



Project Overview

to the

Request for Proposal

For

REVIEW OF THE ICANN Root Server

System Advisory Committee

Date of Issue: 5 June 2017

1.0 Introduction

1.1 About this Document

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (“ICANN”) is seeking a provider to conduct an independent review of the [Root Server System Advisory Committee](#) (RSSAC), as mandated by ICANN’s [Bylaws](#).

In seeking a comprehensive proposal for these services, ICANN is placing maximum emphasis on several key components of value including expertise with similar processes, demonstrated expertise with RSSAC and/or the Root Server System, experiences with similar processes, and the ability to work within the guidelines established in this RFP. Additional ideas and suggestions are welcome.

Note: This “Project Overview” to the RFP, even if it provides all the information relevant for the RFP such as the RFP background, scope, requirements, deliverables and timeline, does not constitute the complete RFP packet by itself. There are several other documents included as part of the RFP packet that require participants to provide information to ICANN in a structured format. For a full list of documents included in the RFP, along with detailed instructions for responding to the RFP and use of the ICANN Sourcing Tool, send an email to RSSACReview-RFP@icann.org with your expression of interest.

1.2 Overview of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

ICANN’s mission is to help ensure a stable, secure and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet, you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world.

See www.icann.org for more information.

2.0 RSSAC Review Requirements

2.1 Period of this Review

This is a one-time review. ICANN is planning to start the review of the RSSAC in September 2017, with an anticipated duration of nine (9) months, and is seeking qualified providers to conduct the review in an efficient and effective manner and submit their Final Report by 30 June 2018.

2.2 Scope of the Review

As part of ICANN's ongoing commitment to its evolution and improvement, Article IV, Section 4.4 of [ICANN's Bylaws](#) contains provisions for *“periodic review of the performance and operation of each Supporting Organization, each Supporting Organization Council, each Advisory Committee (other than the Governmental Advisory Committee), and the Nominating Committee [...]by an entity or entities independent of the organization under review.”*

These periodic reviews present ICANN structures with opportunities for continuous improvement through consistent application of compliance audit principles to objectively measure performance relative to specific and quantifiable criteria developed by ICANN based on the unique nature of its structures. The resulting implementation of improvements and the systematic means of measuring performance and validating effectiveness of implementation are of utmost importance to the ongoing legitimacy of ICANN.

According to Article 12.1 of the ICANN Bylaws: *“The Board may create one or more “Advisory Committees” in addition to those set forth in this Article 12. Advisory Committee membership may consist of Directors only, Directors and non-directors, or non-directors only, and may also include non-voting or alternate members. Advisory Committees shall have no legal authority to act for ICANN, but shall report their findings and recommendations to the Board.”*

Article 12.2(c) of ICANN Bylaws provides for the Root Server System Advisory Committee, whose role *“is to advise the ICANN community and Board on matters relating to the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the Internet's Root Server System.”*

The RSSAC is a committee whose members are appointed by the ICANN Board, and led by two co-chairs. RSSAC appointments are for three-year terms, and there are no limits on the number of terms an RSSAC member may serve (see also Article 12 Section 12.2(c) of the ICANN Bylaws). The RSSAC is responsible to:

(A) Communicate on matters relating to the operation of the Root Servers and their multiple instances with the Internet technical community and the ICANN community. The RSSAC shall gather and articulate requirements to offer to those engaged in technical revision of the protocols and best common practices related to the operation of DNS servers.

(B) Communicate on matters relating to the administration of the Root Zone with those who have direct responsibility for that administration. These matters include the processes and procedures for the production of the Root Zone File.

(C) Engage in ongoing threat assessment and risk analysis of the Root Server System and recommend any necessary audit activity to assess the current status of root servers and the root zone.

(D) Respond to requests for information or opinions from the Board.

(E) Report periodically to the Board on its activities.

(F) Make policy recommendations to the ICANN community and Board.

Section 4.4 of the [Bylaws](#) addresses the periodic review of ICANN's structures and operations:

The Board shall cause a periodic review of the performance and operation of each Supporting Organization, each Supporting Organization Council, each Advisory Committee (other than the Governmental Advisory Committee), and the Nominating Committee (as defined in Section 8.1) by an entity or entities independent of the organization under review. The goal of the review, to be undertaken pursuant to such criteria and standards as the Board shall direct, shall be to determine (i) whether that organization, council or committee has a continuing purpose in the ICANN structure, (ii) if so, whether any change in structure or operations is desirable to improve its effectiveness and (iii) whether that organization, council or committee is accountable to its constituencies, stakeholder groups, organizations and other stakeholders.

These periodic reviews shall be conducted no less frequently than every five years, based on feasibility as determined by the Board. Each five-year cycle will be computed from the moment of the reception by the Board of the final report of the relevant review Working Group.

The results of such reviews shall be posted on the Website for public review and comment, and shall be considered by the Board no later than the second scheduled meeting of the Board after such results have been posted for 30 days. The consideration by the Board includes the ability to revise the structure or operation of the parts of ICANN being reviewed by a two-thirds vote of all Directors, subject to any rights of the EC under the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws.

The outcome of the current review will be factored into ICANN's strategic planning work and holistic considerations of the ICANN structure.

2.3 Review Overview

The objective of this RFP is to identify an independent reviewer to conduct a review of the RSSAC as mandated by the [ICANN Bylaws](#). The Review is scheduled to take place from September 2017 through June 2018.

According to the ICANN Bylaws, the scope of work will include the following key elements:

1. An assessment of whether RSSAC has a continuing purpose within the ICANN structure;
2. An assessment of how effectively RSSAC fulfills its purpose and whether any change in structure or operations is needed to improve effectiveness, in accordance with the ICANN-provided objective and quantifiable criteria;

3. An assessment of the extent to which RSSAC as a whole is accountable to the wider ICANN community, its organizations, committees, constituencies, and stakeholder groups to make effective selections.

The scope of the review should include years from 2011 to the present.

ICANN will supply the criteria to be used in conducting the RSSAC Review, which were developed in collaboration with the RSSAC Review Working Party. These criteria include but are not limited to the categories listed below. To further elaborate on the criteria, several questions are included within relevant categories, possibly for inclusion by the independent examiner into interviews or surveys, as applicable:

In addition, the RSSAC will perform a self-review prior to the start of the review that is to inform the examiner's work.

2.3.1 Scope of Work for 2017/18 RSSAC Review – High-Level

- 1. An assessment of the implementation state of RSSAC's [prior review](#).**

This includes a status report of the [implementations approved by the ICANN Board from the first RSSAC Review](#), and an assessment of the effectiveness of these implementations.

- 2. An assessment of whether RSSAC has a continuing purpose within the ICANN structure.**

Examination of RSSAC's [chartered purpose](#), to advise the ICANN community and Board on matters relating to the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the Internet's Root Server System, and how well it is fulfilled, will help assess the RSSAC's continuing purpose within the ICANN structure.

- 3. An assessment of how effectively RSSAC fulfills its purpose and whether any change in structure or operations is needed to improve effectiveness, in accordance with the ICANN-provided objective and quantifiable criteria.**

The assessment of RSSAC structure and operations may include an assessment of RSSAC's makeup, its current level of participation in, but not limited to, ICANN's specific review team, and cross-community efforts, the RSSAC's representation and effectiveness within ICANN, the effectiveness of its communications (both internal and external towards ICANN and other SO/ACs), and the alignment of its charter with [ICANN's mission](#). Other points to examine include RSSAC's decision-making methodology, transparency, processes, procedures, and competencies.

- 4. An assessment of the extent to which RSSAC as a whole is accountable to the wider ICANN community, its organizations, committees, constituencies, and stakeholder groups to make effective selections.**

Determine if the RSSAC is sufficiently accountable regarding the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the Internet's Root Server System, according to its chartered mandate.

2.3.2 Suggested Questions to be addressed– Non-exhaustive

A. Fulfilment of mission, adherence to policies and procedures, and organizational support

- Has RSSAC considered its current level of participation and effectiveness within ICANN, and potential for improvements?
- What developments can RSSAC bring about to enhance communication and understanding of its purpose within ICANN?
- How do RSSAC's operations enhance ICANN's mission?
- Are the decision-making procedures of RSSAC consistent over the years – if not, why is flexibility important and which procedures (if any) should remain constant?
- Other elements to assess:
 - Appropriate procedures, competencies and support in place
 - Participation and representation of RSSAC within ICANN
 - Continuous development
 - Alignment with ICANN's mission (as per Bylaws)

B. Accountability and transparency

- How can RSSAC's processes be improved, including but not limited to transparency and accountability?
- Determine if RSSAC has clearly defined its stakeholders with respect to ICANN, and if it is accountable to them.

C. RSSAC composition, membership processes, and participation

- Is any change in structure or operations desirable to improve RSSAC's effectiveness?
 - RSSAC Caucus
 - Liaison representation
- Is RSSAC operating optimally within ICANN based on the needs of the ICANN community?
- Does the RSSAC Caucus enhance the work of RSSAC? If so, how? If not, how could it be improved?
- Are RSSAC operations performed at a standard that is consistent throughout the Committee?
- Considering the nature of RSSAC's mission and the scope of its work, does representation in the current RSSAC structure appropriately match ICANN's core value of diversity, as stated in Article 3.1 of the Bylaws?
- Should there be a limit to the number of terms an RSSAC member may serve?

D. Communication

- Do RSSAC communications regarding the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the Internet's root server system satisfy the needs of the ICANN Board, and the larger ICANN community?
- Are RSSAC's communications and its community channels – both among its members about its internal processes, and among the ICANN community about its role and function – adequate to assure understanding and legitimacy of its action? If not, how can it be improved?

- Does RSSAC invite/permit/allow stakeholder communications on topics of mutual import to the root server system and ICANN?
- Is RSSAC operating in such a way that interested parties may easily locate and retrieve details of its standards, procedures, and safeguards?
- Does RSSAC have the necessary resources, knowledge, and processes in place to effectively engage with the ICANN Board and ICANN community?

E. Governance and management, effectiveness of execution

- Does the ICANN Board provide timely responses regarding new RSSAC appointees?
- Should the process for defining prospective RSSAC Caucus candidates be modified?

F. Evaluation and measurement of outcomes

- Are RSSAC processes and membership adequate to properly advise ICANN regarding the root server system?

G. Effectiveness of implementation of prior review recommendations

- Have implementation steps been completed, or initiated, from the prior review? If not, why not?
- Has implementation been completed to a degree that allows/permits effectiveness assessment? If so, have the implemented recommendations from previous review efforts led to the desired improvements?

2.4 Review Work Methodology

The Review's methodology is expected to include the following:

- Examination of documentation, records and reports, and their impact on ICANN and the multistakeholder process.
- Impact of the recommendations from previous review efforts (see 'Scope of Work' above).
- Observation of proceedings of RSSAC activities.
- Interviews (group and/or individual) with existing and former RSSAC members, and the broader ICANN community, especially those in leadership positions of the SO/ACs, as well as the ICANN Board and ICANN Organization¹.
- Online survey aimed to collect feedback pertinent to the scope of this review. Feedback should be sought from existing and former RSSAC members and appointees, as well as all of ICANN's Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs); the ICANN Board of Directors; interested members from ICANN community; the ICANN Organization.
- Consulting studies and/or literature related to the roles/procedures of RSSAC and/or other, comparable technical advisory committees.

¹ ICANN Organization is the term used for all ICANN employees.

2.5 Structure of the Reports

There are to be two reports—an Assessment Report and a Final Report.

The Assessment Report is to be the initial published document, presenting findings about areas that are working well and those that need improvement, but without providing any recommendations. The Assessment Report will be made available to the RSSAC Review Work Party, who will respond, and, in parallel, a public consultation, led by the RSSAC Review Working Party and ICANN’s department of Multistakeholder Strategy and Strategic Initiatives, will take place.

The Assessment Report should have the following main sections:

1. **Executive Summary:** This section should provide a clear and easy to understand summary of findings and recommendations.
2. **Facts:** This section should provide data on all aspects as described in the Scope of Work section above.
3. **Analysis:** This section should provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected, and show correlations amongst the various data sets.
4. **Assessment:** This section should provide an overview of what processes work well and where improvements can be made; the assessment ought to be based on and refer to the ‘Facts’ and ‘Analysis’ sections.

The Assessment Report will undergo public consultation that may include, but is not limited to, a public session during an ICANN meeting, individual presentations to some or all of ICANN’s Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees, and webinars.

The Final Report should include the following main sections:

1. **Executive Summary:** This section should provide a clear and easy to understand summary of findings and recommendations.
2. **Facts:** This section should provide data on all aspects as described in the Scope of Work section above.
3. **Analysis:** This section must provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected, and show correlations amongst the various data sets.
4. **Conclusions:**
 - a. Based on the findings from analyzing the data collected, the Report must identify elements that are working well and those that need improvement.

- b. The Report should provide suggestions and recommendations to address any procedural or structural shortcoming identified and/or ways to improve effectiveness of the RSSAC.

A Draft Final Report will be published for public comment. Following the ICANN standard for public comment periods, the independent examiner (if applicable) will update the Draft Final Report and then submit the Final Report to ICANN.

2.6 Other

The Final Report and any attached documents will be submitted in the English language. All reports will be submitted to ICANN as an electronic document in MS-Word and PDF format, including a 'tracked changes' version (if applicable).

Background of the RFP

Current Review

The timing of the current RSSAC Organizational Review is in accordance with the [July 2015 ICANN Board resolution](#) on Proposed Schedule and Process / Operational Improvements for AoC and Organizational Reviews, setting the second review of the Root Server System Advisory Committee for April 2017.

In preparation for the 2017 RSSAC Review, the current RSSAC has established a Review Working Party to serve as a liaison between the independent examiner, the wider Community, the current RSSAC and the Organizational Effectiveness Committee of the ICANN Board ([OEC](#)) who is responsible for the oversight of Organizational Reviews, including this RSSAC Review.

The role of the RSSAC Review Working Party is to provide input on review criteria and the RSSAC assessment, coordinate interviews and objectively supply clarification and responses to the Assessment Report and the Final Report as well as any intermediary findings. Once the Final Report is issued, the RSSAC Working Party is expected to coordinate with the RSSAC to prepare a Feasibility Assessment and Initial Implementation Plan based on the Final Report. Subsequently, both reports will be sent to the ICANN Board's OEC for its consideration.

Previous Review

The RSSAC Review Working Group formed in June 2008 was charged with addressing recommendations in the independent examiner's Final Report, to consider named improvements.

In October 2008, the ICANN Board of Directors appointed Westlake Consulting Limited to undertake the independent review of the RSSAC. This was the first RSSAC Review, and it focused on how well RSSAC has performed its function, and whether there were general or specific ways to enhance its effectiveness. The [Final Report](#), summarizing findings from the independent review and containing proposals for action, was published on 24 February 2009.

Public Comment on Draft Independent Review of Root Server System Advisory Committee by Westlake Consulting Limited was open from 25 February 2009 to 17 April 2009.

The RSSAC Review Working Group (RWG), which at the time was a subgroup of the ICANN Board, and following a process that is no longer in practice, presented its report for public comment to help ensure that the Review Working Group report contained sufficient and accurate information and to advise the Board on the changes recommended for RSSAC. The public comment period closed 5 June 2010, and the Final Report was presented to the ICANN Board on 8 June 2010. The RSSAC RWG's [report](#) included eight recommendations. Pursuant to its Charter, the report was presented to the Structural Improvements Committee (SIC), currently the Organizational Effectiveness Committee (OEC). After the SIC reviewed the report, and developed [implementation steps](#), the OEC recommended that the ICANN Board approve them.

The report was adopted in January 2011. The Board resolution can be found here: https://www.icann.org/resources/board-material/resolutions-2011-01-25-en?routing_type=path#1.j

The latest details of the implementation of all recommendations from the 2008 Review were published on 1 December 2010.

Additional information about the first RSSAC Review is available at: <https://www.icann.org/resources/reviews/org/rssac>

The Final Report of the RSSAC Review Working Group is available at: <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/rssac-review-final-report-08jun10-en.pdf>

The public comment on the RWG-RSSAC Review Draft Report, is available at: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/rssac-wg-report-2010-04-27-en>

3.0 High-Level Selection Criteria

The decision to select a final provider as an outcome of this RFP will be based on, but not limited to, the following selection criteria:

1) Technical Knowledge

- A. Technical knowledge in Domain Name or Internet server operations, or experience working with RSSAC or Root Server Operators, such as specific understanding of the root server ecosystem and/or DNS protocol knowledge
- B. Experience working with ICANN, or familiarity with ICANN, including experience as a general participant in the ICANN community
- C. Suitability of proposed CVs

2) Other Expertise

- A. Demonstrated experience in conducting broadly similar examinations of large, multistakeholder volunteer-based organizations
- B. Ability to balance timelines and deliverables with resource limitations and scheduling uncertainties inherent in volunteer-based organizations
- C. Demonstrated experience in working with volunteer-based organizations and demonstrated sensitivity and consideration of volunteer time and contribution
- D. Geographic and cultural diversity, multilingualism, gender balance, and demonstrated experience of living and working in different cultural settings
- E. Ability to garner respect and buy-in from ICANN community

3) Conflict of interest

- A. Absence of activity or relationships that may impact sound and impartial judgment

4) Proposed methodology

- A. Careful examination of documentation, records and reports, to gain an understanding of the RSSAC's remit and its impact on ICANN and the multi-stakeholder process
- B. Ability to articulate approach to work organization, project management, and achievement of milestones provided in the timeline
- C. Suitability of tools and methods for conducting a wide-ranging survey, interviews, and other work pertinent to the review
- D. Suitability of planned structure and presentation of deliverables, including 2-phased approach, and public consultation following delivery of the Assessment Report
- E. Clarity of deliverables, including 2-phased approach

- F. Approach that assures productive cooperation with RSSAC, RSSAC Review Working Party, and the wider ICANN community
 - G. Capability to bring outside best practices to inform the review work
- 5) Flexibility
- A. Willingness and ability to adapt the work schedule based on needs of the ICANN community, including, but not limited to, additional public outreach.
 - B. General adaptability
- 6) Financial Value
- 7) Reference Checks

4.0 High-Level Business Requirements

In order to be considered, the providers must be able to demonstrate ability to meet the business requirements. Refer to the “Business Requirements” group in the “Questions” section of the RFP, via the ICANN Sourcing Tool.

5.0 Project Timelines

The following dates have been established as milestones for this RFP. ICANN reserves the right to modify or change this timeline at any time as necessary. All responses (including proposals, supporting documentation, questions, etc.) must be submitted via the ICANN Sourcing Tool. See the Instructions document for further details. Access to the ICANN Sourcing Tool may be obtained by sending a request to RSSACReview-RFP@icann.org.

RFP Process, including contracting

RFP Process	Date
RFP Published	5 June 2017
Interest indication by candidates	By 19 June 2017
Participants submit any RFP related questions to ICANN	26 June 2017 by 23:59 PDT
ICANN responses to questions	By 30 June 2017
RFP Proposals Due	10 July 2017 by 23:59 PDT

Finalist presentations	Estimated the week of 7 August 2017
Evaluations, contracting, award	Estimated by 8 September 2017

Independent Examiner Deliverables

Deliverables	Estimated Date
Start Review*	September
Work plan + timeline	September
Initial Meeting (via conference call) with RSSAC Review Working party	September
Interview plan	September
Interviews conducted	In-person: RSSAC October Workshop (subject to RSSAC approval), ICANN60, remote: as needed.
Survey(s) plan	October
Survey goes online*	Prior to ICANN60 – remain open for ≥30 days
ICANN60*	28 Oct- 3 Nov 2017
Deliver Assessment Report	January 2018
Public Consultation, e.g. webinar*	January / February 2018
ICANN61*	10-15 March 2018
Deliver Draft Final Report	March 2018
Public Comment (run by ICANN)	April 2018
Deliver Final Report	June 2018

* fixed dates

Relevant RSSAC Events occurring during the course of the Review

The independent examiner will work with the RSSAC Review Working Party to attend/participate in RSSAC events outside of ICANN Meetings. Please note: additional dates for 2018 may be forthcoming.

RSSAC EVENT	DATE
RSSAC Monthly Teleconference*	5 Oct 2017
RSSAC Workshop in College Park, MD, USA*	10-12 Oct 2017
ICANN60, Abu Dhabi, UAE	28 Oct - 3 Nov 2017
RSSAC Caucus at ICANN60*	TBD
RSSAC Monthly Teleconference*	2 Nov 2017

RSSAC at IETF100 (Singapore)*	12 Nov 2017 (TBC)
RSSAC Monthly Teleconference*	7 Dec 2017
RSSAC finalizes 2018 event dates*	Dec 2017
ICANN61, San Juan, Puerto Rico	10-15 March 2018

* Invitations and inclusion are at the RSSAC's discretion

Work with the RSSAC Review Working Party to attend/participate in RSSAC events:

RSSAC monthly teleconferences

7 September 2017
5 October 2017
2 November 2017
7 December 2017

The RSSAC is present at all ICANN meetings (e.g. ICANN60 and ICANN61 in this timeframe).

RSSAC Workshops—the workshops are for RSSAC members and invited guests only (i.e., the RSSAC would have to agree to have the independent examiner there)
10-12 October 2017

RSSAC Caucus meetings

ICANN60 (exact date of Caucus meeting TBD)
IETF100 (likely 12 November 2017)

2018 RSSAC event dates are to be finalized in December 2017.

6.0 Terms and Conditions

General Terms and Conditions

1. Submission of a proposal shall constitute Respondent's acknowledgment and acceptance of all the specifications, requirements and terms and conditions in this RFP.
2. All costs of preparing and submitting its proposal, responding to or providing any other assistance to ICANN in connection with this RFP will be borne by the Respondent.
3. All submitted proposals including any supporting materials or documentation will become the property of ICANN. If Respondent's proposal contains any proprietary information that should not be disclosed or used by ICANN other than for the purposes of evaluating the proposal that information should be marked with appropriate confidentiality markings.

Discrepancies, Omissions and Additional Information

1. Respondent is responsible for examining this RFP and all addenda. Failure to do so will be at the sole risk of Respondent. Should Respondent find discrepancies, omissions, unclear or ambiguous intent or meaning, or should any question arise concerning this RFP, Respondent must notify ICANN of such findings immediately in writing via e-mail no later than three (3) days prior to the deadline for bid submissions. Should such matters remain unresolved by ICANN, in writing, prior to Respondent's preparation of its proposal, such matters must be addressed in Respondent's proposal.
2. ICANN is not responsible for oral statements made by its employees, agents, or representatives concerning this RFP. If Respondent requires additional information, Respondent must request that the issuer of this RFP furnish such information in writing.
3. A Respondent's proposal is presumed to represent its best efforts to respond to the RFP. Any significant inconsistency, if unexplained, raises a fundamental issue of the Respondent's understanding of the nature and scope of the work required and of its ability to perform the contract as proposed and may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The burden of proof as to cost credibility rests with the Respondent.
4. If necessary, supplemental information to this RFP will be provided to all prospective Respondents receiving this RFP. All supplemental information issued by ICANN will form part of the RFP. ICANN is not responsible for any failure by prospective Respondents to receive supplemental information.

Assessment and Award

1. ICANN reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw this RFP, make no award, to waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity and to disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.
2. ICANN may request a Respondent to provide further information or documentation to support Respondent's proposal and its ability to provide the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP.
3. ICANN is not obliged to accept the lowest-priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.
4. ICANN will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in the RFP, further issued clarifications (if any) and consideration of any other issues or evidence relevant to the Respondent's ability to successfully provide and implement the products and/or services contemplated by the RFP and in the best interests of ICANN.
5. ICANN reserves the right to enter into contractual negotiations and if necessary, modify any terms and conditions of a final contract with the Respondent whose proposal offers the best value to ICANN.