
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – ccNSO: ccTLD Market Strategies
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CLAUDIA RUIZ

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And with that, I will now hand the floor over to Namrata Gilada, moderator for this session. Thank you.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you so much. Welcome back for the part two of the session on ccTLD market trends. In part one, we had Barack and Patrick explain the trends in the different regional organizations.

In this part, we have three ccTLDs who will explain strategies they implemented in their own registry. We have Andrew from .ke, Gihan from .lk, and Roelof from .nl. After each presentation, we'll have three minutes for a question or two based on the presentation. After the last presentation, we'll have around twenty minutes to discuss more questions in the room. Let's start with Andrew. Over to you.

ANDREW LEWELA

Thank you, Chair. For the record, my name is Andrew, representing the Kenya Network Information Center, .ke. I'll spend a couple of minutes reflecting on what we see as the strategic growth drivers for some of the numbers my colleague and counterpart, Barack, shared in the earlier segment.

Some demographics around Kenya: with a population of approximately fifty-eight point six million, we're a pretty youthful country. Median age is twenty-one years. Regarding our economy, nominal GDP is about one hundred and forty billion dollars, making Kenya the sixth-largest economy in Africa and the first in East

Africa. The rate of growth of GDP is about five percent expected this year.

The other two statistics on that slide are around what we believe is a meaningful internet. One of the key drivers for us is the increase in mobile penetration, driven predominantly by operators laying the necessary infrastructure and including devices. Smartphone adoption is up, also driving a surge in data subscriptions. This has been a significant growth in our market that has also helped us as a registry to layer on domain services.

Let me share some numbers around the registry itself and what we see as drivers. As I was preparing this slide, our domains under management was about one hundred and twenty-one thousand. As of this morning, we are at about one hundred and twenty-two thousand one hundred and forty-one domains. A significant component of our domains are in the private sector SME segment. Within government education, we have less than single digits, and that is an opportunity for us to grow our numbers.

A major driver is positioning domains for trusted identity around brand protection, security, and so on. Beyond a meaningful internet, this has been a major driver for us. Accelerating our growth has been a two-tiered approach to the registry. One is a push through our channel of registrars. We have collaborated around marketing, and we are also giving cashbacks for performance by our registrars.

This has been a major driver of our growth, which was double digit last year, and we welcome international registrars to collaborate with us in terms of this major push. We also have a pull factor: how do we bundle value for registrants in our market? How do we ensure that our partners understand that we want to sell value? It is only by bundling these offerings into a product-market fit that we can guarantee the retention of our renewal business, currently standing at seventy percent.

Lastly, ladies and gentlemen, how do we sustain or push these drivers into the near term? We believe three important buckets will help .ke. One, we have to ensure that infrastructure remains a bedrock for reliability, security, and the trust that we promise the ecosystem. This is key. Secondly, partnerships, partnerships, partnerships. This is a bridge to ensure that we can sustain growth for our registry and expand.

Finally, we are looking for partners to help us leverage on intelligence, the data that exists to ensure that we can continue growing into the long term. Any interventions around intelligence, monitoring trends, and campaigns that are then positioned on top of this intelligence is something we will be keen on. That is my submission. Back to you, Chair.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you, Andrew. Any questions for him, please? Okay, over to you, Gihan.

GIHAN DIAS

Thank you. Do you have my slides? Where to click on this? Okay, thank you. I am Gihan from .lk, the LK Domain Registry in Sri Lanka. I will talk about domains for persons and small businesses. One of the issues we had at the registry, compared with the size of our population, is the penetration rates which Patrick was talking about. It is a very low number of domains per capita.

How do we get more people to get domains? Eberhard will disagree with me. He says we do not need to get more domains. But anyway, we have been following a different track. What we found was in Sri Lanka, almost all corporates already have a website with a domain name, so they are already there. But individuals and small businesses tend to use social media, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, or whatever, none of which need a domain name.

How do we improve that? We want to get people, both individuals as well as small businesses, to have their own website and promote it, saying, "Why do we need to have our own website? Why do we need to have our own email address? What's important?" We are saying it is prestigious, under your control, and trusted. We introduced two new products for this called MySite and MyPage to meet the requirements of the personal and SME markets.

Small businesses need professional websites for visibility, sales, and trust, but they typically do not have the time or the tech skills, or they do not want to put in enough money. They do not want to hire a web development company and pay them thousands of

dollars to set up a website when the business itself is quite small. We wanted to give them a good website instantly.

We came up with a product that is a white label product from another provider called MySite.lk, which provides an AI-driven website and can be set up in a couple of hours by any small business owner or a simple web developer. Like everything else these days, AI is the way to go. Using AI, we can create a website very fast. It needs less expertise, it saves money, and it is quite optimized and customizable.

Here are a few of our actual websites we built using AI. In the last couple of months, we have managed to get a reasonable number, maybe seven hundred plus. Although many of them have not really done much with it yet, we do see three hundred plus, which I think is a good foundation for future growth.

Let's get on to the next product, MyPage.lk. This is targeted towards individuals. Within ten minutes, you can have a page for yourself. We can also call it a digital business card or a bio link. We branded it MyPage. You can create your own digital home in minutes with links to your social media, contact information, and whatever. The main selling point of this, compared with most of the other similar products out there, is that you will have your own domain name.

Unlike other providers who are in different businesses, we are in the domain name business, so we want to give every customer their own domain name. It is backed by the trusted LK Domain Registry.

These are some of the people we are looking at. Right now, we are looking at students and professionals, people who are looking for jobs or looking for opportunities to showcase themselves, but others are also target markets.

As you can see, it is very simple. It is mobile-optimized, so the form factor is based on a mobile. You have a picture on top and then some links to your email, your phone, your WhatsApp, your Facebook, or whatever you want. If you would like to see this, just talk to any of my team members from .lk who are here. They will be happy to show you their page, which we have set up.

By making setting up a webpage easy and attractive, we plan to get more people to use domain names. Here are some statistics for the MyPage. We have a little over one thousand two hundred or so, of which most were individuals. We did have a fairly reasonable number of small businesses, about eighty or ten percent. Even small businesses prefer to set up this ten-minute thing without going for a fancy webpage. We told them they can get a website as well, but they preferred this very simple mobile-optimized thing. Thank you very much, and that is the end of my presentation.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you, Gihan. Do we have any questions for him? Yes, please.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ

This is Pablo Rodriguez for the record. I would like to know if these services that you're offering are white label available.

GIHAN DIAS

Yes, certainly. I should have mentioned that. First of all, I would like to acknowledge .id, Indonesia. John was somewhere here who gave us this idea a couple of years ago, and we basically followed that. We are more than happy to help you offer this similar service in your domain. I will, or one of my team will, talk to you in a little while.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you. Over there, please.

BYRON HOLLAND

Thanks. Byron Holland, for the record. Interesting program. I'm wondering, have you seen a difference between the growth rates in domains associated with the program and just the regular growth rate of more traditional domains that do not have that program associated with it?

GIHAN DIAS

We have been marketing this in two ways. Our normal domains registration people can register, and we have been having maybe about ten percent or so year-on-year improvement on that, which is also fairly okay. We offer both of these programs. When you register a domain in the registration system, there is a checkbox to say, "I want a website," the MySite product, or "I want a page."

We have seen maybe around five hundred people have selected those. We are also marketing these directly, especially MyPage, which we are offering as a free service right now. When you give something free, especially with a nice gimmick like my friend Brandon came up with—giving a small piece of candy to everyone who gets a page—it became very popular. We see quite a lot of uptake on the free.

The trick is to up-convert people who get a free product to their paid product. I do not think we have been very successful in that, so that is something we need to work on. Yes, we do find that maybe five to ten percent of people who get domain names opt to use these products. But also we found the people we target directly are quite interested. Those were free products, so we have now converted them to the paid product.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you so much. We have time for one more question.

PETER JIAWEI CHOI

Hello, I'm Peter Jiawei Choi from Taiwan. My question will be: because it is a really cool project, I want to know about your points on how AI development and web coding trends actually can change the domain name business. On one hand, digital platforms can use AI to enhance their user experience so that they can have more leverage and more advantage toward competition with self-build websites.

On the other hand, people have more power and more autonomy to building their own websites. How do you see that? Also, what about websites if the users want to add more functions? If they need to have a back-end or a more complex database, how can you support the users doing that?

GIHAN DIAS

That is a very good question. AI is something which we cannot avoid, so we have to look into it. As a domain registry, we have strategically decided we will have AI in all our processes, starting from registering domains to fraud protection. But this is a separate thing. What we are doing here is giving people a very easy way to set up a very basic website. That is this particular product.

This will not serve a big corporate or a bank. They would not want to have a small page for that unless it is some very small product of theirs. It is not really for a corporate, and it is not even for a medium business. I think it is for small and micro businesses, the really small guys who do not have the expertise to do their own website but can very quickly set this up themselves.

As you said, if they want to be more complicated, AI is certainly there, but not in this product. This product is a basic product. As a domain registry, we often refer our customers to various providers who can provide them with a more fancy website. This is not a general website creation product. It is a very low-end product to get people into the market.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you. No more questions right now. Roelof Meijer, can you take over, please?

ROELOF MEIJER

Yes, thank you very much. I have three slides. They are a bit fuller than the ones of my colleagues. One is about the challenges we face related to the Dutch domain name market. One is about how that impacts our strategy, and the last one is about our goals with those changes in our strategy. The short answer is addressing the challenges, but I will go a bit deeper.

There are four challenges: the declining Dutch market, increasing competition between .nl and other TLDs, changes in the way the internet is being used, especially by younger generations, and inflation and rising costs at the registry level. Regarding declining markets, we still have about six million .nl domains for a population of roughly eighteen million, which is about three inhabitants per domain name.

That would make India by far the largest TLD in the market if it had half a billion registrations. Even though we shrunk by something like two hundred thousand .nl domains, which makes a difference of almost a million euros less revenue, we are still by far the largest TLD in our market. One of the causes was the COVID boom. During COVID, we speculated if this was a steady, remaining higher level or if we would shrink back to our old growth rate.

Indicators now show our growth rate is less than it was before COVID, and we are at a level almost where we were before COVID started. There is pressure on smaller enterprises; we see more bankruptcies than new small companies starting. As seen in the center graph, in our top five registrars, the majority is owned by large investors more interested in short-term profit than long-term stable income.

They invest in new registrations but not in renewals. We see very cheap first registration actions with high churn after the first year, which does not help the situation in our market. At the same time, because the whole market is shrinking in the Netherlands, there is increased competition. Our .com colleagues had an action last year where you would get a free identical .com for every new .nl registered. We checked the churn and it is very high, but it still increased their market share.

There are AI tools and the influence of that. We do market research on the intention to eventually register a .nl domain. The lowest graph shows a significant reduction in intent by the younger age group. With all those challenges, salaries increase every year, we have had super high inflation, and there is a race for IT talent. Our internal costs increase while our revenues decrease.

Altogether, that means we have to deal with increasing costs, declining revenues, and a potential spiral to the bottom. If we have fewer registrations, we could increase our prices, and we have done that. But our registrars do the same by a much higher factor.

That again pushes cancellations of domains not being used. You have to be careful with continuing to increase prices because it might end up with a spiral to the bottom.

How did that change our strategy? We have had a registrar scorecard for a long time. It is a price incentive model that we use to drive certain behavior or innovations at the level of our registrars. We use it to increase the number of DNSSEC registrations, IPv6 accessibility, and safe email standards. It was mostly aimed at triggering our registrars to implement secure internet standards.

We are going to use part of that budget and set triggers on renewals and the use of domain names that are actually being registered. We have run a program on co-funded marketing where we do not reward just first-time registrations; it has to be a steeper trend than before the marketing action, and we only pay if the registrations are renewed. We are going to expand that because it seems to be pretty effective.

We are going to address the younger generation. We have a graying population, but we feel younger people are the future. If we want to have a long-term effect, we should address that market. Connected to that are opportunities to change online behavior and strengthening our position as the TLD for the Dutch people and organizations by investing in security, stability, and the fight against abuse. It has increased trust in the .nl domain and led to a higher brand preference compared to other TLDs.

On the inside, we have put diversification plans in the waste bin. Considering our role as a private nonprofit organization with a public role, it is very difficult to combine it with anything else. We are focusing on our core activity. We reviewed our SIDN Labs, which is our research and development team, and SIDN Fund, which is a trust we finance that invests in projects in the Netherlands. We refined that strategy to focus on internet infrastructure.

We bundled forces with CIRA, and we now co-own the Hello Registry platform. That was a way to reduce our cost and make more impact with our core activities. We collaborate where we can. We plan to onboard more TLDs on that platform to increase flexibility and quality while reducing costs for all parties. To our goals, our brand and position are the most important things we can do. We want to remain highly relevant.

Although there is pressure from registrars to follow global standards, we do so where it is a wise choice. But where we feel it is a unique selling point for the Dutch market, we keep our Dutch features in that system. As ccTLDs, we are close to our market and operate under the same legislation as most of our customers. We have unique selling points compared to gTLDs, and we should be careful to guard those.

We want to keep our market share in the sixty-five percent area, increase the use and lifespan of .nl domains, and focus on renewals. We have over a thousand registrars, but almost all the larger ones are European or Dutch-based. It is easier to collaborate

with them than with US-based or outside-of-Europe registrars to work on innovation for our registrants. We have a focus on effectiveness and efficiency.

We came from a period where revenues grew quicker than costs. Now, if we do nothing, costs are increasing quicker than revenues. There is a driver to look at how we organize our business, and we feel closer collaboration is key. We have a unique industry where we do the same thing but are not each other's competitors. There is a lot of room for us to be more efficient. If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. In our industry, we can go fast and far doing it together.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you, Roelof. The spiraling down problem is something I'm sure many registries around the world are facing, and that is a very interesting approach. Do we have any questions? Bruce?

BRUCE TONKIN

Thanks for that presentation, Roelof. In your co-marketing program, you said you are incentivizing it partly on renewal. Do you basically pay a year later?

ROELOF MEIJER

Yes, we pay later. There also has to be a different trend than before the marketing action. We follow their growth rate, registrations, and cancellations. They have to do better after that marketing

action. We only pay them later after we evaluate the effect of that marketing action.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you, Bruce and Roelof. Any more questions? Over there, please.

VIVIENNE MAIDEBORN

This is Vivienne Maideborn from .nz for the record. Directed to anybody on the panel who would like to answer: I am interested if any of your initiatives steer new domain name holders through registrars so you can measure uptake of your campaigns at the registrar level.

ROELOF MEIJER

The co-marketing campaign I was mentioning is focused on new registrations. Other things we do, like the registrar scorecard, are focused on renewals. We look at both but with different approaches.

VIVIENNE MAIDEBORN

You know which registrars you are working with, so you know whether you are incentivizing registrars as a whole or just the ones you are running a co-marketing campaign with?

ROELOF MEIJER

Yes, that is correct. We have data on all of them. The registrar scorecard provides them with a benchmark where they can compare their growth rate, new registrations, cancellations, and churn with the average of our registrar group. They cannot see the individual other registrars, but they can compare their performance with the average.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you. Gihan and Andrew, do you want to add something?

GIHAN DIAS

Our campaigns have been direct and not running through registrars. Especially since they are free, registrars are probably not too interested. We have not really looked into that yet.

ANDREW LEWELA

Likewise, at .ke, it is something we picked at our latest Domain Summit Africa. We want to embark on a partnership to get granular in terms of that question. Watch this space.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you. Any more questions? Rohan, please.

ROHAN SACHDEVA

Thanks, Roelof, for the presentation. You mentioned that as ccTLDs, we have autonomy over what features we offer, and you mentioned that SIDN has special Dutch features. What specifically

are the Dutch features? Is it something different from other ccTLDs?
Thank you. Or are you just niksen-ing?

ROELOF MEIJER

We have special features adopted to specific demands that our registrars or registrants have, or Dutch legislation. For instance, we have the possibility to impound a domain name. We used to have—this is an example where we are aligning with a global standard—registration periods of a month, a quarter, and a year. Originally, we only had a quarter. We now have three options where the year subscription is the cheapest. We are moving to one year because we felt it was better to follow the global standard. There are other things where we are sticking to what we feel is useful in our market.

JOKE BRAEKEN

We have an online question for you, Roelof: As the largest ccTLD in Europe, to what extent have government regulations helped to accelerate uptake of .nl domains?

ROELOF MEIJER

We are not the largest in Europe. Germany is still there. As soon as they move out, then we are the largest. To what extent have government regulations helped the uptake? In no way whatsoever, I think. Probably on the contrary. There is some regulation which, if we are not careful, only applies to either Dutch or European ccTLDs and gives an unlevel playing field for the gTLDs in our market. There is no requirement for anybody to have a .nl domain.

I do not think any regulation has really helped. The fact that we have a single jurisdiction we have to adhere to means we are easier to address if something is wrong. That probably helps make it a safer TLD than the average gTLD, which makes it more attractive, but that is a far reach. There is no direct regulation.

BRUCE TONKIN

This is probably getting outside of marketing, but I want to follow up that question. I understand one of the government regulations in Europe is a requirement to do some sort of validation of registrant data. Given that .nl allows registrations from around the world, do you see that as a challenge to try and validate registrants who are not in the Netherlands or not in Europe?

ROELOF MEIJER

I think our biggest challenge will be to do this for all the Dutch registrants, because more than ninety-five percent of our registrants are Dutch. The non-Dutch is a small portion. There is quite a bit of abuse there, so it is probably the area where we will be looking most for correctness of the registrant data. It will probably be the most difficult to establish that the data are correct. But that is a minor problem compared to incorporating this whole procedure into a registration process together with our registrars for everybody.

NAMRATA GILADA

We have one over there for you.

PATRICIO POBLETE

Hi, Roelof. This is Patricio Poblete from NIC Chile. You mentioned that you have been living with very high inflation. Have you had to raise prices to keep up with inflation?

ROELOF MEIJER

Yes, we did. The first time we raised our prices was before this hyperinflation and energy crisis. That was the first time after fifteen years, and we increased our prices by two percent. We were invited by our government to talk about our financial strategy, so that was quite a hurdle to take. But since then, we had a year where we increased our price by ten percent. At that time, inflation in the Netherlands was roughly in that area.

We now have a financial strategy where we try to maximize our price increase at the level of inflation in the Netherlands or lower. We have told our registrars, and they understand, that if we do nothing and are not growing, our costs are growing. Salaries are growing and we cannot influence that, and the cost of things we buy is increasing. We are following inflation in our prices, and we have been doing that for the last couple of years.

PATRICIO POBLETE

Do you think this price increase is causing registrations to go down?

ROELOF MEIJER

That is a good question. It definitely has to do with registrations and cancellations. We get that back when we do surveys. Some cancellations have to do with the fact that .nl domain names are becoming more expensive. They are still cheaper than .com domains, but price is definitely a factor, especially for domains not being used or registered as part of an impulsive buying action or speculation that did not work out.

It brings up the question of what is more important: quantity or quality? We would all be quick to say quality. But if we went back to only the .nl domain names that are being used at the moment, we would have forty-five to fifty percent shrinkage, and we would have to double the prices to stay at the same income level. It is not easy. That is why we collaborate, look at our costs, increase our prices carefully, and provide incentives to help our registrars address the market with useful things.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you. Joke, do we have any online questions?

JOKE BRAEKEN

Yes, there is one question from C. Onasanya from .ng, and it is not addressed to anybody in particular: "What is your most effective marketing strategy?"

GIHAN DIAS

What we have done is give this MyPage, the personal page, free of charge. They all come with a domain under the name.mypage.lk.

Our strategy has been to try to convert these into regular domain registrations. I think we haven't really done enough of that yet, but we want to get as many people as possible having a page. If other people have pages, there is peer pressure or a tendency for you to get a page if your friends or colleagues have one.

For the small business sites, the MySite product, our marketing is mostly on social media, as well as attending exhibitions to talk to people. We ask if they have a website or if they would like one that can be set up quickly. That has been somewhat successful. We have had a steady number of people coming in and getting these sites. It is not a huge marketing success, but we have a slow and steady uptake.

ANDREW LEWELA

I can throw in our experience. There are two sides of the coin around marketing. At the registry, we are not very smart. We believe our registrars are closer to the registrants. They have marketing campaigns that make sense when bundled with products. That is why we go fifty-fifty in their campaigns. We support our registrars in their marketing campaigns.

Overall, because we are also charged with advocacy and marketing, when we decide we want to do a national campaign, it is driven by one factor: human-centered registry. Many of our campaigns are about the owner of the domain, the registrant. We humanize that so they can tell a story behind it. I will give one simple example. My sister recently got a domain and a nice website.

She adds value to gemstones made by women and girls in Kenya. When she went online and built a payment gateway around .ke, she got her first order from Australia and fulfilled it. That is a good story for her and other ladies like her. We humanize our marketing around this. Thank you.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you, Andrew. We have one last question over there.

EBERHARD LISSE

I have a question for each ccTLD member. What's the average price, how many names, and what's the headcount?

ROELOF MEIJER

Our base price is something like four and a half euros. We have just under one hundred full-time equivalents. We have roughly six point one million domains. You can do the calculation and tell us what the outcome is.

ANDREW LEWELA

For .ke, it is seven point seven US dollars wholesale. We have one hundred and twenty-two thousand one hundred and forty-one domains under management. Headcount is at eighteen. Thank you.

GIHAN DIAS

For .lk, we have several products, but what we call our standard domain for Sri Lankan local registrants is about twenty-five dollars. We have around thirty people in our organization. The domain count is sixty thousand. Thank you. Maybe I would like to put this back to Eberhard. What do you make of those numbers?

EBERHARD LISSE

We have six and a half thousand names, one point two staff complement, and a premium pricing model that is very complicated. One thing I need to remind you is that we have a steady growth for ten years of about one and a half domain names per day.

GIHAN DIAS

If I am a small business, an individual, or a corporate in Namibia, what would I typically do? Would I go to .com?

EBERHARD LISSE

You go to a registrar that is registered with us and register a .com.na, which costs half the price of an annual car license renewal.

GIHAN DIAS

But do they actually go to .com.na or do they just go to .com?

EBERHARD LISSE

.com.na is very well branded. Interestingly, we have a few .de domains for German-speaking farmers who are interested in German-speaking tourists. Even more interestingly, we have a few .pl domains because we have some Polish-speaking tourist farmers who are attracting Polish-speaking tourists. We also attract a large number of Dutch tourists, but they all speak English.

ANDREW LEWELA

We could come up with one indicator based on that bag of numbers so that when we sit with CIRA or .au, we are not measuring ourselves too harshly in terms of a low absolute number of domains under management. I like per capita to a certain extent, but I like that you factor in headcount operationally to see if you are efficient. That would be interesting homework for all of us to come up with that one metric. Beyond domains under management, what makes a registry or ccTLD truly impactful? Thank you.

EBERHARD LISSE

I have to make three confessions. First of all, I am also Dutch, which Roelof and I make fun of all the time. I have a .nl domain name. Also, SIDN spends an enormous part of their headcount and budget on research. They do very valuable work which is not strictly necessary for operations but is extremely helpful. We see this often in Tech Day. Their staff members go further and get better gigs, so they

train people to get increasing responsibility. That is all worth the effort.

ROELOF MEIJER

In reaction to something mentioned there, I think we talk too much about domains under management at the registry level. If you look at our case, there is a very high percentage of domains that are not being used. I think there is still a high percentage that people are not going to quickly give up. In the end, we make far more impact as ccTLDs with domains that are being used and by servicing our domestic markets with a very safe, easily acceptable, and affordable domain name. That is where we can and should make a difference.

ANDREW LEWELA

I agree. A push we are making in Kenya is looking beyond DNS infrastructure at economic impact. Governments like to hear that. If you have domains being used for citizen services delivering millions of dollars in value, how do we bring that metric in? It is a good conversation. Thank you.

NAMRATA GILADA

I think we have an online question, Joke.

JOKE BRAEKEN

Indeed. Hilda from .ke has a question for Roelof. .com recently saw a market share increase in the Netherlands, reaching sixty-one

percent for .nl. What specific marketing levers are you pulling to reinforce the local trust advantage of .nl against global gTLDs?

ROELOF MEIJER

I talked about the .com action. If you register a new .nl, you could get a free .com. We did that the other way around to see how it works; if you registered a .com, you could get a free .nl if it was still available. In the end, that is a commercial way to compete. I do not think it is the best way to do things. The best way to make sure you are the TLD for your country is the combination of having relatively low prices, making it very easy to register a domain, having a diverse group of registrars, and making sure the TLD is one of the safest in the world.

That is where you can really make a difference at a local level. People will start trusting you and will trust web shops more under your TLD than under others. That is a snowball effect which strengthens itself. Once you have large exposure and a good reputation, you get free advertisement on trucks, airplanes, and commercials. Once you have that, you are off.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you. I have one question for all three panelists, and other ccTLD representatives in the room can also contribute. How do you measure the strength of your ccTLD in your home market? Do you take any actions to increase the strength of your ccTLD in your home market? Andrew, would you like to go first?

ANDREW LEWELA

We measure strength on the back of trust, which is very hard to measure. For us, the strength of the ccTLD is really about whether we are responsive to the owner of that asset. Is DNS abuse minimized? Is it safe and secure for citizens to use? This is how we measure the strength of the ccTLDs: that we deliver the promise every time to the best of our ability.

NAMRATA GILADA

Gihan?

GIHAN DIAS

I think we measure strength based on the statistics you all provide, which show us having over fifty percent market share. It is not just market share we are looking at; we are looking at the number of people or organizations who could potentially benefit from having a website or email and who use the domain for that. We try to brand ourselves as very high-end. Our branding keywords are trustable, dependable, and safe, not only for registrants but also for end users.

We want a person who is looking at a website or an app to say, "If I go to a website and it is in .lk, then it is safe and dependable." That is a message we want to get across to the entire population. I think that has been quite successful, and we do see people trusting .lk more than other gTLDs.

ROELOF MEIJER

We measure strength in all kinds of ways, including market share, growth, and churn, but also registrar satisfaction. We do not do direct registration, so we are completely dependent on where our registrars put .nl domain names. It is important that they are happy about our pricing strategy, registration system, and customer support. We do brand preference surveys and buying intent surveys. We benchmark our prices to check our competitiveness. We benchmark our abuse percentage because we feel that is an indicator of trust in the TLD.

NAMRATA GILADA

Just one last question.

İDİL KULA

Hello. This is İdil Kula from Turkey for reference. I would like to raise a question regarding indicators. While we are speaking of indicators of market share growth, I want to send this question to all ccTLDs in this room. It seems like we are bragging about our growth and market share, but do you have any ecological indicators regarding e-waste, water use, energy, and carbon emissions? Thank you.

NAMRATA GILADA

Who wants to take this up first? Okay, Andrew.

ANDREW LEWELA

I will take it because it is easy. We haven't done anything yet. This is the honest truth. But for the first time, on my scoreboard as a CEO, my board has asked us under the strategic plan to measure this. It is a very good question regarding sustainability as a registry and how you are contributing in terms of environmental and social impact. My commitment is that hopefully next year we will all track this and report back as ccTLDs. Thank you.

ROELOF MEIJER

It is a great question, and you are absolutely right that we should not brag about sizes. It is a good example of where collaboration can make a difference. We have a local industry association called CENTR for European ccTLDs. They have a corporate social responsibility working group. We already had a group of registries working together and benchmarking on environmental things.

We have our annual report where we follow our CO2 footprint and energy consumption, and we change that into a per-domain-name metric. It helps if you have a lot of domain names, obviously. We started doing that, but there is still a long way to go. My Belgian colleague told me they had finished doing everything where they could change something, and now it was flights. That was the next biggest thing. We should bear that in mind while we are here. We can have our data centers use green energy, but to get here is something else.

İDİL KULA

Thank you so much. I have a suggestion for the ccNSO. Since ccTLDs are regional or country-based, maybe we can have some indicators in the ccNSO for this track next year. Thanks.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you so much to all of you. It was a great session. Thank you to the audience for your patience and your questions.

JOKE BRAEKEN

Recording stopped.

NAMRATA GILADA

Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]