

Second level domain anme 2LD(.sa) Registration now available in Saudi Arabia

Stephen Jiew - Senior Associate - Intellectual Property
s.jiew@tamimi.com - Dubai International Financial Centre

March 2011

The (.sa) domain is a coveted one as it is arguably the definitive identifier in cyberspace as the domain of choice for entities connected to Saudi Arabia, who would want to own a (.sa) domain name in cultivating one's cyber presence in reaching the lucrative Saudi Arabia market.

The Saudi Network Information Centre ("SaudiNIC") has announced that the all important (.sa) domain name regime is now available for registration. This means that applicants wishing to own domain names using the (.sa) domain such as (www.yourcompany.sa) may now register their domain names in Saudi Arabia in two phases as follows:

Sunrise Phase

This Sunrise Phase runs from January 10, 2011 to March 7, 2011. This period represents a priority period for existing Third Level (3LD) Domain Name Registrants who had registered their 3LD domain name before the Sunrise Phase.

Only qualified registrants (individual or entity) may apply during the Sunrise Phase to register a (.sa) Second Level (2LD) domain name with a label identical to that of their existing 3LD domain name provided that the 3LD domain name was registered before the Sunrise Phase and its registration application date was before the qualification date.

Thus, those owning existing registrations for e.g. www.yourcompany.com.sa may apply for www.yourcompany.sa

Where two applications from different qualified registrants are received for the same 2LD domain name during the Sunrise Phase then priority will be given first to governmental and semi-government organisations i.e. (.gov.sa) and then priority will be based on the earliest registration date.

Landrush Phase

Following the Sunrise Phase, the Landrush Phase begins where applicants (individual or entity) can register (.sa) 2LD domain names on a strictly (first come, first served) basis.

The usual requirements of domain name registration apply i.e. the applicant can either be:

- An entity physically located in Saudi Arabia;
- A natural person, not underage, with a Saudi national identification card or equivalent document issued by the Ministry of Interior of Saudi Arabia;
- An entity with a registration or license issued by a pertinent authority in Saudi Arabia; or

An owner of a trademark or trade name that is registered in Saudi Arabia.

Importantly, foreign trade mark owners should note that if they do not have a business presence or licensed to operate in Saudi Arabia, they must have a trade mark or trade name registration in Saudi Arabia.