UniForm SA selected to administer dotAfrica top level domain

The .ZA central registry operator, UniForum SA, has been selected by the African Union as its preferred registry operator that will administer the upcoming dotAfrica Top Level Domain. dotAfrica is set to be a distinctive pan-African identification for regional online operations when it is opened up for registration.

The endorsement follows the evaluation of proposals submitted in December 2011, which attracted local and international registries interested in managing dotAfrica operations. "This is an important step for organisations and individuals interested in acquiring an African online identity, as dotAfrica will give added visibility and identity to operations in the region," said Neil Dundas, a UniForum SA director.

Promoting development of Africa's Internet services

"The African Union Commission will work with its appointed registry operator to establish ways to promote dotAfrica. Specific outcomes will be increased online content generation, the establishment of policies and rules on registrations, intellectual property and dispute resolution, as well as the promotion of ICT use in the region," said the AU representative, Abulkhirat Esam.

"The Internet community is currently participating in the project through the dotAfrica steering committee which was selected by the African Internet community and comprising African Internet experts, country code managers, registrars and others volunteering for a better Internet for Africa. Africa's new Top Level Domain will be used as a vehicle to promote the development of Africa's Internet services and ecosystem," said Mohamed El Bashir, chaiman of the steering committee.

dotAfrica will be among the new generic Top Level Domains that are likely to be approved by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in 2013. The dotAfrica project is sponsored by the African Union with support from Africa Top Level Domain organisation and the appointed registry operator will be submitting its application to ICANN prior to the deadline in April this year.