
Verified Top Level Domains Consortium ("Consortium") Charter

MISSION OF THE CONSORTIUM

To enhance public trust, online safety, and Internet commerce by promoting the unique value and increasing the awareness of verified domain name extensions as trusted channels for products, services and communications online.

The Consortium will collaborate to:

1. Educate the public about the value of vTLDs;
2. Improve universal awareness and recognition of vTLD value by distribution channels, consumers, registrants, Internet commerce companies and technology vendors;
3. Develop collaborative activities with public and private sector stakeholders;
4. Share best practices;
5. Enhance the reputation of vTLD Registry Operators and vTLDs generally; and
6. Harmonize processes, as appropriate.

The Consortium is defined by:

1. Shared commitment to building trust online and supporting global public safety;
2. Proactive verification and monitoring processes; and
3. Commitment to policy issues that impact consumer protection online.

Elements of a vTLD are defined as:

- **Verification prior to use.** Registry Operator (RO) validates the registrant by verifying a publicly accessible credential or verifiable credential (e.g., license, accreditation, tax ID#) prior to use to ensure the registrant (a) is the entity/person they purport to be and (b) operates a business eligible for the vTLD as defined by the registration policies.
- **Adherence to standards.** Requirement that the registrant maintain the credentials necessary to register a domain name in the vTLD and to abide by registration policies.
- **Autonomy to take back name.** RO has sole discretion and authority to take back a domain name for violation of registration policies.
- **Ongoing verification.** RO will ensure ongoing vTLD eligibility by implementing a reverification or audit process.

BENEFITS OF CONSORTIUM MEMBERSHIP

Benefits of membership may include, without limitation:

- **Focus** – An opportunity to concentrate on policies, practices and awareness raising activities related to vTLDs.
- **Influence** – Ability to impact domestic, international and ICANN policies on issues having an effect on vTLDs.
- **Promotion** – A platform for advancing Members' vTLDs and related policies.
- **Expertise** – Access to other vTLDs' policies, practices and thought leadership to enhance your own operations.
- **Commerce** – Improve marketability and demand for vTLDs by registrants and trading partners.
- **Participation** – Face-to-face and virtual engagement opportunities.
- **Goodwill Building** – Evidence your commitment to building trust online, thereby heightening your image with consumers, clients, constituents and policymakers.
- **Consumer Awareness** – An opportunity to educate consumers on the value of domain names in vTLDs.

PARTICIPANTS

The Consortium Membership is open to vTLD registry operators.

Members. It is anticipated that each Member shall designate one delegate who will function as the manager of his or her institution's involvement in the Consortium. This delegate will be responsible for managing, without limitation, issues that arise regarding (1) policy development and Consortium positions, (2) procedures or activities undertaken by the Consortium, and (3) communications with the Consortium and its Members.

New Members. New Members must agree with the Consortium's mission and meet the elements of a vTLD as defined above. Other membership criteria may be established by the Members and, if established, such criteria shall be applicable to all Members and shall be incorporated into this Charter.

Consortium Advisors. Advisors observe the Consortium's work and provide advice and information to Members. In addition to facilitating transparency, Advisors have the ability to participate in Consortium meetings, provide expertise and voluntary input, and exchange information that can help to inform the Consortium's work and their own efforts. Advisors are not Members of the Consortium and shall not be counted when determining the consensus position of the Consortium. Members may limit the number of participating Advisors. Members reserve the right to hold Member-only meetings. A statement of interest should be provided by all Advisors seeking to join the Consortium.

New Members and new Advisors may be approved by the Existing Members or by a designated Consortium committee that may be established at any time.

Consortium Advisors may include:

1. Registrars providing registration services to vTLDs;
2. Vendors and technology providers to vTLDs; and
3. Other entities as may be approved by the Members.

Membership Dues:

Following agreement from Consortium members in August 2017, all existing and future members will have annual dues as agreed upon by the Steering Committee per calendar year. Additional funds, at any point, may be requested from Consortium members for special projects, additional travel or other related items. Additional funds for special projects or other advancement of the Consortium are considered voluntary and not required, as seen with the annual dues structure in place. fTLD Registry Services will serve as treasurer for the Consortium and will be responsible for the management of member dues.

The Consortium could not be successful without substantial in-kind contributions, including the provision of legal, policy, consulting, and technical expertise, donated conference space, and donated media and/or other external communications support.

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The Consortium is an informal, voluntary association of stakeholders united by our mission. All Members have an equal voice. Decisions are made by consensus among Members and no one has a veto.

The Consortium is led by a small Steering Group which guides the organization's operations; makes recommendations to the Members regarding strategy, policy positions and action items; and oversees governance decisions related to external communications and project expenditures. All Members actively participate and provide input to direct the Consortium' strategy.

The Consortium shall operate in accordance with all applicable laws, including but not limited to U.S. federal and state antitrust laws and other similar international or non U.S. nation state antitrust laws, and each Member may access its own forum or any court of competent jurisdiction, subject to conflicts of laws provisions.

The Steering Group shall consist of three (3) individuals including a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary (collectively "Officers"). Each Officer candidate shall be nominated by a Member(s) and selected by consensus of the Members. Each Officer shall have duties and responsibilities as may be defined by the Members but to include the service standards of impartiality, accountability, and conflicts of interest declarations. The term of each Officer shall be determined by the Members upon taking office. The Steering Group may set the agenda for the Consortium. The Steering Group may recommend to the Membership that a Member(s) be admitted, suspended, or terminated. The Membership shall take action on the Steering Group's recommendation based on consensus.

The Consortium is action-oriented and will likely seek to capitalize on Members' interest, expertise and experience by delegating agreed-upon action items to Members who volunteer to be the issue or project "champion." The Consortium will meet in-person and via conference call as needed to discuss Consortium objectives, action items, outreach and next steps.

ABOUT THIS CHARTER

This Charter outlines the vision for vTLDs as shared and aggregated by the Consortium organizations who have approved the Charter. Additional members may be added to the Consortium ("New Members") as approved by the designated Consortium committee consistent with the policies and principles presented herein. Current and New Members shall collectively be referred to as "Members." In the future, should the Consortium decide to engage third parties to provide management, policy development or other services to the Consortium ("Vendor"), such will be done by consensus of the Members.

The Consortium may, from time to time, amend this Charter on a consensus basis.

The following organizations are Members of the Consortium:

Dominion Registries
Dot Trademark TLD Holdings Limitedⁱ
fTLD Registry Services
National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
Second Generation

The following organizations are Advisors to the Consortium

EnCirca
Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting
.Jobs
Valideus

This Charter is adopted by the Members on:

May 27, 2016

ⁱ New member *Dot Trademark TLD Holdings Limited* agreed upon by vTLD Consortium members on November 21, 2016.