

# 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;
- 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.

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### 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.

## 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.
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**. 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.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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
8. 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.
9. 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.