

Guide to Registering a Nigerian Domain

Rev. 0.9a – 24th Jan 2007

This guide has been written to give basic information needed to successfully register a domain under the Nigerian (.ng) Top Level Domain. The Nigerian Registry is operated following guidelines on the operation of a registry, contained in RFC1591. (<http://www.apps.ietf.org/rfc/rfc1591.html>)

Registering under a country Top Level Domains (ccTLD), usually depends on whether the country domain is Open or Closed. Nigeria operates a closed domain system, it is not open to everyone. Examples of open domains include Tonga **.to**, Western Samoa **.ws**, Tuvalu **.tv** and Cocos Island **.cc**. Examples of closed domains include

Registration can be done by selecting “Dot-NG Registration Tool” from the Registry’s website at <http://www.register.net.ng> or directly at the URL <http://db.register.net.ng>

Disclaimer

By the registration of your name on the Internet, the registrar NiRA, The Technical POC (randy@psg.com), the IANA, and the National Science Foundation are accepting in good faith that you have the right to use the name. Our function in registering names on the Internet is to assure that the name does not conflict with any other name in the name space requested.

The use by your registration and use of the name and/or your continued use of an existing name, agrees, as part of your request for name registration, to indemnify and hold harmless from any and all costs, fees, expenses arising from litigation involving trademark, trade name, service mark, and any other name infringements, or other reasons, the registrar, the IANA, and the National Science Foundation.

The party requesting registration of this name certifies that to her/his knowledge, the use of this name does not violate trademark or other statutes.

Registering a domain name does not confer any legal rights to that name and any disputes between parties over the rights to use a particular name are to be settled between the contending parties using normal legal methods (See RFC 1591).

SECTION A. IMPORTANT Considerations

Before registering any domain, please take note of the following points.

I ADMINISTRATIVE Issues

1. Registrations must be from organizations with a real presence in Nigeria and with a demonstrable intent to use the domain name on a regular basis on the Internet. I.e brand, vanity, placemark, trademark, service mark. Name registration is not appropriate. I.e., one registration per organization.
2. Choice of the domain name that you want to register. If you are registering a domain for the first time, please take a look at “Choosing an appropriate Domain Name” available at <http://www.register.net.ng>.
3. Applications must specify an Administrative contact who works within the organization that will be using the domain name. The administrative contact is responsible for appointing or removing the technical contact.

4. Applications must specify a technical contact, whose role is to administer the domain servers and attend to technical issues. The technical contact for a domain may or may not be an employee of the organization requesting the domain but must understand the basics of Domain Name Services (DNS) and must be able to handle the servers in a responsible manner.
5. Every person (Handle) listed in your application must be a real person that is reachable by telephone between 0900hrs and 1700hrs (GMT+1). The person must also be able to read and reply to emails within a reasonable period of time. Role function is allowed, but must ultimately have a person at the other end. For example, CEO is a role, but someone must answer as CEO.

II TECHNICAL Considerations (Basic Services)

If your intention is simply to host a website, have www.yourdomain.whatever.ng and also provide basic Email services of the form whoever@yourdomain.whatever.ng then this section is for you.

If you want to have hostnames beyond www.yourdomain.whatever.ng and you want to use other types of hostnames/use other types of services, then please jump to Advanced Services.

1. You need to obtain the IP address of the Server of your Server hosting company.
2. If you want your server to respond to requests of the form <http://yourdomain.whatever.ng> then you must specify both the A record, and the WWW record.
3. If you want your users to have Email addresses of the form whoever@yourdomain.whatever.ng but you do not have the resources to run an Email server, then the IP address of your Email host must be specified as the MX host.
4. It is your responsibility to see that an IN-ADDR pointer record is entered in the DNS database. (For internet hosts only). Contact the administrator of the IP network your host is on to have this done. The NG Domain administration does not administer the network and cannot make these entries in the DNS database.

III TECHNICAL Considerations (Advanced Services)

1. You must have two different domain servers which are in different locations that are not served by the same international backbone providers. The rationale for this is contained in RFC2182 (<http://www.apps.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2182.html>)
2. This is to ensure that it takes more than a single network outage to stop your domain names from resolving. Please note that a number of domain servers have different IP address ranges but are hosted behind the same router/gateway; such servers do not qualify since an outage of that router would mean that both domain servers would be unreachable.
3. Unlike registering com/net/org domains, you need to configure your domain servers with at least an SOA and two NS records BEFORE putting in your application. This is to ensure that when checks are being carried out on your application, your domain servers will be consistent and will be passed easily the first time.
4. Your domain servers should be hosted in locations that are reachable on the Internet round-the-clock. Verification checks could be carried out at any time of the day.
5. Queries to your domain name servers must return the same resource records (specifically NS) as you have specified in the domain registration application submitted. They should also return the same SOA.
6. Putting in an application when you have not setup the servers is not a smart move as it only delays your application. The logic behind the verification check scheduling is such that each new domain application has a fair chance of being passed within the shortest

possible time frame. If you put in a careless application and it fails the required checks, it has to wait until the next scheduled check before verification is retried. During periods of peak activity, you would be better off making sure that all your technical and administrative details were setup properly before putting in the application at all.

SECTION B. Registering the Domain. Step by Step Guide

Please follow the step-by-step guide below, which corresponds with the registration steps within the Domain Registration Tool.

Step 1: Specify, Change or Create Identity Handle

This step gives you the opportunity to create a handle, change the details of a handle, recover the password of an existing handle, or login to the system by specifying an Identity handle.

The Identity Handle is formed by concatenating the initial letters of the first and last names of the user, a sequential number, and the word NIRA appended to it. For example, if **James Adogi** tries to create an handle, it could be **JA754-NIRA**. This is consistent with Handles such as those of InterNIC, RIPE or AfriNIC. A valid handle is needed to access the Registration Tool.

A. Create Identity Handle

First time users must create an identity handle, with which they can then login to the registration tool. To create a handle, please follow these steps:

- i Click Step-1 from the quick steps.
- ii Click on the quick link to create a handle
- iii Complete the details of the new handle. Take note of the following fields
 - a) **Email Address:** The email address must be unique in the entire registry. Two registrants cannot share the same Email address. Note that the password will be sent to this Email address, hence it must be functional. This field is mandatory and required.
 - b) **Alternate Email Address:** All correspondences are copied to the alternate Email address. Multiple Email addresses must be separated by comma. Note that the alternative Email address need not be unique within the registry. This field is optional.
 - c) **Full Name:** Use the format – Firstname Lastname. For Example: Ojo Ige.. This field is mandatory.
 - d) **Mother's Maiden Name:** Please use any response that suits you here. Should you have the need to recover your password, you must specify the same response for the recovery to succeed. This field is optional.
 - e) **Organizational Name:** Please specify the organization where the entity requesting the handle works, or is affiliated to. This field is mandatory.
 - f) **Address:** Specify the address of the entity. For example: PO Box 117. This field is mandatory.
 - g) **City:** Specify the City. For example: Abuja. This field is mandatory
 - h) **Postal Code:** The Postal code to be used is as defined by the Nigeria Postal Service. This field is currently optional, but will be mandatory in the future.
 - i) **Country:** Please specify the country of the entity. Note that Non-Nigerians can very well serve as technical contacts; hence this is not by default – Nigeria. This field is mandatory.
 - j) **Voice Phone:** Ensure that the phone number specified is reachable and functional. This field is mandatory.
 - k) **Fax:** Specify the Fax number, if available. This field is optional.

- 1) **Click on Continue.** A password will be generated automatically and Emailed to you.

Please note:

- If any of the contacts already have a NIRA handle, you do not need to create another handle.
 - If the administrative contact is different from the technical contact for the domain you want to register, then two separate NIRA handles will have to be created.
- iv) Click on Continue. A password will be generated, and Emailed to the address specified above.

B. Recover Password

Registrants who have a NIRA handle but do not know their passwords can recover their password, using the steps below. For those who have registered a domain before, and do not know their handle, a WHOIS query will reveal the handle. Please consult the section of this documentation on the use of WHOIS. If the handle is ADMIN-NIRA or TECH-NIRA, please email registrar@register.net.ng.

For all other handles, to recover the NIRA handle's password, please follow these steps:

- i) Click Step-1 from the quick steps.
- ii) Click on the link to recover password
- iii) Complete the details on the form. Take note of the following fields
 - a) **Email Address:** The email address is mandatory. This must match the Email address displayed with the WHOIS query. The recovered password will be mailed to this address.
 - b) **Handle:** The handle whose password is to be recovered. The handle is mandatory.
 - c) **Mother's Maiden Name:** Please use the exact text when the initial NIRA handle was created. For legacy registrations (ie registrations made before the creation of NIRA) please leave this field BLANK.
- iv) Click on Continue. A password will be generated, and Emailed to the address specified above.

Note that if any of the fields is not correct, the entire entries will be rejected. No attempt will be made to offer any helpful hint, for security purposes.

C. Login to the Registration Tool

You must be logged in, to use any of the registration tool's functions, except the WHOIS and Registry statistics. You will require a valid NIRA handle, and the password. If you do not have any of these, please refer to any of the preceding steps, to create or recover a NIRA handle.

To login, please follow these steps:

- i) Click Step-1 from the quick steps.
- ii) **NIRA Handle:** Enter your NIRA handle. The Handle is displayed.
- iii) **Password:** Enter the password for the handle. The password will not be displayed
- iv) Click on Continue. If the Handle and password are correct, you will be logged in. Please note that if either input is not correct, the entire entries will be rejected. The system will not attempt to offer any helpful hint, for security purposes.
- v) Upon a Successful login. You will be taken directly to Step 2.

D. Edit the NIRA Handle

Addresses may change, Names may change, Telephone numbers may change, Email addresses may change etc. The tool allows you change any of these fields in your handle. You must be logged in, to make changes to the handle. Please refer to the preceding step, to login to the tool.

To Edit your handle, please follow these steps:

- i Login to the Registration tool, using your NIRA handle and Password
- ii The Handle will be displayed at the lower left corner of the screen.
- iii Click on the hyperlinked handle. The existing details are displayed for edit
 - a) **Email Address:** This cannot be changed for now. If the email address has changed, please update the alternate Email address.
 - b) **Alternate Email Address:** All correspondences are copied to the alternate Email address. Multiple Email addresses must be separated by comma. Note that the alternative Email address need not be unique within the registry.
 - c) **Full Name:** Use the format – Firstname Lastname. For Example: Ojo Ige. This field is mandatory.
 - d) **Mother's Maiden Name:** Please use any response that suits you here. Should you have the need to recover your password, you must specify the same response for the recovery to succeed. This field is optional.
 - e) **Organizational Name:** Please specify the organization where this person works, or is affiliated to. This field is mandatory.
 - f) **Address:** Specify the address of the entity. For example: PO Box 117. This field is mandatory.
 - g) **City:** Specify the City. For example: Abuja. This field is mandatory
 - h) **Postal Code:** The Postal code to be used is as defined by the Nigeria Postal Service. This field is currently optional, but will be mandatory in the future.
 - i) **Country:** Please specify the country of the entity. Note that Non-Nigerians can very well serve as technical contacts, hence this is not by default – Nigeria. This field is mandatory.
 - j) **Voice Phone:** Ensure that the phone number specified is reachable and functional. This field is mandatory.
 - k) **Fax:** Specify the Fax number, if available. This field is optional.
- iv **Click on Continue.** The modifications will be saved.

Step 2: Specify or Delete a Domain

This step gives you the opportunity to Request the registration of a domain. The Domain delete function has not been implemented. For now, to delete a domain, please email registrar@register.net.ng

A. Register a New Domain

To register a new domain, You need to conduct a search in WHOIS, to ensure that the domain doesn't exist. Once you confirm that the domain does not exist, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-2 from the quick steps.
- ii **Choose Domain to Modify:** Leave this as NEW
- iii **Specify Domain:** Enter the domain without the suffix. For example, if you want to register watermark.com.ng, it is required to enter just **watermark** at this point. If

- your intention is to register www.watermark.com.ng, all that is required is also **watermark**
- iv Choose the desired sub-domain. Valid sub-domains are: **.com.ng**, **.net.ng**, **.edu.ng**, **.org.ng** and **.gov.ng**.
 - iv **Click on Continue.** The domain will be reserved, and you can edit the details

B. Edit an Existing Domain

To edit an existing domain, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-2 from the quick steps.
- ii **Choose Domain to Modify:** Drop this box down, to reveal the list of domains associated with your handle, whether as Administrative contact, or as Technical Contact. Select the domain of interest.
- iii **Specify Domain:** Leave this field blank.
- iv **Choose the desired sub-domain.** This field is ignored by the tool at this point.
- iv **Click on Continue.** The domain will be loaded by the tool, and you can edit the details

Note: Until you select a domain to edit, the remaining steps are inaccessible.

Step 3: Specify The Administrative Contact

This step gives you the opportunity to specify the administrative contact of a domain. Please proceed below, depending on whether you registering a New domain (A), or editing an existing domain (B).

A. Specify Administrative contact while Registering a New Domain

To specify the administrative contact for a new domain, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-3 from the quick steps.
- ii **Specify the Administrative contact Handle:** Type in the handle. The tool will always suggest the handle that is currently logged in. If this is not the handle of the administrative contact, please overwrite this suggestion with the handle of the desired administrative contact.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The administrative contact detail will be updated.

B. Specify Administrative Contact while updating an existing Domain

To change the administrative contact for an existing domain, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-3 from the quick steps.
- ii **Specify the Administrative contact Handle:** The tool will display the existing administrative contact. Only the administrative contact can make a change to the displayed administrative contact. If you are the contact, please proceed to type in the handle of the intended administrative contact. Technical contacts can view the admin contact details, but cannot make a change.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The administrative contact detail will be updated.

Note that you will still retain administrative contact privileges, until you log out of the session.

Step 4: Specify the Technical Contact

This step gives you the opportunity to specify the Technical contact of a domain. Please proceed below, depending on whether you registering a New domain (A), or editing an existing domain (B).

A. Specify Technical contact while Registering a New Domain

To specify the technical contact for a new domain, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-4 from the quick steps.
- ii **Specify the Technical contact Handle:** Type in the handle. The tool will always suggest the handle that is currently logged in. If this is not the handle of the technical contact, please overwrite this suggestion with the handle of the intended technical contact.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The technical contact detail will be updated.

B. Specify Technical Contact while updating an existing Domain

To change the Technical contact for an existing domain, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-4 from the quick steps.
- ii **Specify the Technical contact Handle:** The tool will display the existing technical contact. Either the administrative or technical contact can change the technical contact. Please proceed to type in the handle of the intended technical contact.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The technical contact detail will be updated.

If you are the technical contact ceding the role to another person, you will still retain the technical contact privileges, until you log out of the session.

Step 5: Specify or Change the domain details

This step gives you the opportunity to describe the organization registering the domain. For new Registrations, either the Administrative or technical contacts can specify the details. For existing domains, only the Administrative contact can edit the details in this Step. Technical contacts are able to view the details, but cannot make changes.

The organization and the administrative contact must be based in Nigeria.

A. Specify Domain details while Registering a New Domain

To specify the domain details for a new domain, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-5 from the quick steps.
- ii Complete the details for the entity.
 - a) **Organization Name:** The name of the entity/organization registering the domain. This is the eventual entity that will use the domain, and not the web hosting company or Network Service Provider ISP registering the domain on behalf of the client.
 - b) **Description:** Make a short description of the organization. For Example, Pisces Nigeria Limited is in the Business of buying and selling Fish meals. This field is important.
 - c) **Address:** Specify the address of the entity. For example: PO Box 117. This field is mandatory.
 - d) **City:** Specify the City. For example: Abuja. This field is mandatory
 - e) **Postal Code:** The Postal code to be used is as defined by the Nigeria Postal Service. This field is currently optional, but will be mandatory in the future.

- f) **Country:** Please specify the country. For now, only Nigerian based companies can register under the Nigerian TLD. This field is mandatory.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The Domain details will be updated.

B. Specify Domain details while updating an existing Domain

To specify the domain details for a domain being edited, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-5 from the quick steps.
- ii Make changes to the details of the entity.
 - g) **Organization Name:** The name of the entity/organization registering the domain. This is the eventual entity that uses the domain, and not the web hosting company or Network Service Provider ISP registering the domain on behalf of the client.
 - h) **Description:** Make a short description of the organization. For Example, Pisces Nigeria Limited is in the Business of buying and selling Fish meals. This field is important.
 - i) **Address:** Specify the address of the entity. For example: PO Box 117. This field is mandatory.
 - j) **City:** Specify the City. For example: Abuja. This field is mandatory
 - k) **Postal Code:** The Postal code to be used is as defined by the Nigeria Postal Service. This field is currently optional, but will be mandatory in the future.
 - l) **Country:** Please specify the country. For now, only Nigerian based companies can register under the Nigerian TLD. This field is mandatory.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The domain details will be updated.

Step 6: Specify or Change the Name Servers

This step gives you the opportunity to specify the various servers that will be technical details of your Domain. Basic service setup does not require Name Servers.

If your intention is to just Register your name and create a website such as www.pisces.com.ng, or [pisces.com.ng](mailto:yourname@pisces.com.ng) and have Email of the form yourname@pisces.com.ng then complete the section (A) related to basic services below.

If on the other hand your intention is to run your own name servers, so that you can have the freedom to create your own name such that you are not limited to the basic options above, then skip to section B.

A. Setup Basic Name Service

To specify the details for a basic Name Service, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-6 from the quick steps.
- ii Complete the details for the following fields:
 - a) **IP (A) Address:** Specify here, the Internet Protocol (IP) Address of your Server. This is the IP address of the server that will be contacted, if users type <http://yourdomain.whatever.ng>
This is also the IP address Servers on the Internet will send Emails to, if addressed to whoever@yourdomain.whatever.ng
 - b) **WWW Address:** Specify here, the Internet Protocol (IP) address of your Web Server. This is the IP address of the server that will be contacted, if users type <http://www.yourdomain.whatever.ng>.

- c) **Mail Exchanger:** Specify the IP address of your Email hosting Service. You only need to specify the MX IP address, if the server specified in a) above, is not responsible for handling Email for the domain. By Default, MX is assigned a default preference value of 10.
 - d) Skip all remaining fields, and ensure they are BLANK.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The Domain details will be updated.

B. Setup Advanced Name Service

If you will run your own servers, then take note of the fact that domains must provide at least two independent servers that provide the domain service for translating names to addresses for hosts in the domain. Establishing the servers in physically separate locations and on different Networks is required. See RFC2182 for the rationale.

This means that the secondary server must be on a physical location quite separate from the Primary, and that the two must be on completely separate International backbone providers. Two servers are sufficient, but you can have and specify up to 5 servers. For help/guide on setting up your Name servers, please consult the resources on the Registry Website.

Once your Name Servers are setup, you need to test, to make sure your servers are OK and responding, before completing this step in your application. Please follow the steps below, to test your Name Servers:

- i) go to <http://www.network-tools.com/nslook/Default.asp>
- ii). For each of the DNS Server IPs you have listed/will list in your application, do the following tests:
 1. Domain: yourdomain.whatever.ng
 2. Server: IP address of your DNS Server
 3. Port: 53
 4. Query Type SOA
 5. Query class: IN - Internet
 6. Timeout 5000
 7. Check NO Recursion
 8. Check Advanced output
 9. Click on GO.

If you do not get a response that lists your Primary Server, under the Answer records, your SOA definition is wrong. Make necessary corrections.

- iii). For each of the DNS Server IPs you have listed in your application, do the following tests:
 1. Domain: yourdomain.whatever.ng
 2. Server: IP address of your DNS Server
 3. Port: 53
 4. Query Type NS - Name Server
 5. Query class: IN - Internet
 6. Timeout 5000
 7. Check NO Recursion
 8. Check Advanced output
 9. Click on GO.

If you do not get a response that lists all Your Name Servers (As will be specified in your domain application) under the Answer records, and matches

what is configured on your primary server, your NS definitions are wrong. Make necessary corrections.

- iv Click Step-6 from the quick steps.
- v Complete the details for the following fields:
 - a) **Primary Name Server:** Specify the domain name of the machine that will serve as your primary Name Server
 - b) **Primary Name Server IP Address:** Specify the IP address of the machine that will serve as your Primary Server.
 - c) **Secondary Name Server:** Specify the domain name of the machine that will serve as your secondary Name Server
 - d) **Secondary Name Server IP Address:** Specify the IP address of the machine that will serve as your Secondary Server.
 - e) Repeat steps C and D above, for the Tertiary, Quaternary and Quinary Servers, if you have more than two servers configured.
 - f) Skip all remaining fields, and ensure they are BLANK.
- iii **Click on Continue.** The Domain details will be updated.

Step 7: Request Validation and Registration

This step signals the completion of data entry for your domain. When you click on “Continue” your request will be passed to the domain registrars for validation and registration.

It is important that you painstakingly complete the details in the preceding Steps, as any error spotted by the registrars will end up delaying the registration of your domain. Pay attention to all the steps in this guide.

Step 8: Monitor the Status of your Registration

This step allows you follow the stages in the registration of your domain. To monitor the progress of your domain request, please follow the steps below.

- i Click Step-8 from the quick steps. The Domain status page will be displayed. The following are the various items displayed.
 - a) **Date Submitted:** This is the date the domain registration request was made. It is written in the format YYYY-MM-DD HH:MM:SS
 - b) **Administrative Contact Verification:** This is the first stage of verification process. The details of the administrative contact are verified to be correct, as much as possible. This includes reaching the contact by telephone etc. This field can either be “**Pending**”, “**Verified OK**” or “**Not verified OK**”.
 - c) **Technical Contact Verification:** This is the second stage of verification process. The details of the technical contact are verified to be correct, as much as possible. This includes reaching the contact by telephone etc. This field can either be “**Pending**”, “**Verified OK**” or “**Not verified OK**”.
 - d) **Server Set Verification:** This is the third stage stage of the verification process. All the servers (Advance Services only) are checked, that they reply to Name queries for SOA and NS records, and that they are on separate network segments on the Internet. To speed up your registration, ensure that you use online testers like the one in step 6 above, to ensure speedy registration. This field can either be “**Pending**”, “**Verified OK**” or “**Not verified OK**”.
 - e) **Zone update and registration:** This is the final stage of the verification process. The application is checked against all rules remaining, including - one Domain per organization, Admin contact residing within the organization

registering the domain etc. This field can either be “**Pending**”, “**Verified OK**” or “**Not verified OK**”.

- g) **Registrar’s Comments (if Any):** Comments made by Registrars on the application are displayed here. Most often, these are requests for corrections or modifications to applications. Registrars do not directly make modifications. Applicants must make all modifications.
 - h) This is the final stage of the verification process. The application is checked against all rules remaining, including - one Domain per organization, Admin contact residing within the organization registering the domain etc. This field can either be “**Pending**”, “**Verified OK**” or “**Not verified OK**”.
- ii The verifications are in the stated order. Requests flagged as pending may be kept pending for 7 days, while the registrar requests that certain corrective actions be carried out on the affected application.
 - iii Once a step has been “**verified Not OK**” the remaining checks are skipped, and the domain is marked for deletion. Rejected domains are deleted from the registry at around 23:55GMT daily, while Domains to be registered are loaded into the Root Servers at 00:00GMT daily.

This guide is “work in Progress” and will benefit a lot from your feedbacks and comments. Please send all comments to registrar@register.net.ng