Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a visual guide on how to submit a request/application for business name search.

Prerequisites

Individual submitting a request for a file perusal must have an eCitizen account. The type of account could be either of the four below:

- Kenyan citizens account:
- Foreign Residents Account:
- Visitor(eVisa) Account:
- Linked Business Account.

Anyone with an eCitizen account can submit a request for business name search and reservation:

***This manual has been prepared using an eCitizen account. Please note; regardless of the account used everything remains constant i.e. the interface and application forms***

The Business Name is the simplest business form under which one can operate a business. The Business Name is not a legal entity. It simply refers to a person who owns the business and is personally responsible for its debts.

The Company Registry under Attorney General requires all applicants to request for a business name here. Currently, It takes one (1) day for the business name search to be processed.

Before you perform a name search it is important to note the following,

1. Business with the word "Enterprises" at the end cannot use Initials E.g. J.K and Brian Enterprises
2. Names with the word “Foundation” must be registered as Companies limited by guarantee
3. Names with “Groups”, "projects” and “Holdings” must be limited. (Ahadi group limited)
4. Names with “Universities” must be limited. (Ahadi university limited)
5. Single words are not accepted (Ahadi)
6. Offensive or abusive words are not allowed either. Offensive words in vernacular (mother tongue) are not allowed either.
7. Political names e.g. (Nairobi youth alliance) are not allowed
8. Numeric characters are not allowed not unless it’s the current year e.g. (2015)
9. Names starting with the word “Kenya” are only reserved for the government.
10. Names with ‘Church’ and ‘Ministry or Ministries’ are not allowed
11. Names with “Trust”, “Foundation”, Programmes are not allowed
12. The Registrar of Names does not register clubs
13. Names with “Relief” are not allowed
14. Names with “welfare”, Organization, Association, are not allowed.

Steps of application:

1. Log into your e-Citizen account (www.ecitizen.go.ke) as illustrated below and click Login

![Login Screen](image)

2. Click on get service under Business Registration Service
3. The customer logs into their personal eCitizen account and clicks on “Make application” as illustrated below.
4. A list of all Business Registration Services (BRS) will be displayed.

Click on the link **NAME SEARCH AND RESERVATION** as illustrated below:

![Screen capture of the eBusiness portal showing the search functionality for Business Registration Services with a list of services including Name Search and Reservation highlighted.]

5. Read through the details. The requisite fee to pay will be displayed. In this case it will cost **KShs 150** for this service. Click **Apply Now**.
6. Enter the details required as per the illustration below. Any errors detected will be flagged by the system and ask you to correct.
After choosing a special instruction, provide a brief description of your proposed business name.

Click Continue.

7. Select the checkbox confirming that you have provided all information required by the registrar in order for your business name to be reserved and click Finish as illustrated below:

8. Select your preferred payment option from the list provided and follow the payment instructions as listed.
9. Once you complete the payment click on Complete. Your payment will be processed and confirmed.

10. A receipt will be generated which contains a reference number beginning with NS e.g. NS-BQ73Q
11. You will be required to keep checking your eCitizen account to find out whether your preferred business name has been reserved or rejected. Usually it takes 1 business day.

It should be noted that there is no requirement for a minimum or maximum number of names that an application can give.

Circumstances in which a company name will not be registered

These circumstances are well illustrated under Section 10 of Companies (General) Regulations, 2015:

A company name may not be registered if:

1. it is the same as a name appearing in the Registrar’s Index of Company Names, Business Names, Limited Liability Partnerships or Partnerships;
2. it has a close phonetic resemblance to the name of company, business name, limited liability partnership or partnership that is already registered;
3. it differs from the name of another company, business name, limited liability partnership or partnership that is already registered only by the addition of the name of a place, locality or region within Kenya;
4. it is identical to, or closely resembles, that of a name that has been reserved by the Registrar for use in connection with a proposed company, business name, limited liability partnership or partnership;
5. it is identical to, or closely resembles, the name of a company or limited liability partnership that has been dissolved, or has been struck off the register of companies or register of limited liability partnerships, or the entry of a business in the register of business names or partnerships kept under the Registration of Business Names Act 2015 has been cancelled;
6. it is the same as a name of a body corporate or established under a written law;
7. the Registrar believes on reasonable grounds that its use would involve the commission of a criminal offence; or
8. the Registrar believes on reasonable grounds that it is offensive or undesirable or contrary to public interest.