

Norid and SIDN consider making '.bv' available to Dutch companies Netherlands - Hogan Lovells LLP

Domain names

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Norid and SIDN, respectively the country-code top-level domain (ccTLD) registry operators for the Norwegian and Dutch domain name spaces, have announced that they are in discussions about the possibility of making the '.bv' domain name extension available to the Dutch market.

As well as being responsible for the '.no' domain name extension, Norid is also responsible for the operation of '.bv', the ccTLD for Bouvet Island, and for '.sj', the ccTLD for the islands of Svalbard and Jan Mayen. According to Norid's website, domain name registrations under these ccTLDs have never been made available to the general public.

Norid stated that it frequently receives enquiries from Dutch companies who want to register '.bv' domain names. This is because in the Netherlands, the term 'BV' is the abbreviation of 'Besloten Vennootschap', which is the designation for the Dutch version of a private limited liability company. As such, the ccTLD '.bv' holds a certain attraction for Dutch companies.

Roelof Meijer, SIDN's chief executive officer, has been quoted as saying:

"We believe that the availability of '.bv' domain names would open up new opportunities for the Dutch business community. One of the ideas we've discussed with Norid is using '.bv' for a platform on which companies could publish validated corporate information. Business partners looking for a company's details wouldn't then have to visit a variety of online information sources, but could go straight to the company's '.bv' page."

However, before any decision is made on the possibility of making '.bv' domains available to the Dutch market, SIDN intends to undertake a study in order to ascertain whether '.bv' domain names would be beneficial to Dutch companies.

SIDN has indicated that any such study will be undertaken in consultation with all their stakeholders, especially the '.nl' registrar community. Once the research and consultation have been concluded, SIDN will need to enter into further discussions with Norid in order to decide whether to pursue the possible release of '.bv' domain names to Dutch companies.

A partnership between Norid and SIDN would seem to be a logical step for both registries, whereby all TLDs under their control receive greater exposure but, more importantly, Dutch companies are offered a specific business-orientated TLD, namely '.bv'. Hilde Thunem, Norid's managing director, has been quoted as saying:

"We are looking forward to further discussions with [SIDN] on whether it is possible to use '.bv' in an innovative manner that adds value for both the Dutch and Norwegian internet communities."

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