

1. INTRODUCTION

This document explains the basis, scope and structure of Te Kāhui Raraunga Charitable Trust's .aio TLD policy suite. It accompanies the appended policies and is intended to support the preparation of the .aio TLD application for the ICANN New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

The document explains why the appended policies have been selected, how they operate together and why other policies commonly published on generic top level domain (gTLD) registry websites are not reproduced in this suite.

The appended policies are intended to provide the substantive registry rules needed to protect the purpose and integrity of the .aio TLD namespace at launch. Other relevant obligations will need to be implemented separately, including through the Registry-Registrar Agreement, registrar registration agreements, registry procedures and technical systems. The policy suite does not replace those instruments.

2. ICANN REQUIREMENTS, REGISTRY POLICY AUTONOMY, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE APPLICATION

The authoritative requirements for the 2026 Round are contained in the current Applicant Guidebook, the form of Base Registry Agreement approved for the round, its specifications, applicable Consensus Policies and Temporary Policies, and other binding ICANN requirements. Successful applicants will enter into a Registry Agreement that defines the registry operator's rights and obligations and the technical and operational standards for operating a top level domain (TLD). These requirements establish a mandatory baseline. They do not, however, prescribe every rule governing participation in a particular namespace.

Subject to the Registry Agreement, applicable ICANN policy and law, a registry operator may adopt additional requirements and restrictions that are consistent with and appropriate to the purpose of its TLD. However in the context of the 2026 round, this policy autonomy must be exercised consistently with any community commitments made in its application and embodied in the Registry Agreement.

3. INDUSTRY TRENDS AND EVIDENCE BASE

The appended policy suite has been informed by the 2026 Round materials, commentary on the 2012 application round, comparative review of registry policy suites and engagement with .aio TLD.

The research indicates that registry policies are most effective when the principal obligations are consolidated into a manageable number of documents, abuse requirements are stated clearly, registration-data obligations are aligned with the

current ICANN framework, and enforcement processes are transparent, proportionate and capable of consistent administration.

Community-oriented and culturally specific TLDs also demonstrate the value of eligibility requirements, nexus or intended-use commitments, restrictions on misleading use, and culturally protective naming controls.

4. ASSUMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

The policy suite is developed assuming that .aio TLD will operate as a dedicated, limited-purpose community namespace rather than a general-purpose open gTLD. Its policies must therefore protect the .aio TLD mission, give effect to the relevant community's authority to define participation, and establish requirements that are clear, measurable and capable of consistent administration through registry and registrar processes.

.aio TLD's instructions and community inputs are the starting point for the policy design. Comparative research and industry practice may inform drafting, but do not displace those instructions.

The policy suite is confined to registry-level domain-name governance. The test applied here is whether a standalone .aio TLD instrument is necessary to state a registry-specific rule, implement a .aio TLD community commitment, or provide a registry-controlled process that is not adequately supplied by an existing binding instrument. It does not purport to replace binding ICANN policies, contractual instruments or specialist operational documentation.

The following are excluded:

Registry-Registrar Agreement. The Registry-Registrar Agreement is the contract through which the registry imposes relevant obligations on registrars and requires appropriate flow-down to registrants. It must be prepared separately and reviewed against the final Registry Agreement, the registry service model and applicable law. The policies inform that agreement but are not a substitute for it.

Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy and Uniform Rapid Suspension system. The Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) is an ICANN Consensus Policy and the Uniform Rapid Suspension (URS) is an ICANN-mandated rights-protection mechanism. They apply through the ICANN contractual framework and their own rules. Reproducing or redrafting them as .aio TLD policies would risk inconsistency and could imply a power to amend instruments that .aio TLD must apply as issued. The suite therefore refers to them where relevant but does not restate them.

Registration Data Policy and privacy materials. The Registration Data Policy is an ICANN Consensus Policy applying directly to gTLD registry operators and ICANN-

accredited registrars. .aio TLD will nevertheless require separate implementation documentation, including any data-protection agreement, privacy notice, disclosure procedure, retention schedule and internal controls required by the ICANN policy and applicable privacy law. Those documents concern legal compliance and operational processing rather than the community-registration rules addressed by this suite.

Other ICANN and operational materials. Data escrow specifications, registry continuity arrangements, DNSSEC practice statements, registry service provider procedures, incident-response plans, technical service documentation and detailed complaints manuals are excluded because they are governed by ICANN requirements or require specialist legal, privacy, security or operational input. Organisational policies not specific to domain-name governance, including employment, procurement, supplier, ESG and corporate risk policies, are also outside scope.

5. FRAMEWORK FOR TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The policy-development process requires a clear distinction between technical-operational responsibilities and community-governance authority.

InternetNZ serves as the primary drafter of the registry policy suite and is responsible for developing the mechanisms by which policies are administered and enforced. This includes registrar flow-down requirements, compliance processes, technical standards, registry operations, and alignment with applicable ICANN requirements.

.aio TLD and the relevant community authorities retain responsibility for defining the substantive values, eligibility requirements, naming principles, cultural safeguards, and broader policy objectives of the TLD. These inputs establish the community mandate that the registry policies are intended to reflect and protect.

This allocation of responsibilities creates a practical policy development model. .aio TLD and its community determine the purpose, scope, and substantive criteria of the namespace, while InternetNZ translates those requirements into a coherent policy framework and drafts the individual policies.

6. .AIO TLD POLICY SUITE

6.1 Policy Objectives and features

The appended policy suite contains the registry-specific instruments required to express the .aio TLD community-registration model and its launch.

.aio TLD is intended to operate as a dedicated community namespace. The suite must therefore do more than regulate ordinary registration mechanics. It must support Indigenous community self-identification, cultural connection, collective benefit and

the authority of the .aio TLD community to determine participation in the .aio TLD namespace. Those objectives are implemented through five connected functions: eligibility; name selection; validation; acceptable use; and compliance and operational enforcement.

6.2 Proposed Policy Taxonomy

The policies have been consolidated where possible so that each document has a distinct function and the suite can be read as a whole.

The following are included:

.aio TLD Registration Policy. The .aio TLD Registration Policy states who may register, the evidence and attestations required, the pre-registration validation process, name-selection requirements, continuing obligations and available compliance measures. It is the key feature of the community-registration model.

.aio TLD Reserved and Restricted Names Policy. The .aio TLD Reserved and Restricted Names Policy gives effect to ICANN reserved-name requirements and establishes .aio TLD controls for operational, legal, community and culturally significant or sensitive names. A separate policy is justified because these controls may apply independently of ordinary eligibility review and may require distinct approval or allocation processes.

.aio TLD Acceptable Use Policy. The .aio TLD Acceptable Use Policy states prohibited uses and the registry's reporting, assessment and enforcement framework. It supplements ICANN's DNS Abuse baseline by recording .aio TLD-specific obligations concerning community integrity, impersonation and misleading use.

.aio TLD Internationalised Domain Name Policy. The .aio TLD Internationalised Domain Name Policy sets the registry rules for IDN labels, tables, variants and technical validation. It is required because IDN implementation depends on registry-specific language or script choices and must operate consistently with ICANN IDN requirements and the .aio TLD naming framework.

.aio TLD Launch Policy. The .aio TLD Launch Policy establishes the start-up sequence, Sunrise, Trademark Claims, any pre-registration phase, allocation and contention rules, publication requirements and launch enforcement arrangements. These matters are time-limited but require a clear public instrument before launch.

.aio TLD Sunrise Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy. The .aio TLD Sunrise Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy provides the required mechanism for challenging failures to comply with .aio TLD's Sunrise allocation and registration rules. It is separate from the UDRP, URS and Trade Mark Clearing House (TMCH) procedures because its scope is limited to Sunrise compliance and registry implementation.

The appended policies should be read together with the final Registry Agreement, Registry-Registrar Agreement, registrar registration terms, applicable ICANN Consensus Policies and operational procedures. Where a binding ICANN requirement applies directly, that requirement prevails. Where .aio TLD has adopted a more specific community rule that is consistent with ICANN requirements, the .aio TLD rule forms part of the conditions for registration and use.

.AIO TLD Internationalised Domain Name Policy

Version 1.0 - Effective 11 August, 2026.

Introduction

This Internationalised Domain Name Policy sets out how .aio TLD governs the registration and management of Internationalised Domain Names under the .aio TLD top-level domain.

Interpretation

In this Policy:

“A-label” means the ASCII-compatible encoding of an IDN Label used in the Domain Name System.

“.aio TLD” means the registry operator for the .aio TLD top-level domain.

“ICANN” means the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

“IDN” means an Internationalised Domain Name.

“IDN Label” means a domain-name label containing one or more non-ASCII characters represented as a U-label or corresponding A-label.

“IDN Table” means a table defining permitted Unicode code points, rules and variant mappings for a supported language or script.

“Policy” means this .aio TLD Internationalised Domain Name Policy.

“Primary IDN Label” means a registered IDN Label from which the applicable IDN Table generates one or more variant labels.

“Registrar” means an ICANN-accredited registrar authorised by .aio TLD to offer .aio TLD domain names.

“Registrant” means the person or entity recorded as the holder of a registered .aio TLD domain name.

“U-label” means the Unicode form of an IDN Label.

1. Scope

- 1.1 This Policy applies to all IDN Labels registered and managed under .aio TLD.

2. Technical standards

- 2.1 .aio TLD will accept an IDN Label only if it complies with IDNA 2008, including the standards-track RFCs 5890, 5891, 5892 and 5893, and any successor standards adopted by ICANN or otherwise required under the .aio TLD Registry Agreement.
- 2.2 .aio TLD must reject code points disallowed under IDNA 2008.
- 2.3 .aio TLD must reject an IDN Label that:
- contains hyphens in both the third and fourth positions unless it begins with the 'xn - -' prefix and constitutes a valid A-label under IDNA 2008;
 - contains a code point or character combination not permitted by an applicable IDN Table or IDNA 2008 contextual rules;
 - contains hyphens in the leading or trailing positions

3. IDN tables and permitted characters

- 3.1 .aio TLD will maintain one or more IDN Tables defining the Unicode code points permitted for .aio TLD IDN registrations.
- 3.2 Each IDN Table must identify its supported language or script and specify all applicable contextual rules, whole-label rules, variant mappings, dispositions and validity conditions.
- 3.3 Each IDN Table must use only the code points and rules needed for the specified language or script to minimise confusion, abuse and security or stability risk.
- 3.4 Each IDN Table must be published, before use, in the IANA Repository of IDN Practices.
- 3.5 .aio TLD will follow the applicable ICANN reference second-level Label Generation Rules and RFC 7940 format where required and otherwise use them as the baseline for developing or updating a .aio TLD IDN Table. Where an ICANN reference Label Generation Rules does not exist or lacks coverage for a target language or script, .aio TLD may author a custom RFC 7940 compliant Label Generation Rules.
- 3.6 .aio TLD will not implement an IDN Table that creates an unacceptable security, stability or user-confusion risk.

4. Registration rules

- 4.1 A .aio TLD IDN application must satisfy:

- a. this Policy;
 - b. the applicable IDN Table; and
 - c. all .aio TLD registration requirements, including those set out in the .aio TLD Registration Policy, .aio TLD Name Selection Policy and .aio TLD Reserved and Restricted Names Policy.
- 4.2 Each IDN registration application must:
 - a. include any language or script tag required by the registry system or applicable IDN Table; and
 - b. use only code points permitted by the associated IDN Table.
- 4.3 Each IDN Label must use only one Unicode script unless .aio TLD determines that:
 - a. an established orthography or language convention requires a limited combination of scripts;
 - b. the applicable IDN Table expressly permits that combination; and
 - c. the combination creates no unacceptable risk.
- 4.4 .aio TLD may subject a requested or registered IDN Label to:
 - a. extended review, including confusability screening; or
 - b. additional evidence requirements.
- 4.5 An IDN Label must not be registered or retained where .aio TLD determines that it is deceptive, misleading, abusive, technically non-compliant or inconsistent with the mission or policies of .aio TLD.
- 4.6 Registration of a .aio TLD IDN Label gives no automatic right to a similar, variant, blocked or reserved IDN Label.
- 4.7 .aio TLD may reject, suspend, place on hold, reserve, block or otherwise restrict an IDN Label where it does not comply with this Policy.

5. Variant labels

- 5.1 Where an IDN Label is registered as the Primary IDN Label and the applicable IDN Table generates variant labels, .aio TLD will treat those variant labels in accordance with the variant disposition rules in that IDN Table and this Policy.
- 5.2 A variant label may be:
 - a. blocked from registration; or
 - b. allocatable only to the same Registrant as the Primary IDN Label.
- 5.3 .aio TLD will not automatically activate variant labels except where .aio TLD has published a clear policy for a specific language or script community in accordance with then-current ICANN requirements.

- 5.4 .aio TLD and Registrars must preserve same-entity allocation and apply domain name lifecycle events consistently to the Primary IDN Label and its variants.

6. Changes to IDN tables or policy

- 6.1 .aio TLD may add, modify, suspend or remove an IDN Table, language, script, code point, variant rule or registration rule, subject to ICANN requirements and the .aio TLD Registry Agreement.
- 6.2 If a change affects existing registrations, .aio TLD must publish an appropriate transition plan addressing matters such as timing, grandfathering, holds, blocking, renewal, notice, Registrar instructions and security or stability protections.
- 6.3 .aio TLD must monitor changes to ICANN IDN requirements and update this Policy and its IDN Tables as necessary.