The 2009 EA-IGF participants identified the following issues that would benefit from research

- Access to broadband and internet
- Cybercrime
- Policy ,Legal and regulatory issues affecting access to internet
- Critical internet resources specifically management of country code top level domains' (ccTLDs) and transition to IPv6 as well as the introduction of new generic top level domains (gTLDs) and the significance for the East African region.
- Consumer issues related to ICTs

The Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) will conduct research on one of the areas identified by the 2009 EA-IGF. It will focus on critical internet resources and explore ways of strengthening Africa's country code top level domain (ccTLDs). The study will explore and review the following issues as they relate to management of ccTLDs; consumer, policy and regulatory issues, cybercrime and cyber security (East Africa's contribution to global initiatives on cybercrime), affordable access to broadband and the internet.

The main focus will be on strengthening East Africa's ccTLD's so that they can contribute to the appropriation of the internet for socio-economic, cultural, and political development.

Justification

Country Code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs) are a significant part of every national *information infrastructure*, without a well functioning national internet suffix a country is not represented on the Internet, and its citizens, businesses and institutions are denied an effective way to associate themselves with particular territories, regions and countries - which have considerable impact on the opportunity to participate in global commerce, trade, development, political and cultural discourse. Issues surrounding the functioning and management include such diverse, even though interdependent points as freedom of expression, privacy, trust in e-commerce, government policy and regulation of the Internet, development, and availability of local content, consumer, and trademark protection, cybercrime, access to broadband and management structure of the ccTLD.

Documenting activity and issues faced by country code top-level domain (ccTLD) operators can benefit those who seek to make policy decisions on ccTLDs. The purpose of the proposed project is to therefore conduct a study of issues surrounding the functioning, management, regulation, of "Country Code Top Level Domains," so as to improve the management of national internet infrastructures.

The study will aim to provide a general overview of country code top level domains in the East African region and produce, a ccTLD Best Practice/good governance Model/Guide with the aim of strengthening ccTLDs in East African.

The study will;

- Identify trends in management of ccTLDs, identify non-operational ones and highlight causes;
- Highlight consumer issues relating to ccTLD's
- Identify criteria for good governance model for ccTLD's (private, public, profit, non-profit, governmental, quasi-governmental, multi stakeholder, outsourced, new models?) this would help countries like South Sudan, Somalia that are working on establishing their own ccTLD;

- Identify current and ongoing policy and regulatory issues faced by ccTLDs (for example, cybercrime, institutional relationships e.g. with government's, other stakeholders, among others);
- Develop best practice models for re-delegation (transfer) of management authority over a ccTLD, for example Rwanda and Uganda are working on re-delegation of their ccTLD
- Explore types of cybercrime committed, East African ccTLD's being used as conduits for cybercrimes and strategies for addressing cyber security in the region
- Highlight issues of access to broadband and to internet

Time lines

Activities	Time frame									
	March 2010	April 2010	May 2010	June 2010	July 2010	August 2010	September 2010	October 2010	November 2010	December 2010
Inception Workshop/s AFTLD and ICANN meetings in Nairobi	X									
Literature review	X	X								
Data collection		X	X	X						
Data Analysis			X	X						
Report Writing				X	X					
Validation					X	X				
Final Report							X	X	X	
Dissemination							X	X	X	X