RSSAC Operational Procedures Version 1.0

The Operational Procedures of the ICANN
Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)
DRAFT 31 July 2014

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Preface

These are the Operational Procedures of the Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC). The role of the RSSAC is to advise the ICANN community and Board of Directors on matters relating to the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the Internet's Root Server System. The RSSAC's responsibilities are defined in the Bylaws for ICANN, article XI, section 2.3.[1]

These Operational Procedures document how the RSSAC will carry out its own work, with the rationale for processes where it seems helpful. In case of conflict with the ICANN Bylaws, the ICANN Bylaws take precedence.

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[1] See 2.3 Specific Advisory Committees, Root Server System Advisory Committee at
https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/bylaws-2012-02-25-en#/XI.

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1. Who We Are and What We Do

The Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC) consists of root server operators and root zone managers who provide advice and information to the ICANN Board of Directors and community on topics that are broadly related to the Internet's root server system. The RSSAC is chartered as an Advisory Committee under the ICANN By-Laws, Article XI, Section 2.3. The RSSAC is one of several ICANN Advisory Committees that, together with the several Supporting Organizations, represent the stakeholders in ICANN's multi-stakeholder model of operation.

The RSSAC produces various documents in direct response to requests from the ICANN Board or at its own initiative.

The RSSAC advises the Internet community and ICANN Board of Directors on matters relating to the root server system and root zone management as it impinges on the root servers (i.e., DNSSEC implementation). This may include operational matters (e.g., matters pertaining to the correct and reliable operation of the root server system), and registration matters (e.g., matters pertaining to registry and registrar services involved in managing the root zone).

The RSSAC generally prepares its publications for use by ICANN's staff and Board of Directors, Domain Name System (DNS) experts, the Internet community, and the public. Most of the RSSAC's work is for unrestricted distribution, but when circumstances require it (e.g. disclosure of sensitive information might interfere with a study or put a service or individual in jeopardy), access may be restricted to the RSSAC or the ICANN Board of Directors.

The RSSAC has no formal authority. Its effectiveness comes from the quality of the advice it provides and whether others accept and follow that advice.

1.1 Purpose of This Document

This document describes the RSSAC's Operational Procedures. Article XI of the ICANN Bylaws establishes the Charter of the RSSAC, but the RSSAC develops its own Operational Procedures. The RSSAC will review these Operational Procedures each year to ensure they are current. The RSSAC's responsibilities are defined in the Bylaws for ICANN, article XI, section 2.3.[2]

1.2 Formal Structure

1.2.1 The RSSAC

The RSSAC is composed of appointed representatives of the root server operators. The ICANN Board of Directors appoints the members who form the RSSAC. The RSSAC is the only entity that can take formal action as the "RSSAC".

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[2] See 2.3 Specific Advisory Committees, Root Server System Advisory Committee at https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/bylaws-2012-02-25-en#/XI.

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1.2.2 The RSSAC Co-Chairs

The Board will confirm the appointment of the Co-Chairs that are selected by the RSSAC. The RSSAC shall recommend the appointment of the Co-Chairs to the Board following a nomination process that it devises and documents. The RSSAC chairs may invite persons to participate in the RSSAC meetings or to observe the meetings. These may be liaisons, alternates, or other regular participants.

1.2.3 The RSSAC Caucus

The RSSAC Caucus is comprised of individuals who have expressed willingness to work on the RSSAC documents. The membership of the RSSAC Caucus consists of the union of the appointed RSSAC Caucus members and the RSSAC. The RSSAC Caucus members are recommended by the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee and appointed by the RSSAC to join the RSSAC Caucus. The RSSAC may ask the RSSAC Caucus to produce documents according to the RSSAC Caucus procedures. The RSSAC may also ask the RSSAC Caucus for advice before taking actions.

1.2.4 The RSSAC Liaisons

The RSSAC may have liaisons with other bodies. Some of these are specified by the ICANN Bylaws. All liaisons are specified on the RSSAC public website and reviewed periodically.

1.3 Voting

The RSSAC is formed as described in Section 1.2 above. Formal action of the RSSAC is taken by vote of the RSSAC. The RSSAC determines what work the RSSAC takes on, keeping that work moving, and determining that a work item has been completed. Completed work is to be sent as correspondence, posted publicly, or otherwise finalized as RSSAC work product as described in Section 3 below.

Prior to all official decisions a quorum must be established. A quorum is a simple majority of the RSSAC (half plus one). Voting may be in person or via telephonic means. When a quorum is present, a majority vote -- that is a majority of the votes cast, ignoring blanks -- is sufficient for the adoption of any motion that is in order. The Co-Chair who is chairing the meeting gets a normal vote and if the votes are tied the motion does not pass.

In order to do formal business between meetings the RSSAC adopts Roberts Rules of Order[3] for electronic voting.

1.4 Co-chair Election Process

The RSSAC will select two Co-Chairs for a two-year term from the membership.

The terms of the Co-Chairs are staggered. Initially both Co-Chairs will be elected together, one for a one-year term and the other for a two-year term. Thereafter each year a Co-Chair's term will expire and a new Co-Chair will be elected.

One month prior to each election, nominees will be accepted for the Co-Chair position from the members.

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[3] See Robert's Rules of Order, Art. VIII, Voting at http://www.rulesonline.com/rror-08.htm.

During the meeting, additional nominations will be accepted from members, and all nominees will indicate their intentions – accept or withdraw their nomination.

The standing Co-Chair will conduct a roll call. Members will verbally indicate their selection. A simple majority (half plus one) will establish the new Co-Chair. In the event of a tie, a run-off will occur with members verbally indicating their selection. In the event of a second tie, the floor will be opened for discussion followed by a new vote with the simple majority designating the new Co-Chair.

1.5 Meetings

The RSSAC holds both closed and public meetings. Closed meetings are used to conduct the work of the RSSAC. Public meetings are used both to present the work of the RSSAC and to engage the community. The RSSAC may elect to hold multiple public meetings when the RSSAC is studying a topic of particular interest over a long period of time. Meetings will be held at the following locations:

- At ICANN meetings;
- At IETF meetings;
- Ad hoc conference calls as determined by Co-chairs (with the RSSAC Support Staff conducting a Doodle poll or similar accommodations, or via a regular schedule);
- Calls – audio and adobe connect or similar accommodations.

1.5.1 The RSSAC Closed Meetings

The RSSAC closed meetings are open to the RSSAC and to participants as invited by the Co-Chairs or by formal resolution. These meetings are held periodically via teleconference with a supporting Adobe Connect chat room when an issue or issues are identified for discussion. Emergency meetings may be called as needed.

In-person meetings of the RSSAC are scheduled when a reasonable number of members are present at other meeting venues. Members may select an alternate in the event they are unable to attend the meeting. Alternates may perform only the specific tasks for which they are deputized.

The purpose of these meetings is to discuss in detail issues before the RSSAC and determine an appropriate action and publication of that action. The RSSAC teleconference information is confidential and is maintained and distributed by the support staff. The Co-chairs will provide oversight for the RSSAC mailing lists.

Rules for Meetings:

1. Meetings (with the exception of emergency meetings) should be announced at least one week before they occur with an email to the RSSAC from Support Staff with a draft agenda and the teleconference information;

2. The Support Staff takes notes during the meeting in the Adobe Connect chat room and posts them to the RSSAC's Wiki Workspaces;

3. The Support Staff produces minutes (see details below); and

4. After each meeting support staff send an email to the RSSAC including the minutes as described in number 3 above.

The minutes of the meetings include a summary of the discussion and all decisions. Minutes will be publicly available on the RSSAC web site. The RSSAC Support Staff may record meetings to assist in the preparation of the minutes, but these recordings will be deleted immediately after use. The minutes will contain at least the following elements:

- participants (with apologies);
- date and time;
- meeting venue;
- agenda;
- resolutions; and
- action items.

The RSSAC normally prepares informal notes of its meetings as an internal tool. ICANN staff provides these notes to the RSSAC as quickly as possible after the meeting. These notes are not published and have no formal status.

1.5.2 The RSSAC Public Meetings

The RSSAC produces publications in part for the broad Internet community. In support of this community the RSSAC holds public meetings for two principal purposes;

- To report to the community on its activities and other significant issues; and
- To receive from the community questions, comments, and suggestions.

These meetings are held as an integral part of the regular ICANN meetings and supported by real-time transcription and streaming of the audio.

2. The RSSAC

The ICANN Board of Directors appoints the RSSAC Co-Chairs and the members. The root server operators of the lettered root servers each nominate a representative for participation in the RSSAC. The Root Zone Managers each nominate a representative for participation in the RSSAC. These names are then submitted to the ICANN Board for approval.

The RSSAC may add alternates, liaisons and work parties as needed.

2.1 The RSSAC Caucus

2.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the RSSAC Caucus is:

- to define a well defined pool of motivated experts to whom the RSSAC can turn to for getting work done;
- to provide transparency to the community at large about the people doing the work; and
- to provide a framework for the RSSAC Caucus participants to formalize their a availability and to execute the work.

2.1.2 Principles

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The RSSAC Caucus is the group of people that produces the RSSAC documents, such as reports and advisories. The RSSAC Caucus consists of the RSSAC as well as other persons appointed by the RSSAC. Each member of the RSSAC Caucus maintains a public description of his or her willingness and motivation to help produce the RSSAC documents, relevant expertise, and formal interests in the work area of the RSSAC. The RSSAC will consider all seriously motivated offers to participate in the RSSAC Caucus. Once the RSSAC decides to take up work on a document, it may ask the RSSAC Caucus to produce the document and submit it to the RSSAC for formal action. The RSSAC maintains a record of the RSSAC Caucus members and their contributions to the RSSAC documents.

2.1.3 Procedures

2.1.3.1 RSSAC Caucus Selection

The RSSAC periodically issues calls for participation in the RSSAC Caucus, normally in January of each year. The RSSAC periodically reviews the composition of the RSSAC Caucus and adds or removes members, normally once each quarter. On request of the person concerned the RSSAC publicly explains its decision to refuse to add a person to the RSSAC Caucus or to remove a person from the RSSAC Caucus. The RSSAC delegates the task of communicating with people about joining or leaving the RSSAC Caucus to an RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee.

2.1.3.2 The RSSAC Caucus Work

The RSSAC involves the RSSAC Caucus in the production of substantial documents. The RSSAC defines and publishes the initial scope of the document to be produced and the date by which is has to be submitted to the RSSAC for action. The RSSAC requests one or more RSSAC Caucus members to lead the production of a document. Document leaders actively involve other RSSAC Caucus members, specifically any RSSAC Caucus members that volunteer. Document leaders report to the RSSAC about progress at regular intervals and on specific request. If it considers progress insufficient, the RSSAC may appoint new document leaders or take other action to progress the document.

Once the document leaders consider the document ready, they pass it to the RSSAC for formal action. The RSSAC may ask the RSSAC Caucus to do specific further work on a document. RSSAC Caucus members may submit personal opinions about documents to the RSSAC at any time, specifically once the document has been passed to the RSSAC for action. The RSSAC may also ask RSSAC Caucus members for advice and opinions about RSSAC business. RSSAC Caucus members will receive credit for their work on specific documents.

2.1.3.3 Bootstrapping

The RSSAC invited people who participated in the previous RSSAC to join the RSSAC Caucus, specifically those subscribed to the previous RSSAC mailing list. The RSSAC notified the ICANN Supporting Organizations about the RSSAC Caucus. RSSAC members will publish their preferred work areas, their relevant expertise and their formal interests in the work area of the RSSAC.

2.2 The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee

The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee is comprised of three members of the RSSAC. If more than three participants volunteer to be on the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee a

vote will be conducted along the procedures outlined for electing the Co-Chairs.

The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee will serve for a period of one year beginning in January of each calendar year. RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee members may renew their membership each year with a four-year limit to renewals. The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee meets every other week via teleconference and at ICANN meetings as demand warrants. The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee provides to the RSSAC quarterly reports of its activities that include minutes of biweekly meetings, the number of submissions it received, the number of candidates it recommended for membership, and the number of new RSSAC Caucus members the RSSAC approved. ICANN staff supporting the RSSAC will provide support for the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee including scheduling calls and meetings, taking and distributing notes in a timely manner, and performing duties as described below.

2.3 New RSSAC Caucus Member Selection

The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee may consider and recommend to the RSSAC new RSSAC Caucus member candidates at any time during the calendar year. The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee evaluates these candidates individually, rather than collectively. The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee may learn of interested candidates in several ways: the RSSAC may recommend a candidate; a candidate may contact the committee directly. In every case, the following procedure applies.

For pre-existing participants in RSSAC prior to 2013, the RSSAC Membership Committee contacted them via email to the rssac@icann.org list requesting submissions of interest for joining the RSSAC Caucus.

These statements of interest should include a brief statement describing why they are interested in becoming involved in the RSSAC Caucus and what particular skills and experience they would bring to the RSSAC Caucus, along with a stated commitment to participate in work groups on an active basis.

On the basis of the candidate's statement of interest, the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee will evaluate the following:

1. Is the candidate sufficiently familiar with the RSSAC and its work?

2. Can the candidate devote time to participation in the RSSAC, including participating in regular meetings, work groups, and in the development of work products?

3. Does the candidate bring to the RSSAC skills and experiences that will add value to the RSSAC Caucus?

The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee Chair will contact via email those candidates that the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee decides are not currently suitable for RSSAC Caucus membership and thank them for their interest in the RSSAC, but indicating that the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee is not recommending their addition to the RSSAC Caucus at this time. It is important to note that the names of candidates who are not recommended for membership are not revealed to the RSSAC. However, a candidate is not prevented from contacting the RSSAC concerning the process. If a candidate appeals the decision, the RSSAC Co-Chairs shall address the appeal on a case-by-case basis.

Candidates who have not been recommended for membership may not re-apply within the same

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12-month period as their initial application.

For those candidates that the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee decides to recommend to the RSSAC, the following procedures will apply:

RSSAC Staff Support will send a message to the RSSAC describing the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee's recommendation, including the statement of interest and asking for a decision in one week. The message should make it clear that if no objections are received the candidate will be considered as a member of the RSSAC Caucus.

For candidates that receive objections from the RSSAC the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee Chair will notify the RSSAC that the candidate has not been recommended for membership. Only one objection is sufficient to reject a candidate. This objection should be made on the RSSAC list. The RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee Chair then will contact the candidates and thank them for their interest in the RSSAC, but indicate that the RSSAC is not recommending their addition to the RSSAC Caucus at this time. If a candidate appeals the membership decision, the RSSAC Co-Chairs shall determine how to address the appeal on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 Departing RSSAC Caucus Members

Individual members may leave the RSSAC Caucus at any time for any reason.

2.5 Access to Proprietary Information

On occasion RSSAC members may need to access certain technical data or information that is commercially valuable and not generally known in its industry of principal use (collectively referred to as "Proprietary Information") pursuant to the RSSAC's performance of its tasks. If necessary the RSSAC members may be asked to sign applicable Non-Disclosure Agreements to access Proprietary Information.

2.6 RSSAC Officers

In addition to the obligations of the RSSAC, some members may wish to take on the additional responsibilities of an RSSAC officer as defined below.

2.6.1 RSSAC Co-Chair

A Co-Chair of the RSSAC is a volunteer position elected by the RSSAC and appointed by the ICANN Board of Directors at the recommendation of the RSSAC. The RSSAC Co-Chairs are responsible for working with the RSSAC to suggest priorities, conducting all meetings and gatherings of the RSSAC. The RSSAC Co-Chairs also represent the RSSAC to the public.

2.6.1.1 RSSAC Co-Chair Election

The RSSAC Chair election is held in January of the year following the end of the three-year term. The process begins during the first week of January as follows:

1. The RSSAC will select two co-chairs for a two-year term from the RSSAC.

2. The terms of the RSSAC Co-Chairs are staggered. Initially both RSSAC Co-Chairs will

be elected together, one for a one-year term and the other for a two-year term. Thereafter each year a co-chair's term will expire and a new RSSAC Co-Chair will be elected.

3. One month prior to each election, nominees will be accepted for the RSSAC Co-Chair position from the RSSAC.

4. During the meeting, additional nominations will be accepted from the RSSAC, and all nominees will indicate their intentions – accept or withdraw their nomination.

The standing RSSAC Co-Chair will conduct a roll call. The RSSAC will verbally indicate its selection. A simple majority will establish the new co-chair. In the event of a tie, a run-off will occur with the RSSAC verbally indicating its selection. In the event of a second tie, the floor will be opened for discussion followed by a new vote with the simple majority designating the new RSSAC Co-Chair.

2.6.2 RSSAC Liaisons

The RSSAC may have liaisons with other bodies. Some of these are specified by the ICANN Bylaws. All liaisons are published and reviewed periodically.

2.6.3 ICANN Staff Support

ICANN provides staff support for the RSSAC. The staff members are designated by ICANN and report to ICANN.

2.6.4 Invited Guests

The RSSAC may choose to invite individuals to participate when they have expertise or experience desired by the RSSAC, e.g. during the development of a specific work product. Unless otherwise established by the mutual agreement of the RSSAC and the invited guest, he or she is expected to affirm their commitment to the obligations of membership as previously specified. At the completion of the activity the membership of the Invited Guests ends. Invited Guests may submit a request to be considered for membership in the RSSAC Caucus.

RSSAC member candidates whom the ICANN Board of Directors has not yet appointed to the RSSAC, or whose terms have not yet commenced, also may serve as Invited Guests.

3. RSSAC Publication Procedures

The RSSAC may produce various publications from time to time. The following is a description of the procedures for finalizing RSSAC publications.

3.1 Developing Final Drafts, and Previewing Recommendations

3.1.1 Developing Final Drafts

As noted in Section 2.1.3.2 above, the RSSAC involves the RSSAC Caucus in the production of substantial documents. Once the document leaders consider the document ready, they pass it to the RSSAC for formal action. The RSSAC will take formal action as soon as practical. The following are guidelines for developing a final draft work product:

1. The document leaders circulate the revised draft work product to RSSAC Caucus

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members via the RSSAC Caucus list.

2. The document leaders collect and review comments from RSSAC Caucus members, assisted by RSSAC Support Staff as appropriate, and either accommodates them directly or starts a discussion thread to resolve the comment.

3. When the document leaders have considered and accommodated all RSSAC Caucus comments, the document leaders re-circulate the final draft work product to the RSSAC via the list.

4. If a final draft work product is developed, the document leaders incorporate the final comments and provide the final work product to the RSSAC for consideration before a formal action is implemented.

5. The RSSAC Co-Chairs will post the final draft work product to the RSSAC list and ask if there are any objections.

6. RSSAC objections to or withdrawals from a document should be indicated in the appropriate section of the document.

7. If objections, if any, have been addressed as in number 6 above, the RSSAC Co-Chairs will determine the work product is final and may be published as a formal action of the RSSAC.

3.1.2 Review by ICANN Legal Staff

If the RSSAC finalizes a document, the RSSAC Chair may send the document to ICANN Legal Staff for review. The document leaders review any suggested edits that may be received from ICANN Legal Staff and with the RSSAC to determine the appropriate disposition.

3.1.3 Previewing Recommendations

The document leaders or the RSSAC or RSSAC Caucus members may recommend previewing proposed recommendations to affected ICANN parties. The following are guidelines for sending the final work product to the affected ICANN parties prior to publication:

1. The document leaders determine which parties in the ICANN community could be affected by the findings and recommendations in the final work product;

2. The document leaders alert the RSSAC Co-Chairs concerning which parties could be affected;

3. The RSSAC Co-Chairs send a message with the final work product to the chairs of the affected ICANN organizations to alert them to the fact that the RSSAC will shortly publish the document and requests a response in two weeks;

4. The RSSAC Co-Chairs also may decide that it is beneficial to post the draft work product for a period of public comment to solicit input from the community;

5. The document leaders address any questions or concerns, if any, from the affected parties and consults with them to determine whether these require changes to the final work product; and

6. If the RSSAC determines that the questions or concerns of the affected parties may require changes to the final work product, the document leaders incorporate the changes, with assistance from RSSAC Support Staff as appropriate.

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3.2 Publication and Community Outreach

ICANN RSSAC support staff are responsible for the production of all the RSSAC publications. This is to ensure that the publication has followed the RSSAC process (i.e. it has been reviewed by the RSSAC and is appropriately archived) and is consistent with the quality of publications produced by the RSSAC. A work product is assigned an index when the RSSAC consensus has been reached and the RSSAC agrees to publish the work product.

When there are no further changes to a final work product and it is ready to be published, the RSSAC support staff will publish the document to the RSSAC web site.

3.3 Tracking, Review, and Follow-Up

A goal of the RSSAC is to ensure that its work products result in specific actions whenever possible.   In order to measure progress towards this goal, the RSSAC will track any effects of each recommendation. Tracking may include a determination of a metric or series of metrics and may include a survey at the end of each work product. The RSSAC will report progress towards its goals in an annual summary and the RSSAC support staff shall track any specific outcomes that are identified. The RSSAC also may organize public sessions to present and discuss the document. These may be coordinated with ICANN meetings or as teleconferences or webinars with the ICANN community.

3.3.1 Work Product Numbering

All public work products of the RSSAC are assigned a unique number from a monotonically increasing sequence. This number always appears on the cover or title page of the published work product. All confidential publications of the RSSAC are assigned a unique number from a monotonically increasing sequence that is distinct from the sequence used for public work products. This number is used for internal tracking and never appears on the publication itself. Once a work product has been published, either publicly or confidentially, it is referred to as a publication. A publication's number does not change during its lifetime.

A version number is also specified for each publication and it always appears on the cover or title page of a publication. This number starts at "1" the first time a publication is released to the public, in the case of a public publication, or to the requester, in the case of a private publication. It is incremented each time the document is revised and released.[4]

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[4] The publication of certain RSSAC documents predates the version number requirement. RSSAC documents that do not have a version number should be assumed to be version 1.0.