

## Top-Level Domains (TLDs) for the Chinese market

### Summary: TLDs for the Chinese market

Do not use Chinese ccTLDs (e.g. .cn, .com.cn, .gov.cn) for an overseas business presence.

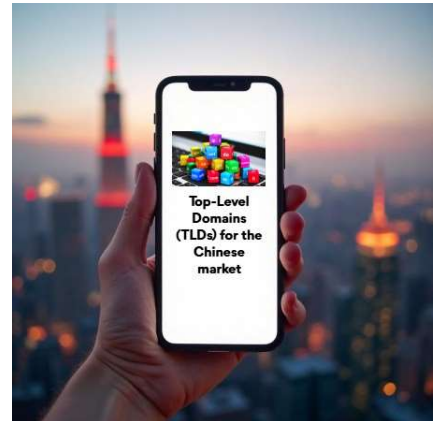
In 2022, Chinese authorities changed ownership rules: only Chinese companies and citizens can own Chinese TLDs.

Overseas companies can still purchase a domain in China, enabling the use of Chinese national name services.

Chinese search engines prioritise traditional TLDs such as .com, .net, .co, and .cn.

Our recommendation: keep your current TLD (.com / .co) and add cn to the domain label, e.g. mydomaincn.com or mydomaincn.co.

Registering a domain in China can significantly improve online performance in China and local search visibility.



**Practical takeaway:** Being seen, being found, and starting to trade require using Chinese Name Servers to make your DNS records available throughout China.

### TLD, Name Services (NS) and Domain Name Service (DNS) terms

There are two main parts to a domain name you need to consider when making a purchase:

- A TLD (Top-Level Domain) is the part of the domain name that comes after the "DOT", e.g., .com, .net, etc.
- A domain is the part that comes before the TLD. ", e.g. "mydomain" in mydomain.com
- The Domain name is the domain + TLD., e.g. mydomain.com

### Top-level domains (TLDs)

TLDs are in three groups as follows;

#### Country Code Top-Level ccTLDs

- These are two-letter TLDs assigned to specific countries or territories, such as .uk (United Kingdom), .cn (China), and .de (Germany).

- Managed by local authorities or organisations specific to the country or territory.
- Today, most countries want these ccTLDs to be used by businesses and residents of their country, and China is no exception.

### Sponsored gTLDs (sTLDs)

- These TLDs have a sponsor representing a specific community, industry, or sector.
- Example: [.edu](#) (for U.S. educational institutions), [.gov](#) (for U.S. government entities), [.museum](#) (for museums).
- Sponsors set policies and manage registrations for their specific communities.

### Un-sponsored gTLDs (uTLDs)

- These are generic TLDs managed by registries accredited by ICANN and open to general public use.
- Example: [.com](#), [.net](#), [.org](#), [.xyz](#), [.online](#), [.info](#).
- No specific community or restrictions—available for commercial or personal use.

Within these groups, there are also second-level ccTLDs. Here are some examples for [.cn](#):

- [.com.cn](#) – This is for commercial entities similar to [.com](#) but specifically for businesses operating in China.
- [.net.cn](#) – For network-related organisations similar to [.net](#).
- [.org.cn](#) – For non-profit organisations or entities similar to [.org](#).
- [.gov.cn](#) – For government institutions in China.
- [.edu.cn](#) – For educational institutions in China.
- [.mil.cn](#) – For military organisations in China.

Again, most countries want these ccTLDs used by businesses and residents of their countries, and China is no exception.

Traditionally, the commonly used TLDs in China are;

- [.com](#) & [.cn](#)
- [.com.cn](#) (original Chinese TLD)

For a while now, you can register International Domain names (IDN) in different language characters, e.g., Russian, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, etc.

In the case of Chinese characters, there are Chinese ccTLDs available, e.g.;

- [.中国](#) is.CN in Simplified Chinese

- .中國 is.CN in Traditional Chinese (Cantonese / Taiwanese)
- .公司 is.COM in Simplified Chinese
- .网络 is .NET in Simplified Chinese

Some TLDs are ccTLDs and are operated and managed by the Chinese authorities.

The domain can also be in Chinese, e.g., 我的域.com (“mydomain” in Chinese). You can purchase a domain name in Chinese from any domain registrar that supports Chinese. The authorities manage the TLD.

Examples;

- mydomain.com (standard English domain name format)
- mydomain.cn (standard English domain name format) ☒ mydomain.com.cn (standard English domain name format)
- 我的域名.com (domain format in the Chinese language)
- 我的域名.cn (domain format in the Chinese language)
- mydomain.中国 (TLD in the Chinese language)
- 我的域名.中国 (TLD and domain in the Chinese language)

Having shown that you can use the Chinese language in domains and TLDs, I would not recommend it. Its use is limited: only people who can write Chinese on a mobile or tablet can use the domain name.

## Chinese ccTLDs management

The management of the Chinese ccTLD is the responsibility of the Chinese authorities.

In 2013, Chinese authorities fully automated the purchasing of Chinese domain names. While many international domain suppliers offer Chinese ccTLDs, a licensed Chinese supplier is involved in the background when purchasing one. It's important to note that only an authorised Chinese business can register a Chinese ccTLD.

In 2022, Chinese authorities will only allow Chinese companies to own Chinese TLDs. This did not affect Chinese domain ownership at this stage, as Chinese business agents only own Chinese TLDs. The problem today is that if you use a Chinese TLD for overseas business, the Chinese authorities can shut down the domain.

Chinese authorities apply the Chinese Internet Content Provider (ICP) rules and regulations if you use the domain name to publish content within China. When writing this paper, the ICP rules and regulations do not apply if you use Chinese ccTLDs outside China.

The Chinese authorities could stop using a Chinese domain name if they wish. Therefore, we recommend that you refrain from publishing inappropriate materials for the Chinese market.

Please follow this link to view our recommendation for the domain name for the Chinese market.

### **Trademark registration checks**

We always recommend that you register the company trademarks and brand name(s) in China.

When publishing a domain name in China, the local authorities will check the Chinese trademark registration database to ensure that your domain name is not a registered brand. If so, regardless of your domain name ownership, you will not be permitted to use this domain name in China. You can still use the Chinese TLD name outside China.

Note: For more information, please see: [Domain names for the Chinese market](#)