

HKIRC Strategic Plan 2015 - 2017

1. HKIRC's Vision

.hk / .香港 are the most preferred top-level domains of Hong Kong residents, companies and organizations.

2. HKIRC's Mission

HKIRC is a non-profit-distributing organization that is committed to providing, and supervising the provision by others of, .hk and .香港 Internet domain name registration, resolution and related services in an uninterrupted, effective, customer-centric and sustainable manner.

3. HKIRC's Values

HKIRC has the following core values: (a) Pursuit of excellence, (b) Effectiveness, (c) Integrity, (d) Care, (e) Innovation, (f) Leadership (foresight)

4. Efficient and effective registration services responding to stakeholders' needs

Focus Area Definition: HKIRC is to (i) provide services of domain name registration and conversion of domain names into IP addresses, and services incidental or related to services in respect of .hk domain names, (ii) support competition and consumer choice in the sourcing of .hk domain name holders and managing .hk domain name registration, (iii) seek to be innovative in the provision of new services, and to anticipate and respond flexibly to new technological and market developments which may impact domain name sourcing, registration and usage.

4.1 To increase visibility of .hk on mobile/smartphone platform (since 2011)

Smartphones and tablet devices continue to gain popularity especially among the young generation. HKIRC as an Internet company should have a presence on the mobile platform. Its website is already "smartphone-ready". In addition to QR (Quick Response) Code, HKIRC should support other new developments on the mobile platform applicable to domain names.

4.2 To support the Hong Kong Supplementary Character Set for .香港 registrations (since 2011)

To ensure that .香港 is well accepted by the local community, HKIRC should ensure local Hong Kong Chinese characters can be registered under .香港 at a measured pace.

4.3 To promote sense of loyalty and sense of belonging of Hong Kong companies and people

HKIRC should emphasise the use of .hk as a sense of loyalty for businesses having presence in Hong Kong. Equally for individuals, HKIRC should promote the use of .hk as a sense of belonging for Hong Kong people. Specifically, HKIRC will identify local companies which are not using .hk/.香港 and write to them to encourage them to use .hk/.香港 instead. HKIRC will consider reinvigorating the branding of .hk to ensure that the message is delivered. HKIRC will also explore partnership with Companies Registry, company secretarial service providers, schools and other organisations to promote .hk to their target audience.

4.4 To explore opportunities in overseas and China markets (since 2012)

Currently, about 20% of second-level .hk domain names are from overseas including Mainland China. There is potential to develop the overseas and Mainland China market. Of the 26 accredited registrars, 19 are overseas registrars and 6 are from Mainland China. HKIRC will continue to promote .hk to overseas registrants. As the attention of most overseas registrars is now drawn to new gTLDs, HKIRC will have to be more proactive in arousing interest of global registrars in offering .hk registration service.

4.5 To explore opportunities arising from the ICANN new gTLD Program (since 2011)

The New gTLD (generic Top-Level Domain) program is an initiative of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) to open up the TLD name space globally. New gTLDs can be in English or other languages. Companies can provide domain name registration services under the new gTLD or use it internally. Application closed on 29 March 2012 with 1,930 new gTLDs. HKIRC has been offering help to local corporations interested in new gTLDs. HKIRC should also consider providing registry operation services to successful bidders of new gTLDs.

4.6 To consider offering new services to .hk and .香港 registrants (ongoing)

To enhance the value of .hk, the Group always strives to provide new features for .hk registrants. Eg. HKDNR introduced the "Minisite" feature in May 2013. The Group will offer new features based on customer feedback and to strengthen the branding of .hk as a secure and trustworthy Top-level Domain. To gauge the level of awareness of .hk

of internet users, a survey should be conducted before launching any promotion programs.

4.7 To make better use of HKDNR to foster the development of the local Internet industry (since 2012)

To fulfill its mission and objectives, HKIRC has to launch new initiatives and services from time to time. Some of the new initiatives, such as DNSSEC and IPv6, may not be supported by our external registrars and partners to start with because they may think there are no commercial justifications. HKDNR can play a pivotal role to ensure that those initiatives can be implemented and innovative services can be available to end users. HKDNR can be the “first mover” to offer new services in which commercial service providers are not willing to invest upfront. Many users do not understand the relationship between HKIRC and HKDNR and what roles they play. HKIRC may have to emphasise that HKDNR is one of the .hk registrars accredited by HKIRC, and to maintain the positioning that HKDNR does not intend to compete with other registrars on price. Nevertheless, HKDNR should still strive to achieve profitability in the future as it should be a role model of a good .hk registrar providing good services in the local internet industry.

4.8 To consider reducing prices of .hk registrations (ongoing)

HKIRC reduced the wholesale price of .hk in July 2012 and August 2013 respectively, with HKDNR also reducing its retail prices during the second price reduction. HKIRC will continue to review the market situation to see if it is necessary to reduce the wholesale prices further and whether it is necessary to set a ceiling on the retail prices.

4.9 To compile annual statistics on the use of the Internet in HK (2016)

In 2012, HKIRC started looking into the types of internet statistics that can be compiled and are of value to the community. Since many parties have been providing basic internet statistics such as no. of internet users, adoption of mobile internet and social network, HKIRC will focus on specific internet statistics related to domain names and specific topics such as quality of websites and e-Commerce.

5. Stability and security of the ‘.hk’ Internet domain

Focus Area Definition: HKIRC is to (i) operate and maintain a stable, secure and interoperable domain name system which abides by the policies and technical requirements laid down by ICANN, (ii) perform all activities in connection with the domain name system and registration service with good quality, security, stability and reliability.

5.1 To provide an uninterrupted Domain Name Server services (ongoing)

Our performance targets on DNS and query response times are either in par with or better than the targets set by ICANN for the gTLD registries. For instance, our target for DNS availability is 100%. In 2013, there were more hacking incidents related to the DNS and TLD registries. In 2014, there were two large scale DDoS attacks on our .hk DNS infrastructure. HKIRC has to enhance the capability to withstand DDoS and other forms of cyber-attacks.

5.2 To implement IPv6 support for our infrastructure (since Q2 2011)

The exhaustion of IPv4 addresses signals an urgency to move to IPv6. HKIRC already provides IPv6 support for .hk domain name registrations. HKIRC has also completed the implementation of support for IPv6 for all services except email.

5.3 To implement new features and services for registrants requiring more security (since 2013)

Customers like financial institutions require better security in managing their domain names. HKIRC launched the registry lock service for .hk, called .hk LOCK in January 2014 and a monitoring service for trademark holders called .hk WATCH in January 2015. HKDNR will also implement 2-factor authentication and dual-password login for .hk domain name registrants.

5.4 To implement support for DNSSEC (since Q4 2011)

All TLD registries should take the lead in implementing DNSSEC (Secure DNS). Adoption has been slow because it requires substantial investment on hardware/ software, additional administrative efforts and its negative performance impact on the DNS. Also, the real benefits cannot be realized unless all parties involved including all the ISPs and the end-user machines also support DNSSEC. HKIRC and HKDNR have to take a leadership role in adopting technologies like DNSSEC. A test bed was set up for external parties to test the capability of DNSSEC in 2012. HKIRC will commence the implementation of DNSSEC in its production environment in 2015. To ensure that there is at least one local .hk registrar offering DNSSEC, HKDNR will have to offer DNSSEC hosting service.

5.5 To review risk assessment and contingency planning (ongoing)

HKIRC has conducted and reviewed risk assessment and contingency planning on an annual basis since 2005.

5.6 To conduct a security audit at least every 2 years (ongoing)

HKIRC conducted its first security audit in 2005 (PriceWaterhouseCoopers). The last security audit was conducted in 2012 (Ernst & Young). HKIRC is conducting the latest security audit in Q1 2015 with the help of Thales.

5.7 To work jointly with other industry bodies to preserve reputation of .hk (ongoing)

Since 2007, HKIRC has been liaising with the Hong Kong Police, HKCERT and OFCA in combating phishing and spamvertising using .hk domain names. HKIRC will launch the "Trusted .hk Registrars" program in 2015 to encourage registrars to offer secure and trustworthy services to .hk customers. HKIRC has been cooperating with Certizen on a bundling offer of .hk and HongkongPost e-Cert, and will explore ways to enhance this cooperation in order to strengthen the positioning of Hong Kong as a secure regional internet hub.

6. Openness and transparency inclusive of all interested parties

Focus Area Definition: HKIRC is to conduct its activities in an open and transparent manner that ensures wide public access to all relevant information.

6.1 To communicate information of interest to stakeholders via our website and the CAP (ongoing)

A policy on openness and transparency and another policy on disclosure of information have been published on HKIRC's website.

7. Accountability, governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Focus Area Definition: HKIRC is to (i) act in the interests of the Internet community in Hong Kong and the global Internet community, without undue interference by any single group of stakeholders or by HK Government, (ii) ensure that balanced attention will be given to the interests of all stakeholders in the Internet community in Hong Kong when making decisions in connection with the domain name system and registration service, (iii) promote freedom of speech, of publication, of communication and of religious belief in accordance with the laws in force in Hong Kong in its management and administration of .hk domain names, (iv) broaden the base for participating in the governance of HKIRC by promoting membership of HKIRC members and streamlining the process for admitting an HKIRC member, (v) be a good corporate citizen placing corporate social responsibility high on its agenda.

7.1 To encourage more '.hk' users to become HKIRC members (ongoing)

The number of HKIRC members has increased from 1,814 (Demand: 1,782, Supply: 32) in 2009 to 3,386 (Demand: 2,911, Supply: 475) by end of February 2015. HKIRC will continue to explore different channels to promote the membership scheme.

7.2 To be a good employer caring for the needs of its employees (ongoing)

HKIRC conducts employee opinion survey every year. HKIRC emphasizes personal and career development by encouraging staff to undertake trainings relevant to their work. We also have a scheme for sponsoring staff members to undertake part-time tertiary education. Our office environment is also friendly and cosy. HKIRC can provide more job security compared to other Internet companies which are predominantly commercially run. HKIRC also received the "Happy Organisation" recognition in 2014.

7.3 To work with and support only organisations which are ethical in their dealings with others (ongoing)

Before deciding whether to sponsor an event, HKIRC will endeavour to conduct a due diligence to find out if the organiser is ethical in its running and in its relationship with stakeholders.

7.4 To be an organization which behaves ethically in its dealings with others (ongoing)

HKIRC upholds transparency, honesty, integrity, fairness as core values especially when interacting with stakeholders. HKIRC exercises extreme care to avoid and has no tolerance of any form of malpractices involving bribery, corruption and other unethical behaviours.

7.5 To be an environmentally responsible organization (ongoing)

HKIRC always strives to conserve energy and natural resources whilst striking a balance with staff comfort and work efficiency. For instance, we host our equipment in data centres which are energy efficient. HKIRC received the "CarbonSmart" recognition and the Hong Kong Award for Environmental Excellence in 2014.

7.6 To retain "Caring Organisation" status granted by HKCSS (ongoing)

HKIRC/HKDNR has received the "Caring Organisation" award from the HKCSS ten years in a row.

7.7 To review HKIRC's internal controls involving corporate governance (ongoing)

The 3-year internal audit of HKIRC includes a review of HKIRC's internal controls for achieving good corporate governance.

8. Financial stability and responsibility

Focus Area Definition: HKIRC is to (i) maintain sufficient reserve to withstand downturn in economy and unexpected turmoil with a view to achieve sustainability of domain name services, (ii) deploy its fund to pursue corporate objectives in a responsible and professional manner.

8.1 To review and implement measures to improve efficiency of business processes (ongoing)

HKIRC shall vigilantly monitor and review the business processes to see if any improvement on efficiency and effectiveness is required.

8.2 To look for opportunities to allocate funds for activities on the Internet and on DNS which could help HKIRC fulfills its mission (ongoing)

Fund should be spent only when good initiatives can be identified which deliver results that are commensurate with the amount of fund to be invested.

9. Excellence in core operations

Focus Area Definition: HKIRC is to (i) perform all activities in connection with the domain name system and registration service meeting or better still exceeding world class standards, (ii) liaise with national and international bodies on issues relating to the development and administration of domain name system.

9.1 To meet or exceed review regional/world benchmarks (ongoing)

Our performance targets such as DNS availability have been set to meet or exceed world benchmarks

9.2 To participate in regional and global industry groups to learn about best practices (ongoing)

HKIRC is a member of APTLD and a member of the ccNSO (country-code Name Support Organisation) of ICANN. As the Internet domain name industry is a global community, HKIRC should give opportunities to staff members to attend relevant meetings to broaden their knowledge and people network.

9.3 To adopt best practices in technical operations and other business processes (ongoing)

The adoption of R/R model and DNSSEC are examples of fulfilling this strategic objective.

10. Hong Kong as an international centre for e-Commerce, e-Society, digital inclusion

Focus Area Definition: HKIRC is to facilitate and look for opportunities to promote Hong Kong as an international centre for e-commerce and to encourage for the benefit of the Hong Kong community a better understanding and use of the Internet and related technology.

10.1 To promote the adoption of IPv6 in Hong Kong (ongoing)

As the custodian of a critical Internet infrastructure, HKIRC should take a leading role in promoting the use of IPv6. Apart from taking part in "soft" promotions such as seminars and community education programs, HKIRC has sought support from a number of industry players to form the goIPv6 Consortium and started providing the goIPv6 tunneling service in July 2013 on a free trial basis.

10.2 To explore opportunities to achieve the "one .hk per person" initiative (ongoing)

At present, 80% of .hk registrants are companies (most of which are SMEs) and only 20% are individuals. There are only about 400,000 registered local and overseas companies in Hong Kong. With a population of 7 millions in Hong Kong, there is no doubt that the long-term growth of .hk will be in the personal market. HKIRC is working with academic institutions to promote .hk to students. These are efforts aiming at building up awareness and brand value of .hk in the long term.