

'paris' is launched
France - Hogan Lovells LLP

gTLDs
Domain names

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The [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#) launched the application process for new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) in January 2012. The new gTLD programme will result in an unprecedented expansion of the Domain Name System from the existing 22 TLDs, such as '.com' and '.org', to over 1,400 TLDs.

Over 400 new gTLDs have been delegated so far, and of these approximately 300 are now offering domain names for registration. Of these 300 operational gTLDs, over 20 are what are known as city TLDs. The first city TLDs launched were '.wien' (meaning Vienna), '.berlin' and '.nagoya' in February 2014. '.paris', the French capital's TLD, has now been launched.

The '.paris' TLD is open to all companies and individuals having a link with the Paris region (*Île de France*). The launch procedure started on September 9 and consists of a combined sunrise/landrush phase ending on November 11 2014. Domain name applications will be assigned according to the following order of priority:

1. Sunrise TMCH (September 9 - November 11 2014) - this is reserved for trademark holders who have registered their trademark in the Trademark Clearing House (TMCH). Should multiple applicants request the same domain name, priority will be given to trademarks affording protection in France. In the event that there are competing trademarks that all afford protection in France, then priority will be given to the oldest trademark. Likewise, if there are multiple applications for the same domain name based upon trademarks that do not cover France, then the oldest trademark will prevail. In the unlikely event the trademarks at stake were registered on the same date, an auction between the applicants will take place.
2. Applications by public authorities (September 9 - November 11 2014) - this is reserved for the public authorities of the Paris region. Domain names corresponding to the name of public authorities, the name of public services or geographic names of the Paris region can be applied for. In the event that there are competing applications for the same term and one of the applicants is the City of Paris, then the City of Paris will be assigned the domain name. If the City of Paris is not an applicant, then applicants will be expected to reach an agreement between themselves with regard to the assignment of the domain name. Should an agreement not be reached, there will be a third-party mediation process. Should this not resolve the competing applications, then an auction between the applicants will take place.
3. Applications by other trademark holders (September 9 - November 11 2014) - this is reserved for holders of French trademarks and trademarks covering France which were not registered in the TMCH. It also concerns holders of geographical terms recognised by international treaties, European regulations or French law. In the case of multiple applicants for one domain name, priority will be given to the oldest trademark/right. Should the trademarks/rights at stake have been registered on the same day, an auction between the applicants will take place.
4. Applications by companies and associations (September 9 - November 11 2014) - this is reserved for companies and associations based in the Paris region. Should there be multiple applicants for the same domain name, an auction will take place.
5. Landrush (September 9 - November 11 2014) - during this phase, anyone justifying a link with the Paris region but not falling into any of the above priority categories can apply for the domain name of their choice. Application fees will be higher than during general availability. Again, in the case of multiple applicants for the same domain name, an auction will take place.
6. General availability (December 2 2014) - general availability will take place on December 2 2014 after applications made during the combined sunrise/landrush phase have been treated. Anyone eligible for a '.paris' domain name will be able to apply for the domain name of their choice. Domain names will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

It will be interesting to follow the performance of the '.paris' TLD, which represents one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. How will it compare with other city TLDs? Will it rival '.berlin', which is currently the second-largest new gTLD in terms of volume of domain name registrations? Will it overhaul '.london', which is currently the seventh-largest new gTLD, but has no registration restrictions?

There are currently 100 domain names active under '.paris' that were registered as part of the '.paris' Pioneer programme to promote the '.paris' TLD. Whether this will have any impact on the overall registration volumes remains to be seen. However, compared to some TLD registration figures, 100 domain names registered before sunrise can be considered a good start.

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