# The digital postal network

.POST Group Business Plan 2018–2020

Berne, March 2018

**Introduction**

This document sets out a strategy for the .POST Group and the UPU-sponsored top-level domain .POST. Its objective is to define one line of thinking which reflects and illustrates UPU members' expectations and the values of the wider postal community in the development of .POST.

The Internet is rapidly changing. The key assets of the worldwide postal network are trust, interconnectivity and visibility as a worldwide brand. These are high-value assets in the rapidly changing digital world created by the development of the information society. The postal sector can use .POST as a platform to leverage these assets in the digital world, thereby strengthening and expanding business opportunities. Indeed, .POST should be considered as the digital trust infrastructure that helps Posts focus their digital strategy as a tool, supporting them in their digital transformation and serving as the vehicle for digital security services and communications such as e-ID, e-delivery, e-proof and e-cloud services.

The challenge is to bring cohesion to different digital strategies and a level of maturity amongst member countries in their digital transformation in order to:

– provide postal operators worldwide with attractive Internet domain extensions for economic, social and commercial aspects of their service; and

– increase postal operators' cyberspace exposure for their own benefit.

In order to achieve this, we need to adopt a coherent, common approach and much simpler, well-structured plans to help implement a digital agenda for the UPU.

The .POST strategy 2020 is aligned with the UPU Istanbul World Postal Strategy.

**I.  Vision**

"Enable the postal sector to be seen as an essential component of the global digital economy and connected governments".

**II.  Mission of the .POST Group**

– Develop .POST to represent the postal sector on the Internet;

– Secure the Posts on the Internet and support them to provide their customers with reliable and secure Internet-based postal services;

– Offer a multi-service .POST platform with viable products to strengthen and extend Posts' business with innovative, Internet-based services;

– Promote innovation, integration and inclusion of Internet-based postal activities based on .POST.

The vision and mission together guide the overall direction of the .POST Group and the development of .POST. To achieve them, a clear business plan is described in this document.

### III.    What is .POST?

–    An Internet identity for the postal sector;

–    An integrated and trusted digital postal network;

–    An enabler of interconnectivity of Internet-based postal services based on UPU standards;

–    A provider of innovative digital postal services.
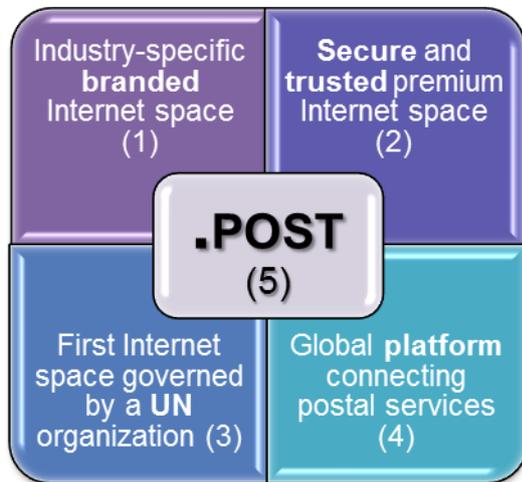


*How .POST can strengthen and extend postal business in a digital world*

Posts need to increase their visibility and find innovative ways to engage with public authorities to ensure countries are able to release the value of the important national infrastructure that Posts provide in their countries.

As mentioned in the introduction, the key assets of the worldwide postal network, namely trust, interconnectivity and visibility as a worldwide brand, are highly valuable in the fast-changing world of the information society. .POST provides a platform from which the postal sector can migrate these assets to the digital world in order to strengthen and expand business opportunities.

### IV.    Situation analysis

*Internet TLD landscape*

The .POST Group commissioned a generic top-level domain (gTLD) intelligence report in 2015 from an external Internet industry expert. The Internet ecosystem is in a transitional period. The competitors' monitoring report was commissioned to look at best practices from other competitive gTLDs, .trust, .bank, .delivery, .pharmacy, in order to monitor the fast-changing and competitive environment of the new generic top-level domains (new gTLDs). This report focused on the new gTLD landscape and how it might affect .POST.

ICANN's gTLD programme, launched in 2012, has increased consumer choice and competition through a range of new top-level domains that have widened accessibility to a broader global user base. ICANN's programme has resulted in the creation of over 1,200 new gTLDs up to 2017. The variance in TLD registry operator type demonstrates a broad mix of business plans, from low-cost volume registries to highly restricted TLDs requiring verification and validation prior to registrant completion, usually involving higher price points (as with .BANK and .TRUST).

The UPU .POST domain is a sponsored TLD postal community space that will benefit from enhanced registration security mechanisms, together with ongoing monitoring, to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulatory codes of conduct.

*Postal sector environment*

Since the first UPU measuring postal e-services development report was published in 2012, there has been strong growth in the importance of ICTs within the postal business and especially in the Internet as a medium for communicating, disseminating information and providing customer support in all regions of the world. Increased focus has been placed on services that support e-commerce and other core services and significant progress has been made in the take-up of postal e-services.

Much progress has been made in the area of strategy and capability development, with a significant number of Posts reporting to have increased funds dedicated to digital and to have developed a new dedicated digital market strategy, hired digital experts, and invested in digital development. However, as shown in the report, the extent to which Posts are using e-services still varies widely as they struggle to implement them, indicating that the potential is far from fully exploited across the entire network.

## V.    The position of .POST in this market

The .POST domain's clear competitive advantage appears to be its position as the only top-level domain specifically connected to a registered and regulated postal union, demonstrating the importance of Posts in the global digital economy and ensuring connected governments and citizens (digital inclusion).

Critical values of .POST include:

–    Security: the advanced Internet security infrastructure that the UPU has established ensures that .POST is the safest Internet top-level domain for UPU members to operate their Internet services, providing highly reliable and secure access for the customer;

–    Visibility and market growth: .POST will increase the visibility of UPU members in the Internet economy and enable them to increase their market share in Internet transactions, thus providing a direct return on investment.

## VI.    Strategy of the .POST Group

The .POST Group is a user-funded body of the POC. Therefore, the strategy for the .POST Group, as defined in this business plan, contributes to and operates within the framework of the UPU strategy for 2017–2020.

The .POST Group will seek and develop opportunities in areas directly related to .POST.

The .POST Group will provide solutions, reports, training, workshops and assistance to all members, dealing with all UPU stakeholders (governments, regulators and designated operators) and businesses from the private sector.

The .POST Group will engage its members in implementing standards and performance expectations. Members are the driving force of .POST growth.

The .POST Group will respond to changes in the market and members' needs, taking into consideration the latest Internet developments. The .POST Group must pursue options and actions that respond to these changes and ensure that .POST meets the needs of the postal sector with viable products and services.

.POST Group members have access to collaborative and cooperatively driven Internet technology solutions, via which they can offer their customers innovative and revenue-generating services.

The .POST Group will develop new streams of revenue and pursue strong positioning in order to ensure .POST remains relevant and sustainable for all its members and the wider UPU community.

*.POST Group strategic goals 2020*

The .POST Group will operate with four goals, supported by eight programmes, as follows:

| Goal 1: Enable the inclusion of the Post in the Internet | Goal 2: Promote trust in digital postal services | Goal 3: Facilitate e-services integrated between members | Goal 4: Service the wider postal community |
|---|---|---|---|
| Registration of names and numbers | Deliver a more secure online experience | Facilitate e-services | Expand the .POST community |
| Provide solutions to address members' needs | Promote the role of the Post in the digital economy | Enhance interoperability of .POST services between members | Engage with ICANN and registrars |

## VII.    Responsibilities of .POST Group members

The success of .POST is dependent on the performance of its members.

Members of the .POST Group commit, where possible, to using .POST as their preferred TLD for cross-border Internet postal services by 2020.

While the objective of strengthening the role of the Post on the Internet remains a global one, each member must commit to .POST by identifying what advancements can be made, quantifying them and executing the necessary actions within the .POST Group.

The .POST Group will work with all members to identify opportunities for improvement and support them in their improvement actions aimed at annual increases in the use of .POST. However, before embarking on specific activities, the .POST Group will seek the commitment of members' senior management to execute the action plans identified.

.POST Group members receive support and assistance to speed up their deployment of secure Internet-based electronic, financial and logistics services aligned with market requirements and innovative business models to strengthen and extend Posts' business.

## VIII.    Activities of the .POST Group

The .POST Group will provide all members with registration services, policies, solutions, training, workshops, information, reports, guidance and assistance to ensure that their usage of .POST and deployment of Internet-based services is continually growing and improving. This includes supporting the registration of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) in Arabic, Chinese and Spanish.

Priority is given to developing the .POST platform and ensuring that it remains trusted, via a dedicated anti-abuse monitoring portal.

The .POST Group provides all its members with a secure domain name environment to enable them to offer trusted services on the Internet. This is done to help position the postal network as a trusted Internet platform to help members improve their digital capability and ensure they are offering their services in a safe and secure environment.

The .POST Group will advocate for greater recognition of the role of the Post in the information society and Internet governance.

The .POST Group will ensure representation in UPU groups that deal with UPU technical standards.

The .POST Group will work with other UPU programmes to ensure that .POST is the first choice in the deployment of Internet-based solutions.

Provision of solutions via market partners, such as website-in-a-box, e-shop for philately and e-commerce marketplaces are in line with expectations expressed by .POST Group members (September 2013 survey).

*Specific activities for 2018–2020*

**Goal 1: Enable the inclusion of the Post in the Internet**

Encourage the growth and development of an Internet-enabled postal network.

*Registration of names and numbers*

– Provide registration services to issue names and numbers on the Internet for all members of the postal community, enabling them to raise their Internet profile;
– Offer suggestions for viable domain name registrations: short, memorable, global and search-engine friendly in order to improve members' visibility;
– Provide support for all its members;
– Create incentives for renewal.

*Indicators*

– Percentage of UPU members registering .POST domains;
– Number of domain names;
– Percentage of support cases resolved within five days.

*Provide services to support members' registration needs*

– Provide secure DNS and DNSSEC hosting;
– Management services of IP addresses with specific security features;
– Ensure compliance with .POST policies and guidelines.

*Indicators:* Percentage of registrants using UPU DNS hosting and IP management services.

**Goal 2: Promote trust in digital postal services**

*Deliver a more secure online experience*

– Create policies, working practices and codes of conduct;
– Enhance .POST policies to increase security and trust in the domain;
– Continue to enhance security monitoring services on .POST, including:
  • IP monitoring and anti-abuse portal against spam, phishing, botnets and malware;
  • advanced domain monitoring of security policies (DNSSEC policy and e-mail server policy);
  • enforcement controls to mitigate abuse and fraud (incident management procedure).
– Investigate possibility of offering digital certificates for .POST domain names;
– Explore authentication for relationships with registrars and registrants;
– Evaluate offering DNSSEC keys at second level for ccTLDs for .POST Group members.

*Indicators*

– Number of security incidents;

– Number of policies and codes of conduct;

– Number of IP addresses monitored.

*Promote the role of the Post in the digital economy*

– Promotion, dissemination of experiences and education
  - Prepare a guide to help countries set up a .POST domain (simple and clear);
  - Develop a community information portal (info.post) for public engagement;
  - Promote use of the .POST logo with taglines to show values;
  - Prepare social media engagement.
– Implement co-branding strategy for use by all registrants and their domains
  - Seek backing from dominant market players (anchor);
  - Reach out to target registrants and those businesses that interact at a secondary level;
  - Use existing standing within restricted unions to drive .POST registrations and use;
  - Provide market research and market intelligence to .POST Group members.
– Provide .POST as a postal community trustmark
  - Encourage authenticated communities with .POST using a shared identity – e.g. EMS Cooperative, philately network, etc.

*Indicators*

– Number of workshops, conferences, news articles, newsletters, blogs;

– Number of communities using .POST.

**Goal 3: Facilitate e-services integrated between members**

Bringing together digital initiatives to enable the interconnected digital postal network using .POST.

*Facilitate e-services*

– Encourage other UPU programmes to launch services using .POST – e.g. address verification services (with POST*CODE), PTC API services (with PTC);

– Create, verify and validate certificates for website authentication;

– Investigate viability of issuing smart objects unique identifier (e.g. IPv6 allocation) for smart data services (such as big data).

*Enhance interoperability of .POST solutions between members*

– Encourage members to establish interoperable services utilizing .POST;

– Encourage a postal ID pilot for electronic identification (eID) across borders.

*Indicators*

– Number of services running across .POST;

– Number of pilots for PostID;

– Number of TLDs using address verification and credentials validation.

**Goal 4: Service to the wider postal community**

*Expand the .POST community*

– Define new launch phases with bespoke pricing models to attract registration levels (e.g. premium name availability);

– Enhance the Domain Management Policy and Rules of Procedure to reflect the launch phases (opportunity to expand domain name registrations and ways to address the needs of all community stakeholders);

– Create an environment that attracts registrants from areas beyond the UPU;

– Carry out an assessment of premium names, target buyers, pricing points and go-to-market strategies;

– Encourage partnerships for utilizing .POST;

– Investigate the use of the domain aftermarket.

*Indicators:* Number of registrant groups activated in the DMP.

*Engage with ICANN and registrars*

– Increase domain distribution channels via registrars;

– Define a registrar on-boarding process and procedure to increase the number of registrars selling .POST domains and providing services to the .POST community;

– Encourage bundling of value-added services during the retail domain registration process (corporate website (website-in-a-box), e-mail, philately web shops, e-commerce shops);

– Encourage .POST members to become registrars, especially in underserved regions;

– Monitor and adopt the most up-to-date ICANN rights protection mechanism (RPM) framework (including a review of the UDRP, as well as all RPMs applicable to gTLDs launched under the new gTLD programme, namely the Uniform Rapid Suspension Procedure (URS), the Post-Delegation Dispute Resolution Procedures (PDDRPs) and the Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH), whose verified data supports additional protective mechanisms available during the Sunrise and Trademark Claims periods);

– Promote UPU legal framework among stakeholders, including civil society and Internet Governance Forum;

– Engage in discussion on public safety and safeguards with ICANN;

– Provide services to support verification and issuing of credentials for interested applicants and validation of registrants for other gTLDs.

*Indicators*

– Number of registrars accredited;

– Number of ICANN policies and procedures adopted;

– Number of data protection and privacy policies;

– Number of WHOIS privacy services;

– Number of credentials issued to other ICANN gTLDs.

**IX.    Links with UPU Istanbul World Postal Strategy 2017–2020**

.POST and the activities of the .POST Group are directly referenced in the Istanbul World Postal Strategy (IWPS) under:

**Goal 2: Ensure sustainable and modern products**

– Programme 5: "E-services": "Build the online presence of Posts and offer new electronic services, demonstrating the importance of Posts in the global digital economy and ensuring connected governments".

In addition, a case could be made for actions in this business plan that will help deliver results for the following programmes:

**Goal 1: Improve the interoperability of the network infrastructure**

– Programme 4: "Information and Communication Technologies"

- Goal 2: Ensure sustainable and modern products.

– Programme 1: "E-commerce and trade facilitation"

- "Speed up the development and implementation of different elements of ECOMPRO …".

– Programme 3: "Product and service diversification"

- "Develop and implement products and services";

- "Speed up the development of diverse financial, electronic and physical products and services aligned with market requirements …".

### X. Work plan and budget

Work plan – the major activities outlined above will be included in the annual plans for 2018, 2019 and 2020.

*2018 work plan*

| *Strategic goals* | *Related activities* |
|---|---|
| Enable the inclusion of the Post in the Internet | – Issue names and numbers on the Internet (ongoing activity) |
| | – Bundling of value-added services during the retail domain registration process via partners |
| | – Enhanced marketing and communications of values and benefits for registering names |
| Promote trust in digital postal services | – New security monitoring services, solutions (tools) and policies |
| | – Promotion, dissemination of experiences and education |
| Facilitate e-services integrated between members | – Facilitate e-commerce and other value-added solutions via partners |
| Service the wider postal community | – Enhanced marketing and communications of values and benefits for policy makers |
| | – Review DMP evolution and RoP enhancement related to opening up more registrations |
| | – Activation of additional registrants group in the DMP |
| | – Approve .POST Registry-Registrar Agreement (RRA) |
| | – Registrars' accreditation and on-boarding processes |
| | – Guidelines for postal operators to become registrars |
| | – Monitor and adopt the most up-to-date ICANN guidelines |

**2018 budget: 570,000 CHF**

*2019 work plan*

| Strategic goals | Related activities |
|---|---|
| Enable the inclusion of the Post in the Internet | – Issue names and numbers on the Internet (ongoing activity)<br>– Bundling of value-added services during the retail domain registration process via partners<br>– Enhanced marketing and communications of values and benefits for registering names |
| Promote trust in digital postal services | – New security monitoring services, solutions (tools) and policies<br>– Explore authentication for relationships with registrars and registrants<br>– Promotion, dissemination of experiences and education (ongoing activity)<br>– Encourage authenticated communities with .POST using a shared identity – e.g. EMS Cooperative, philately network, etc. |
| Facilitate e-services integrated between members | – Encourage other UPU programmes to launch services using .POST – e.g. address verification services (with POST*CODE), PTC API services (with the PTC) |
| Service the wider postal community | – Activation of additional registrants group in the DMP<br>– Additional registrar accreditation and on-boarding processes<br>– Encourage partnerships for utilizing .POST |

**2019 budget: 490,000 CHF**

*2020 work plan*

| Strategic goals | Related activities |
|---|---|
| Enable the inclusion of the Post in the Internet | – Issue names and numbers on the Internet (ongoing activity)<br>– Bundling of value-added services during the retail domain registration process via partners<br>– Enhanced marketing and communications of values and benefits for registering names |
| Promote trust in digital postal services | – New security monitoring services, solutions (tools) and policies<br>– Investigate possibility of offering digital certificates for .POST domain names<br>– Evaluate offering DNSSEC keys at second level for ccTLDs for .POST Group members<br>– Promotion, dissemination of experiences, and education (ongoing activity) |
| Facilitate e-services integrated between members | – Investigate viability of issuing smart objects unique identifier (e.g. IPv6 allocation) for smart data services (such as big data) |
| Expand .POST Group to service the wider postal community | – Approval of DMP evolution and RoP enhancement<br>– Activation of additional registrants group in the DMP<br>– Review of Registry Agreement with ICANN (due for renewal in 2022) |

**2020 budget: 450,000 CHF**