

Root Server System Governance Working Group

Teleconference #21 | 3 December 2020 | 22:00 UTC

ATTENDANCE

RSS GWG

Kim Davies	Liaison from the IANA
Luis Diego Espinoza	ccTLD Registries Representative
Ted Hardie	IAB Representative
Hiro Hotta	RSO Representative
Geoff Huston	IAB Representative
Lito Ibarra	Alternate Liaison from the ICANN Board
Peter Janssen	ccTLD Registries Representative
Lars-Johan Liman	RSO Representative
Kurt Pritz	gTLD Registries Representative
Tripti Sinha	Liaison from the ICANN Board
Brad Verd	RSO Representative
Duane Wessels	Liaison from the Root Zone Maintainer
Hanyu Yang	gTLD Registries Representative

ICANN org

Adiel Akplogan
Xavier Calvez
Paul Hoffman
David Olive
Wendy Profit
Carlos Reyes
Mary Wong

Absences

Suzanne Woolf	SSAC Representative
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MINUTES

Call to Order

Ted Hardie called the teleconference to order at 22:03 UTC and reviewed the proposed agenda. There were no objections to the agenda.

Administration

Carlos Reyes reviewed the draft minutes of teleconferences #19 and 20 on 12 November 2020 and 19 November 2020, respectively. There were no objections to publishing the minutes.

ACTION ITEM: Carlos Reyes to publish the approved minutes on the RSS GWG workspace.

Resourcing for PRS and Rationale for RSO Funding

Kurt Pritz provided an update on the recent small group discussions including Geoff Huston and Suzanne Woolf. The small group agrees with the novel approach despite the lack of strings for funding. This provides the best chance for timely success. Kurt Pritz revised the rationale document to better explain the context for the funding approach. Over time, it will be important to develop clear communications to the ICANN community about this. Kurt Pritz proposed focusing on the rationale document first. Geoff Huston stated that the small group has likely done what it can on this topic.

Geoff Huston reviewed the principles informing the discussions of the small group: There needs to be respect for the independence and autonomy of the Root Server Operators (RSOs). This may be impacted by accountability expectations on how ICANN disburses funds. The collective voice of the RSOs is Public Root Services (PRS), and PRS interacts with ICANN. The grant approach does not impose any operating or service model on the RSOs. Geoff Huston noted that the RSS GWG needs to understand the accountability requirements of ICANN to make progress on the discussion of resourcing for PRS and RSO funding. Brad Verd suggested that this could be a question for ICANN Legal and noted that accountability was the impetus for RSSAC037, but the RSS GWG decided to tie accountability to a contract.

Xavier Calvez stated that there is a fiduciary requirement imposed on ICANN as a nonprofit organization with 501(c)3 designation. There is also a self-imposed accountability requirement, which is a fundamental principle of the multistakeholder model. This means ICANN must account for its funds and ensure its funds are used in accordance with its mission. Xavier Calvez noted the example of the Cross-Community Working Group on New gTLD Auction Proceeds, which was considering establishing a foundation. The accountability requirement stands irrespective of the legal vehicle for disbursing public funds. There are no problems with the grant approach as long as these requirements are met.

Ted Hardie noted that the proposal seems proportionate because efforts to support the Root Server System (RSS) will be devolved to a related body (PRS). PRS is going to be part of the cluster of organizations that make up ICANN. The RSOs and RSS will interact with PRS. There will be a level of transparency with appropriate detail for any disbursement of grants. RSO funding is not intended to result in a system that changes how RSOs deliver their service. Ted Hardie stated that it is possible to achieve clarity on how the PRS proposal and grant approach achieve transparency and meets the fiduciary requirements of ICANN.

Xavier Calvez clarified his previous remarks. ICANN does not need to know exactly how every dollar of a grant is spent, but it does need to evaluate how the support is consistent with its

mission and strategic plan. Xavier Calvez reiterated the ICANN org commitment to support the RSS GWG. This input is consistent with embedding the requirements into the design process.

Lars-Johan Liman emphasized support for accountability of public funds. There needs to be a discussion about what is acceptable for both sides (donor and recipient). Lars-Johan Liman proposed a process where the funds are pre-approved. Geoff Huston suggested modifying the PRS paper to include a reference to the obligation to describe how grants have been put to use in support of root service. Geoff Huston also stated that the RSS GWG should not consider requiring changes to root service as a basis for funding. Funding should be an expression of support to meet the expectations of the community (the Strategy, Architecture, and Policy Function). In response to Geoff Huston, Lars-Johan Liman clarified his previous remarks, noting that he was advocating for pre-arranging the conditions for grants in order to lessen the accountability requirements after a grant is disbursed.

Tripti Sinha stated that RSSAC037 assumes financial accountability and transparency requirements for the Financial Function. Brad Verd agreed with Tripti Sinha. Kurt Pritz suggested including a reference to the fiduciary and transparency requirements of ICANN in the PRS paper but leaving the details to implementation. Ted Hardie disagreed because there could be discrepancies in interpretation and during implementation. Ted Hardie also reiterated that the proposed grant mechanism intends to offer the same amount of money from PRS to each RSO rather than an RSO defining its need and receiving money from PRS.

Next Steps

Ted Hardie asked the RSS GWG to ensure there are understandable descriptions of accountability in the resourcing section of the PRS paper and that the rationale for RSO funding document captures the flow of disbursed funds.

ACTION ITEM: RSS GWG to review the resourcing section of the PRS paper and the rationale for RSO funding document.

Achieving clarity on accountability will be important for future RSS GWG discussions and for finalizing the structural elements of the PRS and SAPF papers. Duane Wessels has volunteered to merge the papers.

Ted Hardie also noted that he has an upcoming call with ICANN President and CEO Goran Marby.

Any Other Business

There were no additional agenda items.

Adjournment

Ted Hardie adjourned the teleconference at 23:05 UTC.