

# .brussels

# .vlaanderen

## LIMITED REGISTRATION PERIOD FOR GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND BUSINESSES

During this phase, government institutions, companies and organisations established in Belgium may submit an application for 'organisationname.vlaanderen' or 'organisationname.brussels'.

### Who can apply?

#### 1. Government institutions established in Belgium

- institutions and bodies belonging to national, regional, provincial and local government bodies
- public authorities, organisations or bodies
- European, international and intergovernmental organisations.

Examples of these are the Belgian State, the Flemish Community, the European Commission, the Brussels Capital Region, NATO, the Province of Limburg, City of Antwerp, Council of State, the National Labour Council and so on.

#### 2. Companies or business with their (head) office in Belgium

These are companies and businesses that have a head office or ordinary domicile in Belgium (no postbox addresses). The type of company is not important and can be a public limited company or a one-man band. Self-employed businesses also fall within this category.

#### 3. Organisations established in Belgium

These are organisations that are domiciled in Belgium (no postbox addresses). In the first instance, these are non-profit associations, foundations and international non-profit associations. This is not an exhaustive list. However, one requirement is that the organisation must be a legal entity.

### Who may act on behalf of their government institution, company or organisation?

There are no specific requirements for lodging an application for a domain name via your registrar. However, bear in mind that you will also have to upload [supporting documents](#) to the validator platform. These documents, wherever relevant, must be drawn up and signed by a person with authorisation to represent your government institution, company or organisation (i.e. with signatory powers).

For example, when a local authority applies for this name of its municipality or borough, the supporting document may consist of an official letter from the council members on the council letterhead, signed by a person authorised to do so (such as the mayor or council secretary).

## What can be applied for?

To summarise, you can apply for:

- your official name or designation, the acronym of that name, your trademark or brand name, the name of a geographical area and name of origin or provenance if you are a government institution
- your brand name, trading name, company name and name of origin or provenance if you are a company
- your brand name, trading name, company name and name of origin or provenance if you are an organisation

Below you will find more detailed information for each type of application: government, company and organisation.

### Government institutions

**As a government institution (established in Belgium), you can apply for a .vlaanderen or .brussels domain name based on:**

- the full name of the government institution (e.g. European Commission)
- the abbreviation or acronym of the name of the government institution (e.g. NATO)
- the designation of a geographical area (e.g. Antwerp)
- a registered trademark (see below for terms and conditions)
- a geographical designation, protected in Belgium (e.g. Ardennes ham)
- a name of origin, protected in Belgium (e.g. Herve cheese)
- a guaranteed traditional speciality from Belgium (e.g. Geuze-Lambiek)

You will find the details you need for the last three categories in the European database: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/list.html>

### Companies

**As a company with a (head) office in Belgium, you can apply for a .vlaanderen or .brussels domain name based on:**

- your registered trademark, on condition that it meets the following criteria:
  - the trademark is a Benelux brand (code BX) and is registered with the Benelux Bureau for Intellectual Property (BBIE)
  - or
  - the trademark has a European trademark registration (code EM) and has been registered via OHIM
  - or

- the trademark has an international trademark registration (code WO) valid in Belgium and registered via WIPO
- de merkregistratie moet geldig zijn op het ogenblik van de aanvraag tijdens deze fase
  - Opgelet: een merk in aanvraag, een niet-geregistreerde merk of een merk waarvan de registratie vervallen is, komt niet in aanmerking.
- your company name (company designation or statutory name), on condition that it meets the following definition:
  - this is the name by which a legal entity is identified and under which its identity as a legal entity is individualised in its legal existence at the time of its establishment or by an official change of name. In other words: the name under which the legal entity was established or is registered.
- your trading name, on condition that it meets the following definition:
  - this is the name that a company uses in the course of its operations, or the name under which the company trades. Only those trading names that are known on Belgian territory are eligible.
- any name of origin or provenance of which the company is the holder (also see above)

### **About trademark types**

Wordmarks (i.e. the brand name of a product, service or entity), such as DNS Belgium, are eligible for registration. Logos (i.e. brand names that consist of graphical components/images or a combination of images and word elements) are eligible. Only the word component of a logo is eligible to be registered as a domain name. This word component must be predominant and must also be clearly separate or distinguished from the image component.

Because of their specific nature, other marks such as shape trademarks, sound trademarks and colour trademarks are not eligible as the basis for registering a domain name.

### **Organisations**

**If the organisation (including associations and foundations) is established in Belgium, you can apply for a .vlaanderen or .brussels domain name based on:**

- your corporate designation or statutory name, on condition that it meets the following definition:
  - this is the name by which a legal entity is identified and under which its identity as a legal entity is individualised in its legal existence at the time of its establishment or by an official change of name. In other words: the name under which the legal entity was established or is registered.
- your registered trademark (see above)
- your trading name (see above)
- any name of origin or provenance of which the organisation is the holder (also see above)

## Special characters, spaces, accents, etc

A (brand)name, trading name or company name may also contain special characters, such as ‘, @, !, &, %, § and so on. It can also contain hyphens, spaces and accent marks (é, ç, à, ê). Some of these will not be allowed in a valid domain name.

The general rule is that you convert these characters to characters that can be registered as a domain name. To do this, you replace these marks by other characters that are permitted, such as a hyphen. Or you drop these characters altogether. Spaces must always be left out. Hyphens can be included, if the applicant prefers, or left out. [IDN accents](#) can be included in the domain name.

The detailed rules used for conversion will be made available extensively at our website before the start of this phase. Your registrar or registration partner can also give you additional assistance if you have any specific questions about this.

### A number of examples of special cases

- Café can be registered as café.vlaanderen and café.brussels
- @café can be converted to café.vlaanderen, at-café.vlaanderen and atcafé.vlaanderen. (and can of course also be used in the .brussels extension)
- c-af-é can be registered as c-af-é.vlaanderen and c-af-é.brussels or converted to café.vlaanderen and café.brussels.

## Exceptions

Some domain names cannot be registered, or cannot be registered yet. DNS Belgium is required to abide by a number of rules imposed by ICANN.

A number of domain names will be placed on a reserved list. The domain names on this list can only be registered if they meet specific conditions. For example, this relates to the names of countries and states, the names of international organisations such as the Red Cross and the International Olympic Committee, 2-letter codes for countries such as BE for Belgium, etc. Normally speaking, only in very exceptional circumstances will there be an overlap with the name that you wish to have registered.

## When?

You can lodge an application for ‘yourorganisation.vlaanderen’ or ‘yourorganisation.brussels’ **from 2nd October 2014 (10.00 CET) until 3rd November 2014 (10.00 CET)**.

## How?

The registration of yourorganisation.vlaanderen or yourorganisation.brussels will take place in two stages: one, the **application via your registrar** and, two, the **investigation by the validator**. After positive validation, your domain name will actually be registered.

For stage one (the application), there are no formalities to carry out. You contact the registrar (or another party that handles your domain name registrations) and say that you wish to apply for a .vlaanderen or .brussels domain name for your government institution, company or organisation during this specific phase.

For stage two (the validation investigation), you will need to fulfil a number of formalities. You will receive the contact details of the validator via your registrar, together with instructions for how to upload your supporting documents to the validation platform. These supporting documents are any means (documents, references to online registers or databases, files, etc.) that demonstrate your entitlement to the domain name you are requesting.

Detailed instructions about supporting documents will be published at our website well before the beginning of this phase. These instructions include a list of the most frequently used supporting documents for each type of entitlement invoked. Your registrar or registration partner can also give you additional assistance if you have specific questions.

A few examples

- The town of Sint-Niklaas wants to register its name. It demonstrates its entitlement to do so by drafting a letter on the letterhead of the Town of Sint-Niklaas and having it signed by the mayor and/or council secretary.
- NV xyz wants to safeguard its company name. For the validation investigation, its best tool to do this is its reference to the articles of association published in the Belgian Official Gazette. Based on this, it can opt to have xyz.vlaanderen, nvxyz.vlaanderen or xyznv.vlaanderen registered.
- A government institution wants to register the acronym “ABCDE” as abcde.brussels. To have its validation application approved, its best option is to refer to some form of a legal deed (Act of parliament, decree, Royal Decree, etc.) in which its name and the required acronym appear.

### Why register now?

At the end of the process, .vlaanderen and .brussels will be opened to the public (in phase 5). This means that anyone (so not just Belgians and Belgian companies or organisations) will be able to apply for and register domain names with these extensions. Once that happens, no specific allocation rules will apply any longer and anyone will be able to apply for and register any domain name (provided it is available).

But before these open registrations become possible, we are using this phase to offer government bodies and organisations an exclusive opportunity to establish domain names over which they can claim certain rights. In this way, local governments, companies and organisations will be able to safeguard the domain names that correspond with their trademark, company name, corporate designation and so on more quickly.

NB: all applications will be gathered and validated during this phase. If a domain name is requested by more than one applicant, an auction will determine who is able

to register the domain name in the end. This might happen, for example, if both the borough of Hoegaarden and the brewer AB Inbev were to apply to register 'hoegaarden.vlaanderen'.

## Costs

During this phase, DNS Belgium will invoice an amount of **€80** per domain name to the registrar for each application. This amount is only the **wholesale price**. Any additional fee that the registrar charges to the end-customer is not included. The payment requested covers the initial application and the validation investigation. The registration fee for your domain name for the first year is not included in this amount.

If your application is given a positive assessment and the domain name is effectively registered for you, DNS Belgium will then charge the **normal registration fee (€20)**. This amount will be charged via your registrar.

It is important to know that any payment you are charged will come via your registrar. You will not receive any payment notice or invoice from the validator.