Summary Report of Public Comment Proceeding

Evolving the Governance of the Root Server System

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Section I: General Overview

This Public Comment proceeding sought feedback for evolving the governance of the Root Server System (RSS), including a proposed community-driven process. On 3 May 2019, the ICANN Board approved a resolution to begin Public Comment on this topic.

Section II: Contributors

At the time this report was prepared, a total of nine (9) submissions have been received. The contributors, both individuals and organizations/groups, are below. To the extent that quotations are used throughout this report, citations will reference the initials.

Organizations and Groups:

Name	Submitted by	Initials
At-Large Advisory Committee	ICANN At-Large Staff	ALAC
Business Constituency	Steve DelBianco	BC
China Organizational Name Administration Center	Zhang Zuan	CONAC
Internet Architecture Board	Ted Hardie	IAB
Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group	Rafik Dammak	NCSG
Registries Stakeholder Group	Donna Austin	RySG
Root Server System Advisory Committee	Andrew McConachie	RSSAC
Security and Stability Advisory Committee	Andrew McConachie	SSAC

Individuals:

Name	Affiliation (if provided)	Initials
Paul Muchene		PM

Section III: Summary of Submissions

General Disclaimer: This section intends to summarize broadly and comprehensively the submissions to this Public Comment proceeding but does not address every specific position

stated by each contributor. Readers interested in aspects or the full context of any of the summarized submissions should refer directly to the specific contributions in the [archive](#).

Overall, the submissions are supportive of evolving the governance of the RSS.

- "The SSAC reviewed the proposed framework in order to assure itself, and others, that the proposed governance structures are capable of identifying issues and responding to them as they arise, including but not limited to issues of technology, policy, operations, or security. Overall, the SSAC is confident that such issues have been adequately addressed in the proposed framework. […] The SSAC believes that this described framework has the necessary attributes of stability and sustainability for the management of the RSS."

- "The proposed evolution of the governance of the Root Server System in RSSAC037 is arguably one of the most significant processes in the history of ICANN. The RSSAC and those who contributed to RSSAC037 are to be congratulated as is the ICANN Board for its response currently under discussion. The ALAC strongly supports the overall proposal and appreciates the opportunity to comment on it."

- The BC states that "a development that integrates RSS governance and accountability within the global multistakeholder structure of ICANN is welcome."

- "[T]he RySG commends the efforts that RSSAC and ICANN Org have engaged in to develop a comprehensive proposal to evolve the governance of the RSS."

There are four general themes to the submissions:

1. **Definition of stakeholders** – Several submissions questioned the definition of RSS stakeholders in RSSAC037 and proposed specific points to address this. The SSAC noted that RSSAC037 "does not make explicit mention of the Internet's user base." The ALAC also found it "difficult to accept that Internet users, the ultimate user and beneficiary of the DNS, are not listed as having a stake in the existence and evolution of the RSS." PM agreed with this sentiment, asking "[a]s Internet users are the biggest beneficiaries of the RSS, how will the proposed structures assure Internet users of the trust and integrity of the RSS?" NCSG noted that it prefers a "more inclusive formulation" of ICANN community that includes all constituent bodies.

2. **Structural clarifications** – Several submissions sought clarifications about the scope and composition of the RSSAC037 functions/Concept Paper structures. The IAB asked for a "description of which coordination roles would be under the Secretariat" and "clarification of whether the coordination envisioned for the deployment of standards will include contributions to the relevant IETF working groups." The IAB also asked if there is an "appeal path of any decisions" about designation/removal of Root Server Operators (RSOs). CONAC advised "that the number of representatives and selection mechanism of the … three new groups should be made clear." In its submissions, the BC is "concerned that ICANN Org as a root operator itself could be faced with conflict of interest … [and] it is BC's view that if the structural mechanism is to work well, accountability and balance can be achieved but the optimum would be for another independent body to operate the L-

root currently operated by ICANN." The NCSG noted that the "two 'houses' of the GNSO have dramatically different interests and perspectives on the operation of the RSS, essentially a producer vs a consumer perspective" and therefore "it would not be possible for one representative to adequately represent both" in the Designation and Removal Function.

3. **Funding questions** – Two submissions raised financial considerations. The ALAC would like to "understand exactly what level of funding will be required. […] It is unclear where the Board currently visualizes these funds will come from. Cost estimates must be established. Once this is done, there should be a study of possible sustainable funding options. As important as the RSS is, the new funding must not come at great cost to other Community and non-DNS, industry-based activity support by ICANN org." The NCSG would also "like to know more details on how ICANN Org plans to staff and perform the [Financial F]unction; since it is difficult to evaluate the cost effectiveness of the proposed staffing needs of RSSAC037 unless we know where the money is coming from and how it would be allocated."

4. **Future work** – Several submissions provided feedback about the next phase of this work, which includes the convening of the RSS Governance Working Group (GWG). The RySG and RSSAC agreed to support the work of the GWG. The SSAC recommended that it be "included as a voting member in the GWG." SSAC also noted that GWG transparency should be more "explicit with specific undertakings to ensure that this objective is part of the standard operating procedures for this group." The BC made a similar point about GWG reporting: "We would like to suggest that the work 'regularly' be defined to be either monthly or quarterly or a week before regular ICANN board meetings." CONAC asked about the composition of the GWG, "On what basis was the number of representatives from ccNSO, IETF/IAB, RSOs, RySG be determined? Why not have more representatives from these stakeholder groups? It is necessary to provide more concrete rationale on this."

Section IV: Next Steps

This summary report will inform the next steps of ICANN org and the ICANN Board. Before ICANN66, ICANN org will consider feedback related to the GWG and make any necessary changes to the draft charter, draft operating procedures, and draft work plan for expected ICANN Board action.

ICANN org will also prepare materials concerning the remaining areas of feedback for the review of the GWG. Once the GWG is in place, it will consider the definition of stakeholders, structural clarifications, and funding questions identified in the Public Comment proceeding. The GWG will then develop a final model based on RSSAC037 and the Concept Paper.