

Registrar certification

Why

The aim of the solution presented here is to attempt to define standards for the provision of domain registration services to end customers and to distinguish individual registrars, primarily from the perspective of the availability of the most commonly requested services.

Over the past two years there has been a significant increase in the number of registrars. The different target groups these registrars focus on is related to this – there are an increasing number of registrars from abroad and registrars providing services to a closed group of customers. Due to this fact, it has become increasingly difficult for regular end customers to choose a specific registrar. And for individual registrars focusing on end users, it is increasingly difficult to attract the attention of customers who select service providers based on the list of registrars published on the CZ.NIC website.

For this reason, CZ.NIC proposes introducing a system to assess individual registrars and help solve these problems.

The purpose of assessing the registrars is:

1. To provide potential registration customers for the .cz domain with information about the level of services offered by individual registrars. This information will be obtained in two ways:
 - by sorting the table of registrars on the website www.nic.cz according to the results of the assessment and a link to the document with a detailed report of the assessment of test criteria)
 - by designating a “certified registrar”
2. To give registrars a definition with information about the features and functions the ideal registration system and related services should have. This would correspond to an assessment with the full number of points. Each evaluation criterion will include an explanation of the benefits for end users.

Two lists of registrars

Currently, .cz domain registrars are both companies that focus on end customers and companies whose target group is sub-registrars or other wholesale customers.

The registrar certification project is focused on end customers, holders or those interested in individual domains. With regard to their needs, individual criteria are also defined. Clearly, the service of registrars who are focused on another target group do not have to comply with the criteria formulated in this way. These registrars could then be at a disadvantage due to this.

For this reason, there are two separate lists of registrars – a list of registrars who provide services to end customers and a list of registrars focused on wholesale customers. The certification will only cover the first group.

The list of registrars providing services to end customers will be the first choice on the CZ.NIC website; the list of registrars for wholesale customers will be available in a link on this page.

Registrars will be included on the list for wholesale customers based on a request sent to CZ.NIC. No criteria used by registrars to register in this group will be established or assessed. A certification project will not be implemented for this group.

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Each list will be named as follows:

“Registrars also providing services to end holders”

“Registrars only providing wholesale services”

How it will be assessed

The entry terms for certification will be set with regard to the criteria, which are very important and if not met, the registrar should not receive a star. If the registrar fails to meet any of these terms, it will be unable to proceed to the assessment.

Entry terms for assessment:

- domain can be ordered online
- main language Czech or English
- agreement with the rules for registration of domain names and consent to the agreement on registration and administration of domain names during registration
- offer of technical support

The relevant registrar’s registration system will be tested during the assessment. This means:

- the functionality of the web application for the registration of domains (or other registration methods)
- services associated with domain registration
- help and customer support

Certification is voluntary. It will therefore take place at the request of the registrar. The assessment will be carried out for the association by an external subject performing the assessment on behalf of CZ.NIC. Assessment will take place once a year. Each registrar will have the option of requesting a re-evaluation once during this one-year period (e.g. due to an upgrade of the registration system or changes in services offered, etc.). CZ.NIC can also carry out registrar assessment at other times, while the results of the assessment will only be used internally at CZ.NIC and can be provided to the registrar for information. In this instance, however, it will not replace an assessment from the proper time.

The criteria are divided into sections that will be reflected in the overall assessment:

1. Registration of the .cz domain (45% weight)
2. Help and documentation (25% weight)
3. Technical functionality (20% weight)
4. Additional services (10% weight)

Individual criteria with versions of the assessment and calculation of the results are available in a separate document. The criteria are considered to have been met even when the specific functionality is only offered by the registrar to a restricted group of customers, and/or as a charged service. However, this fact must be visible from information on the registrar’s website (pricelist, description of service versions, etc.).

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Based on the number of points achieved, certification of the registrar will be carried out with the number of stars in the following way:

less than 50% of the possible points = no star

50%-60% = 1 star

60%-70% = 2 stars

70%-80% = 3 stars

80%-90% = 4 stars

90%-100% = 5 stars

A result of more than 1 star will mean that the registrar will receive the designation “Registrar Certified for Retail” and will be entitled to use this symbol giving the number of stars for a period of one year or until the next assessment is carried out at their request.

Course of assessment

1. CZ.NIC will notify the registrar of the assessment term in advance.
2. The actual assessment of the registrar’s system will take place continually according to the testing methodology within 14 days.
3. The result of the test is given to the registrar in the form of a detailed report from the assessment of the test criteria; the registrar then has 7 days to comment on the assessment.
4. CZ.NIC will address the comments received over the next 7 days and, when appropriate, modify the original assessment.
5. Once all the previous steps are implemented and the deadlines have lapsed, the result is final. The assessment is then passed on to the registrar along with the permission to use the certified registrar symbol (in the case it has been earned).
6. The CZ.NIC website (in the list of registrars providing services to end customers) will publish the certified registrar symbol for the relevant registrar with a link to a file providing a detailed assessment of the individual criteria of the given registrar. The registrars will be listed according to certification results – those with the best assessment will be listed first.

The Registrar Certified for Retail symbol

The Registrar Certified for Retail symbol will include a logo clearly indicating that it refers to a .cz domain, the tagline “Registrar Certified for Retail” and the number of stars from the assessment. Registrars entitled to use the symbol will be able to use it in their marketing and PR communication.