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Generated on 13/11/2026 19:34

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Long-running API operations: the 202 answer, the action_id and following the result

WhatsApp & APIs

CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-MZ-KB-2766	v2026.11.13	Mozambique · English

Interweb Mozambique
RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NUIT) 401 191 607 · Legal entity no. (NUEL) 105 045 974 · Economic activity code (CAE) 62022

https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/2766

Long-running API operations: the 202 answer, the action_id and following the result

WhatsApp & APIs Created on **November 13, 2026** 3 min read



The short answer: operations that take time answer straight away with a `202` and an `action_id`, because the work carries on after the answer. **Do not repeat the request:** follow the result with `GET /v1/actions/{id}` until the status is `done` or `failed`.

Which operations answer 202

Operation	What takes time
Registering, renewing and transferring domains	The work carries on after the answer. Some extensions, including .mz, are handled manually and take longer.
Starting, stopping and restarting a VPS	The action is queued. Starting usually takes about 2 minutes, and stopping about 6.
Buying an extra	The action ends with the payment; delivery is followed separately.

The states of an action

Status	What it means
`queued`	Queued, waiting to start.
`running`	Running.
`done`	Finished successfully.
`failed`	Failed. The reason is in `result`.

```
curl https://api.interweb.co.mz/v1/actions/0f8fad5b-d9cb-469f-a165-70867728950e \
-H "Authorization: Bearer $RLX_API_KEY"
```

The answer gives the `id`, the type, the target (the domain, for example), the `status`, the `result` and when it was created and last updated. You only see your own account's actions.

Following an action without wasting requests

1. **Store the** `action_id` as soon as the `202` arrives, next to the operation that produced it.
2. **Check at a calm pace.** One request every few seconds is enough; very fast loops only burn through the **request limits**.
3. **Stop when the status is** `done` **or** `failed`, and read the `result`.
4. **Confirm the final effect** with an ordinary read: the domain in `GET /v1/domains/{domain}`, the server in `GET /v1/servers/{id}`, the extra in `GET /v1/extras/{id}` with the `extra_id` from the answer.

> **Repeating the request instead of following it**
> speeds nothing up, and on a server it returns `409 action_in_progress`, because each server runs one action at a time (the running `action_id` is in `details`). For purchases, always use the **Idempotency-Key**, so a retry never buys twice.

Server specifics

Case	What happens
Who can check it	Only the key that requested the action.
How fresh the status is	It comes from a copy up to 20 seconds old and counts towards the account read limit. Past that limit, the action stays `running` until the next read.
No confirmation in time	`failed` with `timed_out` in `result.reason`. Check the server's state in that case.
The server is no longer available	`failed` with `server_gone`.

Why does the answer not carry the result right away?

Because some tasks depend on other systems and take minutes. It is the difference between a synchronous and an asynchronous answer, explained in **synchronous or asynchronous**.

RECOMMENDED

Want to watch an action run without risk? Make the request with a Sandbox key and follow it in the documentation, reached from the API page.

See the API page →

SEE ALSO

- Synchronous or asynchronous: why a payment or SMS confirmation arrives later →
- Idempotency-Key in our API: repeating a purchase, payment or ticket without doing it twice →
- API request limits: per key, per account and per task, the headers and what to do after a 429 →
- Domains through the API: checking a name, registering, renewing and transferring with credit →
- Controlling a VPS through the API: start, stop, restart, root password, reinstall and backups →
- Webhook or polling: how one system learns that something changed in another →

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