

## **Members' voice: Domain extension. swiss**

**Private individuals are now eligible for ". swiss "URLs.**



### **Introduction**

Choosing a domain name and its extensions is a strategic decision, both in terms of business and communication. In Switzerland, domains like .com or .ch are commonly used due to their hierarchy in the Internet system. Yet, are you familiar with .swiss? Introduced in 2016, these domain names were initially reserved for Swiss-registered companies and certain

organizations. Foreign company branches couldn't qualify.

### **Core Purpose**

The aim of this introduction was to play a direct economic role in presenting Switzerland abroad, but not to replace the “.ch” domain, as some companies and organizations preferred to keep the latter.

### **Eligibility Expansion**

However, from April 24, 2024, Swiss nationals and residents can also apply for a .swiss domain, following the Federal Council's revision of the Ordinance on Internet Domains (OID) on June 2, 2023.

### **Registration Process**

The Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM) oversees the domain allocation. Applicants must submit their registration through one of the 35 accredited registrars in Switzerland. The application, after ensuring compliance with registration conditions, is forwarded to OFCOM. The costs vary between CHF 100.00 and CHF 200.00 annually.

### **Priority Allocation**

In addition, you should know that OFCOM has established priority allocation orders when an .swiss domain name is requested by several applicants.

## **Requirements for Eligibility**

Swiss citizens or those living and working in Switzerland can register a .swiss domain. The domain ensures the owner's connection to the Swiss community, but business use is restricted to those based in Switzerland, not abroad, to maintain the domain's integrity and avoid misuse.

For example, a Swiss CEO managing a foreign company cannot reserve .swiss domains in her/his name for his company's commercial activities.

This rule is in line with the Swissness regulation, which aims to preserve the use and registration of the name SWISS and its variations for nationals or companies, depending on the nature of the products and services, but in all cases has a necessary link with Swiss origin.

It is important to avoid any risk of misleading consumers about the origin of the products. Since 2017, new rules govern the use of "Swiss" indications of source. They are intended to protect the "Swiss trademark" from fraudulent uses and to preserve its value.

## **Abuse Prevention**

Measures against abusive assignment on .swiss

The revision of the ODI also provides for measures to strengthen the fight against cybercrime. Until now, a person (company) holding a .ch or .swiss domain name who is suspected of misuse had 30 days to identify themselves and notify the Swiss authorities of a postal address in Switzerland. With the new version of the ordinance, they will only have ten days to react and provide evidence. An additional provision will be applied to internet sites that have been registered for less than 90 days. OFCOM, when faced with suspicions of abuse, will be able to block the domain for ten days, and proceed with its revocation if the holder has not provided the necessary credentials.

## **Designation Criteria**

Natural persons can only register .swiss domains that reflect their official names, artistic names, or other recognized designations. Domains must include 3 to 63 characters, combining letters (including accented characters) and numbers. Names with generic or geographical designations are restricted to certain conditions.

## **Advantages of .swiss Domains**

This extension is a boon for branding, emphasizing Swiss innovation, exclusivity, tradition, and quality. It certifies Swiss origin which adds value and assures quality globally, enhancing the financial worth of Swiss

products and services. A .swiss domain confirms a company's origin and aids in positioning on the international market, making it a critical asset for Swiss nationals and businesses alike.

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