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dotCoop Registrant Verification Process

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Purpose

As part of the contractual requirements with ICANN for the provision of .coop domains, dotCoop has a requirement to ensure that registrants of the .coop domains names are eligible entities, as per the .coop Charter.

Sponsor's policies may permit registration within the Community by the following:

- (a) members of the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), if otherwise eligible;*
 - (b) members of ICA, if otherwise eligible;*
 - (c) organizations formed as and/or considered cooperatives under applicable local law;*
 - (d) associations comprised of cooperatives;*
 - (e) organizations that are committed to the seven cooperative principles;*
 - (f) organizations that are majority controlled by cooperatives;*
 - (g) entities whose operations are principally dedicated to serving cooperatives; and*
 - (h) for no more than 5000 registrants, persons or entities whose use of a .coop domain name would, in the opinion of the DCLLC Board, advance the interests of the cooperative sector in general or would assist in the development of cooperatives worldwide.*
-

dotCoop requires the Registry Operator to provide a system that will allow them to manage the status of the registrants, so that dotCoop can perform the required verification of .coop registrants



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Requirements

.coop registrant verification is achieved by storing a status field against the registrant object. This field could take on one of the following statuses:

- Pending Verification
- Verified
- Under Investigation
- Able To Appeal
- Rejected

The default status for each new registrant is Pending Verification. From here the registrant is then either **Verified** as eligible or **Able To Appeal** about not being verified as an eligible registrant (i.e. a cooperative or as per eligibility charter).

At any time should it be brought to the attention of dotCoop that a registrant is no longer eligible to register .coop domain names then the status of the registrant object will be changed to **Under Investigation**. In that case the dotCoop staff will investigate the concerns and the status will either change back to **Verified** or to **Able to Appeal**, should the registrant be found not any longer eligible.

For registrants that have the status **Able To Appeal**, when the relevant appeal time expires and no successful appeal was achieved then the status of the registrant will change to **Rejected**. When this happens ALL domain names registered against this registrant will be deleted. If a valid appeal is heard then dotCoop staff will revert the registrant to the status **Verified**.

Finally, should the **Verified** registrants make any changes to their contact details (as outlined below) then their status should change to **Under Investigation**.

Domain and their registrant status in regards to the zone file

The following table shows whether a domain name is included in the zone file in relation to registrant's verification status.

Registrant Status	Zone File Status
Pending Verification	Does not appear
Verified	Does appear
Under Investigation	Does appear
Able To Appeal	Does not appear
Rejected	Does not appear

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Registrant States and their transitions

State	Event	New State
Pending Verification	dotCoop staff verify Cooperative status	Verified
Pending Verification	dotCoop staff rejects cooperative status	Able To Appeal
Verified	dotCoop staff receives information that brings in to doubt status of registrant	Under Investigation
Verified	A change is made to the registrant contact details which is listed below	Under Investigation
Under Investigation	dotCoop staff verify Cooperative status	Verified
Under Investigation	dotCoop staff rejects cooperative status	Able To Appeal
Able To Appeal	A valid appeal is made within the time limit	Verified
Able To Appeal	A valid appeal is not made within the time limit or no appeal is received within the time limit	Rejected

Transfer of domains & statuses

Any requests for a domain name being transferred from one registrant to a Rejected registrant are disallowed.

Should a domain name be transferred from one registrant to another registrant object (either as part of an intra or inter registrar transfer) and the gaining registrant object does not have the status of **Verified** then the gaining registrant object will take the status of **Under Investigation**. Where the gaining registrant has the status of **Verified** it will stay as this.

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Verification Policy

Verification – maintaining value for .coop registrants

.Coop is a restricted top level domain (TLD) that is only open for registration to cooperatives and other organizations meeting the .coop eligibility criteria. dotCoop LLC (DCLLC), the sponsor of the .coop TLD, is required by its contract with ICANN to ensure that registrants meet the defined eligibility criteria. The aim of dotCoop is to provide a namespace to the Global Co-operative Movement.

Verification is the process of assuring that all organizations that register a .coop TLD name are eligible. It should be noted that .coop assumes no responsibility for trying to determine if the domain names that are registered are specific to the registrant business or organizational name. dotCoop does not consider trademark ownership or related naming restrictions but alerts registrants that registration of a particular name can be challenged through the dotCoop Dispute Policy which incorporates the UDRP. For dotCoop, the sole verification task is to determine the eligibility of the registrant to register a domain.

Eligibility Criteria

While hundreds of thousands of organizations worldwide operate as cooperatives, the definition of a cooperative varies from country to country and from culture to culture. In order to standardize the definition for .coop verification purposes, the following eligibility criteria which define what organizations are eligible for .coop domains were included in the .coop Sponsored TLD Agreement:

- Members of the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) if otherwise eligible;
- Members of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) if otherwise eligible;
- Organizations formed as and/or considered cooperatives under applicable local law;
- Associations comprised of cooperatives;
- Organizations that are committed to the seven cooperative principles;

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- Organizations that are majority controlled by cooperatives;
- Entities whose operations are principally dedicated to serving cooperatives; and
- For no more than 5,000 registrants, persons or entities whose use of a .coop domain name would, in the opinion of the DCLLC Board, advance the interests of the cooperative sector in general or would assist in the development of cooperatives worldwide.

Penalties for Falsification of Registration Application

Each .coop registrant must actively accept the Registration Agreement of the registrar where they purchase their .coop domain. The dotCoop Registration Agreement is part of whatever agreement is provided by the registrar for .coop domains from that registrar and clearly notes that no refunds will be provided by dotCoop for registrants that are not eligible for .coop domains.

Verification Fees

The cost of verification is included in the cost of .coop domains. dotCoop will not pay any charges for COD mail or other similar charges related to delivery of verification information to prove eligibility.

Community Assistance

In order to address varying standards as well as communication issues that could arise in dealing with global domain name registration, the dotCoop Verification process uses a variety of sources to assist in verification. These include:

- ICA Directorate Staff
- ICA member contacts
- Cooperative apex organizations
- Cooperative references provided by registrants

This assistance is very useful in dealing with varying criteria around the world, but dotCoop has sole responsibility for verification of registrants. Although registrars collect the data to assist in the verification process and dotCoop uses the above contacts to assist in confirming information on particular cooperatives, this does not mean that any organization providing information is guaranteeing the validity of the registration or has been in any way delegated the responsibility of verifying the eligibility of the registrant. This responsibility always remains with dotCoop.



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Inquiry-Based Verification

dotCoop can initiate a review of a previously verified registrant based on inquiries from the wider Co-operative community that question the eligibility of that particular registrant. dotCoop will do an initial eligibility check and will update the status to Under Investigation to initiate the formal verification process, if eligibility is not confirmed.

An email is sent to the Registrant Contact alerting them to the initiation of the verification process.

Verification Process

The process for verification is as follows. Throughout the process dotCoop uses its resources as well as any additional information and contacts provided by the registrant to determine eligibility. Please note that all emails noted below are sent to the Registrant Contact email.

1. As soon as a .coop domain name is registered by a new registrant the verification process is initiated and the registrant receives an email by dotCoop asking them to provide confirmation or evidence that they are eligible for their .coop registration. The .coop name/s registered by this registrant will be inactive until the registrant has been verified as eligible.
2. The registrant will have two (2) days to respond to dotCoop with the information required to determine their eligibility:
 - a. A contact in another organisation that can confirm the registrant's cooperative status (for example the contact in the apex organisation the registrant co-op may be a member of)
 - b. A copy of the organization's bylaws that reflect cooperative principles
 - c. A copy of the organization's most recent annual report or the most recent past two years of audited financials, which reflect cooperative principles
 - d. The last two financial statements provided to members
 - e. A sample of the organization's membership application forms and/or membership materials which reflect cooperative principles
 - f. Promotional, sales or informational material that reference the organizations status as a cooperative and reflect cooperative principles
 - g. A copy of the cooperative act in the country of origin or other legal definition of a cooperative of the jurisdiction in which the applicant operates and to which it conforms along with the legal documents confirming cooperative organization within the country
 - h. A listing of the organization's board of directors with contact information.
3. If the registrant is found to be eligible, then the registrant status is set to Verified. An email confirming eligibility is automatically sent to the registrant by the system confirming this. The domain names registered by the registrant will be automatically activated, i.e. they will be added in the .coop zone and they can be used for web/email addresses.



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4. If dotCoop cannot confirm the registrant as eligible or the registrant fails to respond to the initial email by dotCoop requesting information, the registrant status is set as Able to Appeal.
5. The registrant is sent another email that notifies them that they have 30 days in which to provide the above or any additional information to help confirm their eligibility.
6. If dotCoop does not get a response to the Able to Appeal email request for information within the 30-day response period, an attempt will be made to contact the registrant via telephone. Since both valid email and telephone numbers are required at time of registration, if the email address and the telephone number are not operational then dotCoop will immediately terminate the registration at the end of the 30-day Able to Appeal period.
7. If additional information is supplied within the 30 day response period, then dotCoop will re-evaluate the eligibility decision. The registrant's status will be set as Under Investigation and their domain will appear in the .coop zone file during any evaluation period. If it is then confirmed that the registrant is eligible, the registrant status is set to Verified and the domain associated with the registrant remain within the zone file. A confirmation of eligibility email is sent to the registrant.
8. If the information provided does not serve as sufficient information for dotCoop to confirm eligibility, then additional information may be requested. After all information provided by the registrant is reviewed and dotCoop determines that the registrant is ineligible, then dotCoop will notify the registrant of this determination by email
9. If there is no dispute by the registrant to this determination of ineligibility by dotCoop within 10 calendar days, the registration status is set to Refused and any names registered are revoked with no refund of registration fees regardless of any other grace period. An email notifying the registrant of the revocation is sent to the current registrant contact email address.
10. Once the registrant status is set to Refused, the registrant record is marked as deleted and the names that were registered by that registrant are available for registration by others.

Appealing a Denial of Eligibility

Registrants may appeal denial of eligibility. Eligibility appeals are governed by the dotCoop Dispute Policy. Disputes for eligibility reasons must be sent to dotCoop within 30 calendar days of the date that the registrant status was set to Refused and the notification of ineligibility was emailed. Once a dispute is initiated, the domain will be placed on reserve until the dispute is settled based on the processes defined in the Dispute. dotCoop will abide by the results of the Dispute Resolution Process and implement any decisions as directed from that process.



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Verification Poll Messages

Registrars are notified of changes in the verification state of registrants using EPP poll messages with the following format:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?> <epp
xmlns="urn:ietf:params:xml:ns:epp-1.0">
<response>
<result code="1301">
<msg>Command completed successfully; ack to dequeue</msg> </result>
<msgQ count="9" id="30448">
<qDate>2015-05-01T15:51:10.0Z</qDate> </msgQ> <extension>
<coop:stateChange xmlns:coop="http://www.nic.coop/contactCoopExt-
1.0">
<coop:id>contactID</coop:id> <coop:state
code="verificationStatus">verificationStatus</coop:state>
</coop:stateChange> </extension> <trID>
<cITRID>000000000000000001</cITRID>
<svTRID>100000000000000001</svTRID> </trID> </response> </epp>
```

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Where contactId would be the contact's ID, and verificationStatus is one of the following:

- **pendingInvestigation**
 - A registrant will be set to this when they are a new contact and have just registered a new .coop domain name.
 - The domain name will have a serverHold placed on it, and as such it will not be in the zone file.
 - dotCoop staff will be contacting the registrant directly for the information they require to verify the registrant.
 - The registrar can refer the registrant to the Registry's helpdesk support@nic.coop for more information
- **Verified**
 - The registrant has been verified as eligible to hold a .coop domain name.
 - The domain name will be visible in the zone file as long as no other flags have been manually set.
- **underInvestigation**
 - For some reason, an existing registrant has been flagged for verification by new. The reason could be that dotCoop has received a request from the wider co-operative community to investigate the use of a particular .coop name or the registrant contact has changed. We recommend that the registrar flags this change of status to the registrant on their customer interface so that the registrant is aware they have been flagged for verification.
 - The registrar can refer the registrant to the Registry's helpdesk support@nic.coop for more information
 - The domain name will be visible in the zone file as long as no other flags have been manually set.
- **ableToAppeal**
 - The registrant has failed to prove that they are eligible to use a .coop domain name or they have failed to respond to multiple requests for information by dotCoop.
 - The domain name will have a serverHold placed on it, and as such will not be in the zone file.
 - If there is no appeal received from the registrant within 30 days then the registrant will be flagged as refused.
 - The registrar can refer the registrant to the Registry's helpdesk support@nic.coop for more information
- **refused**
 - The registrant will be flagged as Refused, as per the [Verification Policy](#), and ALL .coop domain names that have that contact will be flagged for deletion.
 - The registrar can refer the registrant to the Registry's helpdesk support@nic.coop for more information



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Registry Snippets

These illustrate the emails .coop sends to registrants on a registrar's behalf.

NB: Sample only. Format and content may vary

V1.0

Subject: You have been verified, welcome to .coop!

Dear <REGISTRANT ORG NAME>,

Your eligibility for registering a .coop domain has been verified. No further action on your part is needed.

Thank you for your patience while we were completing this process. The .coop verification process helps to ensure that only organisations within the cooperative movement can use a .coop domain, making your .coop name a valuable asset for differentiating your business on the internet.

If you have any questions or if you need any assistance setting up your .coop domain name so that it points to a website or emails services, your registrar is the best point of contact.

However, if necessary you can contact us with any questions regarding your .coop name and we will refer you to the right contact.

Thank you for your support of .coop!

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V2.0

Subject: .Coop Verification- Cannot Determine Eligibility for .coop - Please respond promptly to avoid domain revocation

Dear <REGISTRANT ORG NAME>,

Unfortunately, we have not been able to confirm the eligibility of your organisation for a .coop domain name registration. In order to be verified we will need confirmation of your cooperative status.

Please provide at least one of the following:

- 1. Existing web site URL that provides confirmation of your cooperative status**
- 2. Electronic copy of your bylaws or articles of incorporation confirming your cooperative status (draft documents are acceptable)**
- 3. Membership information that confirms your cooperative status or other similar materials**
- 4. Contact within a cooperative organisation or cooperative development organisation that can confirm your organisation as a cooperative**
- 5. Any other materials that can provide confirmation of your adherence to the Cooperative Principles as shown on <http://www.ica.coop>.**

Please contact us within 30 days with this information or with any questions you may have about verification and we will help you complete your registration as soon as possible.

If no response is received within the 30-day timeframe your .coop domain name(s) will be permanently revoked and you may not be entitled to a refund by .coop vendor.

Yours in cooperation,

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V3.0

Subject: .Coop Verification – Denied

Dear <REGISTRANT ORG NAME>,

DotCoop has completed the verification process and concluded that your organisation is not eligible for a .coop registration based upon the .coop TLD Eligibility Criteria <http://nic.coop/eligibility>.

The .coop domain names registered by your organisation will be revoked. Registration fees for ineligible .coop registrations are non-refundable, but please contact your registrar if you have a strong reason why you may be entitled to a refund.

For more information, please review the Verification Policy on www.coop.

Regards,

SAMPLE

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