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ICANN74 | Policy Forum – RSS Governance Working Group (3 of 4)  
Thursday, June 16, 2022 – 13:15 to 14:30 AMS

OZAN SAHIN: Hello, and welcome to Root Server System Governance Working Group Session 3. My name is Ozan Sahin, and I am the remote participation manager for this session.

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With that, I hand the floor over to Brad Verd.

BRAD VERD:

Thank you, Ozan. Welcome back, everybody. It looks like we're missing a few people. Hopefully, they'll join shortly. This is the third session of the day and the second session of going through the models that were considered.

Again, I want to remind everybody. This was intended as a bit of a recap for the new members of the GWG to go through things based upon our discussions and kind of level setting our principles with RSSAC058. So some of this will be a repeat for some and new for others.

So with that said, I'm going to turn this over to Ken Renard who is going to talk through the RSSO model.

KEN RENARD:

All right. Thanks, Brad. This is Ken. Team RSSO. We were going to get the t-shirts, but they didn't come in on time. Liman, Kurt, Ashwin, and myself. And we can go on to the next slide.

We'll just give an overview of the model—things that have been said before, but kind of summarize them here. Do an overall assessment and then dive in. I like you guys too much to go line by line through RSSAC058, so I tried to summarize. So that's what we'll do. And go to the next. I guess it's two slides.

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Okay, so there are certainly people that are more familiar with this than myself, so please feel free to jump in at any point and help me clarify or correct. So, the supporting organization was discussed early on in the GWG, and the RSSO model was ... Further documentation on it was commissioned by the RSSAC Admin Committee. And so the ICANN staff has assembled some information. They've purposely left things blank. Things that could be specified but, well, it's really up to this group to fill in those blanks appropriately. So things that are not specified, they're actually on purpose.

So as an SO, there are a lot of comparisons to other supporting organizations with ICANN, which is good. We have some other models to base things on. But we are definitely not bound by those structures, so we don't have to fit in with the exact definitions of SOs. I believe changing RSSAC or adding a new SO is going to require some significant changes in ICANN's structure [inaudible] the Bylaws. So we have some flexibility in how we define that. Next slide, please. Okay.

OZAN SAHIN: So there's a problem with screensharing. I'll reshare the slides.

KEN RENARD: So there have been two presentations that we've seen on the SO model, and they've different slightly in what they addressed. But

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nothing really contradicted. So I'm pulling from both versions. One was last June, and one was earlier this year, I believe. And there are things even specified in these that are up for discussion, up for redefinition. Specifically, some of the makeups of the bodies. Go one more. Okay.

So, the RSSO, the purpose is to perform that SAPF. The idea is that this SO would be a part of the Empowered Community. And it's important here that it would actually replace RSSAC. The two pieces here are the RSS Council and the Caucus, roughly equivalent to RSSAC and RSSAC Caucus. Very roughly.

ICANN Org has performed some of the functions—the secretariat, the financial function, the performance monitoring, the operations of that. And I guess it was assumed that ICANN Org would also be able to hold the agreements with the Root Server Operators. And hopefully there'll be some flexibility of which organization can sign which type of agreement. And there are subgroups that the Council can charter, spin off, to perform designation and removal. And those are standing bodies that would serve those specific functions. Next.

A little bit more about the Council managing the work of the Caucus and recommending the strategic and architectural policies. It would activate the RSO Review Panel when necessary.

And the composition. These are strawman ideas of what it would look like. Representatives from the Caucus—gTLDs, etc. You can

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read all of that. As well as liaisons. The Caucus would be similar in composition to what it is today. So, pretty much open to anyone—to RSOs, to DNS and root server experts, researchers, practitioners, etc. Basically the DNS community. Next slide.

This is just—thank you, Carlos; this is your slide—basically, that same information pictorially. We see the work groups on the bottom that are spun off on the lower right, the Root Server Operator Review Panel. And there's nothing particularly new on this slide. No text that's new. I'll just give you a chance to squint at it. All right, we can go to the next.

There's a series of flow chart scenarios in some of the work that was done to define the RSSO model as well. So the of the five scenarios that are posed in RSSAC037—those right there—there are flow charts describing the RSSO model for each of these except for the rogue. They're somewhat organized in a more logical way where they share sets of procedures. We can go to the next slide.

In the RSSO documentation to date, they call out three additional documents that would be required. And I pulled these right from the presentation on that.

The Composition Requirements. What should the RSS be comprised of? How many RSOs? Things like that. So this is a pretty big and very important document that's required and

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would be either developed before the governance structure is set up or after.

The other two documents, Candidate RSO and Evaluation Document.

Brad.

BRAD VERD: Can I just ask for a clarification? The first paragraph of RSS Composition Requirements. It says it is required by the SA Working Group. I don't know what the SA is. Sorry.

KEN RENARD: I think that's the SAPC, [inaudible].

BRAD VERD: I got it. Okay, thanks.

KEN RENARD: Security Architecture, yeah. The Candidate Evaluation Document is ... Let's see. Carlos, is that only for new RSO?

CARLOS REYES: That's correct.

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KEN RENARD:

Okay. Then a continual evaluation as well. Then eventually new ones would have to follow. So these are the ones that are called out specifically in the current RSSO description.

The next slide are a few more documents that I think would be required. Yeah. If this model is chosen, this might be the start of a path forward. Lots of documents to write. So, Council and Caucus Operating Procedures a la RSSAC000.

The Financial Functions. Funding to the RSOs as well as spending within the governance structure itself.

Measurement System Guidelines. We already have RSSAC047 as a baseline for that.

Transition Plan and Cyber Incident Oversight and Disclosure Obligations. These things are not written down yet. They will eventually need to be written down. But this is the start of a list for what's ahead of us. There we go. Next slide.

Okay, so this was a slightly older presentation on RSSO model, looking at it as a bicameral structure where within that Council, that the tighter group, you at least have two voting groups. And the idea was that consensus among the two groups ... The actual composition here—IAB appointees, ccTLD, Registry—those are placeholders. They seem somewhat logical, but they are absolutely open to discussion.

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When I look at this, I see the RSO appointees as being up to N members, where N is the number of RSOs. As long as we don't have hundreds of RSOs, that seems somewhat reasonable as a working group.

And you see a lot of the same structures on the right. ICANN Org is operating the Finance Function, operating the Performance Monitoring System. But the Performance Monitoring and Measuring Working Group is a standing membership that's appointed by the Council. They control the policies. ICANN operate machinery.

Same thing with the Strategy, Architecture, and Policy Working Group as well as the Designation and Removal Working Group. Next slide.

Oh, we have a hand. Who is it?

OZAN SAHIN: We have a hand from Ashwin.

BRAD VERD: Ashwin, please.



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ASHWIN RANGAN: Thank you. Clarifying question on the Voting Group A and B inside the box with the RSSO Council. I just wanted your thoughts or the thoughts of the room. Reflecting back to the first discussion we had this morning about consensus, would the same rules of consensus apply to both? Or is there reason to discuss that and validate that differently? Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Thanks, Ash. It is undefined here. The main point that is defined here is the bicameral structure. In RSSAC058, the success criteria actually calls for different levels of consensus for different decisions. Or at least defining what those different levels are. Where some of that might be decisions that could be made by RSOs only, where that would sit. So it is not defined. It's open to discussion and to do “the right thing.”

Kurt.

KURT PRITZ: Thanks. So I think there are two levels of discussion. One is whether a supporting organization model is appropriate for us. And then the second level is, okay, if it's appropriate, how are you going to run it. And I find a lot of this preliminary work is a little bit prescriptive and that maybe the RSSAC does not have to be abolished, or not initially, or that decision can be made later. And

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the membership of the Council is flexible in a supporting organization.

So while one model is portrayed here, we might decide to adopt a different model that includes more SOs, less people in the community, more people in the community. I think it's debate, so it's kind of a two-step analysis. And the same thing ...

What triggered that for me was the same thing for Voting Group A and Voting Group B. If we decide to go back and adopt the supporting organization model, we don't have to adopt the way it was discussed preliminarily. Thanks.

KEN RENARD:

Yes, good point. And these are strawman ideas that have been floated around. Give some details so you can see some of the bigger picture. Some of the squiggly lines or small text at the bottom can be adjusted as necessary.

The one thing that this diagram in particular strikes with me is one of the success criteria—I'm going to look at Robert, and he's probably going to pull up the number in his head right away—had decisions where RSOs can have a significant say. And this seems to address something like that where, if RSOs have “half the decision-making power” in this counsel, that's a pretty significant thing.

Question mark? Yes.

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JIM REID: Thanks, Ken. Jim Reid, IETF appointee to this group and relative newbie. So apologies in advance if these are fairly sort of naive comments. I wonder what the rationale is for having a bicameral structure here to this suggested RSSO Council. It seems to me that's going to make things needlessly complicated. And what will happen if one part of this group has one particular view and the other one doesn't? How do we resolve that between the two if there's going to be a conflict?

And also, I wonder why we're talking about voting here when the discussions we're having [are only] about consensus.

KEN RENARD: Good points in the sense that if you would assume that the RSOs has had a similar opinion or similar desires. Maybe they have common views, but ...

Can I turn to you, Carlos, to address some of that?

Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Thanks. Yes, this goes back to earlier discussions we've had. And I would first like to separate the procedures of this working group, which I thought we were discussing earlier and the future procedures of what we create, which is what we have one very

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fuzzy idea of on the screen. So the exact procedures for how votes, or how decisions would be made in that future model, is still very much up for discussion forthcoming from here.

The two-chamber model doesn't necessarily have to be two chambers isolated from each other where discussion happens separated from each other. But it can be two voting groups in the same chamber. And the idea here was to create a model where the Root Server Operators cannot be forced to something that they don't want to subscribe to. So give them a lot of influence in the ability to veto decisions. And also the other way around. So the other members can veto if the Root Server Operators bring something stupid to the table.

So it creates the ability for inertia and prohibits the capture by a certain group to force something to happen. That's the thinking about these dual voting groups.

JIM REID:

Thank you for the clarification, Liman. I would just say from a personal observation, it seems to be [inaudible] more complexity and more moving parts here. And I'm not really convinced that's a good idea. But let's move on from the discussion.

KEN RENARD:

Thanks, Liman. Wes.

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WES HARDAKER:

So I almost brought up this discussion in the earlier morning because whatever body we end up creating, we're going to have a tension where one aspect of a decision body has a floating number of participants, depending on how many RSOs there are. And so there's always going to be this tension between how do you balance power. And one way to do that is this sort of dual voting mechanism where you have to get consensus among the groups. But internally to each group, you might have voted to see what that group as a whole votes. My family cabin actually has the same sort of voting structure.

And so the reason I didn't bring it up earlier is that it is sort of a post-model discussion. Because it's going to come up in both models. That's really my point. So regardless of when we discuss it, I'd almost consider it out of scope for the moment.

KEN RENARD:

Thanks, Wes. Yeah, again, just put a straw man. This is what it could look like. We can move things around and adjust numbers as necessary, but those rationales are the important piece. Excellent. Next

A broad assessment of the RSO model. I do not see any success criteria that were explicitly precluded from being met. Everything was possible. But a lot of things were undefined. So the exact

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composition of groups, voting thresholds, operating procedures outside of those flow charts. But organizationally or constitutionally, it did not seem that any of the success criteria were violated there. One more slide.

And now we get into the individual pieces. I did group these by kind of the major numbers there to get it a little bit more of the specifics. Some of this has already been said. And the Performance Monitoring System would be operated by ICANN, which then is overseen by that working group which would set the policies of what that would look like.

There was discussion earlier of having the operation of that monitoring system truly by an uninterested third party. Is ICANN enough of a dis-associated, uninterested party? So, the technical accountability would be within that [PMM Working Group]. The non-technical accountability [inaudible] to principles and things like that would be done by the RSSO Council.

The RSSO decisions would be subject to approval by the ICANN Board. And then also, this governance exists within ICANN multistakeholder environment. So if we inherit some of those multistakeholder pieces of the multistakeholder model, that could be a good thing. I'm sure we can all think of downsides as well.

As far as our sole autonomy and independence, there are some parallels to other SOs. You can read through these as you see fit.

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So, financial independence. No other supporting organizations with ICANN fund their members, if I'm not mistaken. So this is new ground here. We cannot completely take the exact model of any other SO. We can pull bits and pieces from other SOs, and we'll still have to make some new decisions, new ground here. Go to the next slide.

Financial function. Again, inheriting some of the properties of ICANN. So I talked about a potential financial policies document with two pieces for sending funds to the—that should be funding to RSOs instead of SOs. And then funding of the government structure itself.

Preserving the enumerated principles. Nothing precluded there, but the detail to be determined in a lot of these documents.

And stakeholder engagement pieces. Council, Council appointees, voting and non-voting members come from non-RSO stakeholders. That's a good thing. Nothing specifically precludes the evolution of that stakeholder discussion or the stakeholder definition. The stakeholders can be added by that Council. Next.

The features of the governance structure as defined in RSSAC037 are there. We've got the flow chart series that we can look at any point. And you can just keep reading on there.

Fairness and equality, where all RSOs have equal power and also can be independent/autonomous if all RSOs are part of that

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Council membership. Whether it was that Voting Group A or just a flatter organization, as far as voting, that can be achieved with that. Next.

Okay, this is the last of the individual criteria. So, “transition” not really defined. Same with “operational stabilities.” The current RSOs must be constitutionally capable of joining. Now, there were some specific requirements of the PRS model. But joining a legal entity or being on a Board or on a Council of legal entity, I don't think that there's any here. But it's up for each RSO to have their lawyers look at this. But to me it seems easier, constitutionally, for the existing RSOs to join this, as it's not a specific legal entity that they would have some control over.

And again, the rest of them are not precluded. There are some example structures of how decisions could be made with those two voting groups or otherwise. In relationship to RSSAC, it would basically replace RSSAC and the RSSAC Caucus. Next slide. Okay.

I'll turn this over to Kurt to talk more about some of the other SO-related issues.

KURT PRITZ:

Thanks. I think the slides are a little bit redundant because Ken augmented his slides. And then I sent some additional materials. In one slide I compared—and if this is helpful or not, I don't know. But I compared the potential supporting organization here with



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existing organizations to see if there were any bars or differences where some sort of innovation is required. Let's see.

There was different formatting here, but there are some areas where the Root Server Supporting Organization will have responsibilities that differ from those typically found in other supporting organizations, especially in how they affect other Root Server Operators. And we were talking earlier about independence, but we also have a monitoring function and a removal function.

So to a very real extent, Root Server Operators are affected, but I don't think these are a bar to creating a supporting organization model. It just makes this supporting organization a little different than the others. And they're like us, [snowflakes] anyway. The things that would have to be figured out are the financial support function. But that can be done within the remit of an RSO. And the same with the monitoring and removal and, kind of significantly, the addition function.

So these all had boxes in the previous slides you saw, but once we get past the model, these are the really hard problems we have to figure out. Next slide.

And then as Ken pointed out, our previous discussions arrived at some very specific models for representation in the RSSO in which entities would be included. But the Council of the supporting organization could conceivably include all of our SOs,

draw some parallels. The ccNSO has 100 plus members, has a Council of 18. So 15 ccTLD managers and three NomCom appointees. The ASO is essentially a Council of its five members. The GNSO Council is made of several stakeholder groups, but the registry operators are in the minority.

An interesting facet of this is that the ccNSO and ASO sort of self-determine what their SO would look like and who the representatives are. And the GNSO was more or less a creation by ICANN with inclusion of all the different stakeholder groups and representative models there.

So I see this group, the Root Server Supporting Organization, as more been in the boat with the ccNSO and ASO and have the ability to make our own rules about who's a member and what outside members of the community. For example, we discussed including the IAB. So we could make that a specification. But we could tailor that and the voting to the model here or a different model.

Well, that's all I had to say about that. Thanks, Ken.

KEN RENARD:

Thanks, Kurt. I just note Brad's comment in the chat about “Those being governed need a voice in how they are governed.”

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BRAD VERD: Yeah, that was me repeating something that was said a couple of times in different meetings. So there was a question earlier, and that's when I typed it.

KEN RENARD: That's it as far as prepared material. I'll open it up to questions/discussion. Give me your t-shirt sizes.

BRAD VERD: Akinori.

AKINORI MAEMURA: Thank you. Just for clarification. In the second-to-last bullet, "The ASO is essentially a Council of its five members." I don't get it.

KEN RENARD: Sorry, I was probably careless there. So, the ASO is comprised of the RIRs, and all of the RIRs, and nothing but the RIRs. So when we specify the Council as those that do the voting, then our supporting organization, they're essentially a Council of the whole.

AKINORI MAEMURA: Right. Then this is applied by all of our RIRs as a member.

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KEN RENARD: Right.

AKINORI MAEMURA: Okay. Then the reality is there are 15 councilors there.

KEN RENARD: Oh, okay.

AKINORI MAEMURA: They have three each from each [inaudible].

KEN RENARD: Right. I'm sorry.

AKINORI MAEMURA: [Tiny point, but ...]

KEN RENARD: Yeah.

BRAD VERD: Robert.

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ROB CAROLINA: Thanks very much, Ken. I won't make the mistake that I made earlier of asking how is this better than the other model because that's absolutely the wrong question to ask.

So the question is, what characteristics of this model do you think really make it stand out as a candidate or as a foundation for discussion?

KEN RENARD: I'd like to pass that around the room. I'll share at least my thoughts. Even though we're not describing any composition of these groups yet, what has been put on paper, all subject to change, it seems more geared towards including all RSOs on decision-making processes. The idea that it can inherit some of the pieces of ICANN that are the multistakeholder piece where you've got a broader community that can have participation—a say—as well.

And I will pass it on to Wes, then Liman.

WES HARDAKER: Well, I was going to ask something in a similar vein. So as we go around the table, you can answer the second part of Robert's question, which is my question, which is ...

One of the things I think we got into a lot in the last session was looking at the independent structure, and is there a view of how

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well this model protects the RSOs from independence and [capture] and things like that. Since that seems to be a sort of difference between the two.

KEN RENARD: Yeah. Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Thanks. Yes, I was sitting here thinking about that. I started to make a table where I put the pluses and minuses in front of various properties and tried to see just for myself where I thought things were. And I arrived at exactly that question that you asked, Wes. How can we put this into perspective?

And one difference I do note is that the supporting organization seems to have a stronger level of influence in the ICANN infrastructure. And it also leans on existing accountability mechanisms that are already in place and operating in the ICANN infrastructure. If we go to the affiliate model, we will have to create such mechanism ourselves. That's an important distinction, I think.

But that couples also with the independence. If you have influence and you use the accountability mechanisms, that also means that tie yourself closer to the organization. In this case, ICANN. Whereas, if you do the affiliate model, you are looser

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[inaudible], but you have to do more work yourself. So this is a balance that we have to find.

And I actually took very much to heart what Sam said before that the supporting organization model in the ICANN perspective is designed to produce policy. That's not what we're out to do here. We are out to do operation, which is also what the IANA Function 4 is all about. So that is actually a plus for the affiliate model, in my little table here. And these are things we won't discuss. I just bring forward what came out of my mind here and now.

So these are things that I think we need to look at. And I would be happy to continue to do this little table for myself or in a document that we all can look at and discuss if that's better.

When it comes to the decision making and the inclusiveness of the Root Server Operator, I think that's a secondary thing. As you said, Kurt, these are things that we can discuss further down the line. And I think we can have somewhat equal representation in both models. That's just a matter of how we design the various committees and how they work.

There can be dragons into details, sure. But I think we can probably have that as a somewhat different topic for discussion. And we can probably fit it into both models to some degree, at least. Thanks.

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KEN RENARD: Peter.

PETER KOCH: Thanks. So there's, of course, a temptation to look at the second model and try to fit or try to match this to the existing SOs where we probably don't have a strictly delineated boundary of what an SO actually is. So I'll fall to that temptation and try to make some comparisons in a way, maybe similar to what Liman just did.

Somebody talked about the accountability mechanisms. And I would just note that, at least for the ccNSO the ASO, the members of these supporting organizations do have accountability mechanisms built in back home, so to speak. So the five RIRs have their own accountability mechanisms, and the ccTLDs are accountable to their local community.

Now the question will be who are the individual root operators accountable to and how does that contribute to that collective accountability in the ICANN system? Saying that ccNSO and ASO members do not derive accountability from being in ICANN. They have a generic system for that. And I'm not talking about gTLDs because I don't know. Well, I do know, but that's not my home turf.

The other aspects, I think, that also goes in the direction that Liman mentioned, these entities are customers of IANA. And that's where part of the policy development comes from or is



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necessary for. But also, that's where the performance measurements are in. So we have a customer Standing Committee [inaudible], the Names Function. The IETF, as yet another IANA customer, has a mechanism to measure IANA performance. And so has the ASO and the NRO for the numbers assigned [in this].

This would turn it the other way around because the Root Server Operators are not customers of IANA, but service entities to the community. So that would also be a bit different.

And then talking about finance ... For the other supporting organizations, talking about finance means putting money into ICANN, whereas here the idea seems to be getting funding into this group and then spread it out. So yes, both talk about funding and finance, but obviously in different directions.

There was one other thing. Oh, yeah. For the ccNSO, for example, the bullet item before that says “all RSOs.” So the assumption might be that RSOs are in that supporting organization. For the ccNSO at least, there are still a couple of ccTLDs who are not members of the ccNSO. They have places to contribute to the work but they, for a variety of reasons, have decided not to join.

And then the question is how policy would apply. And that means, what if a Root Server Operator would not join the supporting organization. Would policies still apply to them and how would

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that work out? So much for the symmetry and the consistency with the rest of the supporting organizations.

WES HARDAKER: Peter, can I ask a clarifying question before you go away?

PETER KOCH: Sure.

WES HARDAKER: So for the ccNSOs that are not members, are they still expected to follow policy and there's no ... I mean, there's no stick there. Right?

PETER KOCH: Well, the ccNSO does not set policy for the ccTLDs. Right? That's supposed to be happening in the ccTLD's local constituencies or communities. CcNSO only has its fourth policy development process in the working which determines ... And that is interestingly slightly similar but also slightly different from talking about—who is—like this Admission Committee, if I may paraphrase it that way. Like talking about what is an IDN ccTLD. So we have the fast-track, and ccNSOs are working on them. So it's only four policy development processes so far.

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And, no, the expectation is that anyone could choose to either leave the ccNSO and not be in it. And then they would no longer be bound because policy is not binding the ccTLDs. Policy is binding, essentially, IANA. At least that's the ccNSO. You and others might differ. Thank you.

KEN RENARD: Brad.

BRAD VERD: Yeah. Thanks, Peter. That was very helpful. Liman, going back to your comments, I'd kind of like to, I guess, challenge you a bit. You made a comment that we're non-operational and we don't make policy. And I guess maybe that's the case today. But this is where my challenge comes in. Haven't we all been talking about defining how somebody would get added, how somebody would be removed, how tall you have to be to ride the ride.

All of these things, I feel, are all policies that need to be determined and created by either model. Because, I mean, if it's the PRS model or SO model, I feel these policies need to be created. So maybe we don't do it today or we haven't done it in the formal sense, but I feel like it's needed. And I guess that's where my question is to you. Not to put you on the spot, but that was my reaction when you made that comment.

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KEN RENARD: Please, Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Thanks. Yes, you are right. And I probably hadn't thought that through properly. But what I was thinking was that the current supporting organizations create policy for ICANN, which I guess now that ... I'm thinking as I speak here. It trickles down to policy for how IANA is supposed to implement that policy in its operations.

And I do agree that we will need to create policies for exactly the things you said. But that would probably not trickle down into IANA's operations, but into operations of other parts of the structure that we're trying to create So, yes, for policy. But policy implemented elsewhere.

So, yes, I'm with you. I will take back saying that we don't create policy, but I think it's a different policy going along a different path. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Yeah. I was just trying to clarify that. I'm not trying to call you out. I was really trying to understand.

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LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: And that's what we're doing here. I make statements. You contradict. And that's how we find some middle ground. And that's exactly what we want to do. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Quick interruption. Carlos has [inaudible].

CARLOS REYES: Thanks. I know there's a queue, but I just wanted to clarify one of the remaining pieces of work that my colleagues and I identified is actually defining the policy remit. Earlier were talking about how the supporting organization model is really designed to have multistakeholder input into a policy process and policy output. That is one of the remaining pieces of this model, defining what the policy remit would be of the RSSO.

KEN RENARD: Thanks. Kurt, you put your hand down. Did you want to say something?

KURT PRITZ: I had a comment similar to Brad's in that I envisioned the RSSO, Liman, as making, for example, policy for how certain Root Server Operators could be financially supported. And then ICANN would probably be the implementer of that policy since they're the ...

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My question that's slightly different than Brad's is when you said “more operationally-oriented” than other SOs. Were you referring to the financial function and the removal function and the monitoring function? Or were you referring to the operational tasks that all the Root Server Operators accomplish every day in their work?

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: I was referring to the latter, but you have a strong point in the former that there's policy there as well, and especially in the financial function. Fully agreed. So thank you for that.

KURT PRITZ: Can I just carry on? So I think that the other SOs have similar operating roles. The ccNSO provide infrastructure through their ccTLDs. The GNSO has the registry operators. The ASO and NRO have the RIRs. They provide infrastructure to make this work just like the Root Server Operators.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Good point. Thanks.

KURT PRITZ: Yeah.

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KEN RENARD:

Thanks, Kurt. Ashwin.

ASHWIN RANGAN:

Thanks, Ken. A few things going through my mind. I think RSSAC037 very clearly calls out for this to be a policy-making body. So I think there is legitimacy to the need for this to be a policy-making body. And I think quite a bit has been said about what kind of policies and who gets to implement them.

I also believe that this intersects with the dimension of independence. When I think of independence, there are multiple aspects of independence that I think about. There's organizational independence which is different from architectural independence—technologies that are used to express the architecture. Operational independence in terms of how the technology is made to work and what it's held up to in terms of SLAs and such. Legal independence, obviously. And financial independence. I'm just thinking of these six different aspects. There could be others that we can add to it.

And I think we have to carefully balance the aspect of which of these is independent versus which of these are governed by a common policy so that that mix is correctly balanced. So I think there is work to be done here. Not to shy away from the policy, but first establish where the independence boundaries are and then to move ahead with policies. Thank you.

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KEN RENARD: Thanks, Ash. Jeff.

JEFF OSBORN: Unusually, I'm at a loss for words. It's been stated—I think Wes put it really well—that sometimes you wish you could go back and figure out how much discussion went into a series of words that's in a document. And you can't see them all. But I remember very clearly, it was probably four years ago, Daniel Karrenberg and I were making the point that we are being asked in this ...

This whole process is about us, the Root Server Operators, being more responsible to something. And the request came from ICANN, “Be responsible to us and some undefined list of whoever.”

And Daniel made the point, and I immediately jumped on it, which was we've been doing this for free for a long time. He works for a non-profit. I work for a non-profit. My nonprofit literally spends 20% of our annual revenues operating [inaudible]. We've never gotten a nickel for ... Well, we haven't in years gotten paid for it. Back in the day, people used to pay a little bit.

So it's kind of a big burden. But what I worry about when the financial function shows up, I feel like I watch wheels turn in people's heads and they think, “Oh, okay. So this is a profit-making opportunity. We're going to line up a bunch of low



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bidders. Some of them will be able to spell 'IP' if you spot them a vowel. And some of them won't. And away we go.“

But it's so far from what the intent was. The intent was merely, if we're going to step halfway into giving up an autonomy that we really value or having for decades had something that doesn't break which, I know all of us are very proud of. I fear that what started as, “Let's have a financial function and relieve some of the stress this puts on nonprofits” and turning it into, “There's a financial function. There's a bidding process. Who can make an 18% fee as a beltway bandit and provide jobs for thousands of people?” Or whatever.

And that's not the reason a financial function is in here. It also, I think, makes it look like we are just ... The Root Server Operators are lined up at the trough looking for somebody to throw money into it. And it's literally the opposite of that. We are literally losing money to provide this for a little bit of prestige and feel like we're doing the right thing for the global Internet.

So I've been sitting on where exactly to put this part in, but I feel like it's a little too important because the people who are not part of the RSSAC that put the financial function into this might have come to a different conclusion. It was very much a matter of a little bit of relief rather than, “We'll give you this money. Give us a low bid. Give us a better bit rate and more queries per second.” Or anything.

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And I probably didn't put that as well as I could, but it's really clear in my mind. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Kaveh has his hand up. And then to Wes.

KAVEH RANJBAR: Thank you very much. I wanted to comment on the RSSO model, but I will keep that short because I think what Jeff brought up is also important.

On the RSSO model, the thing is, everything that was said, I generally agreed with all of those possibilities and how SOs might help in those. But the important part is there is a lot of—and I repeat that from earlier this morning—unknown unknowns. And that's what happens in policy-making. So a lot of things that might come up ...

Think about when GDPR became a thing many, many years ago. Nobody was thinking about WHOIS. At some point, then someone made a link with WHOIS and then everything changed. Right? All the machinery. And these things can come up. Regulation from a different body, different situations—geopolitical, whatever. It might come up and we might have things that is really not even within our vision or within our powers to dream about.

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And having this all set up will allow us to have our fair share of, say, in those situations. So I think that's [inaudible] or something like that. I just want to point out, in this world and in this set up, there are a lot of new scenarios that we cannot even be aware of right now. So to think that we are protected about them or not.

About the financial function, I agree with the lack of clarity on what exactly is expected the function to do. I think what is written is clear, but among us when I talk to people, I see different views.

Hearing what Jeff said, I have a bit of different view on that. Because I think our aim, one of the main motivations to start this work, was to make sure we have a new model. We evolved the model for something that is ready for the next, let's say, 50 years. Correct? Something that can evolve and cope with all the new changes in the environment. It's basically like we want to design a car and a road for it and all gas stations and everything. Correct?

So until now, someone or many people were pushing the car. That's not an engine that can run. So I'd like to make sure that we have machinery that can actually run on its own and can get to the next gas station. It can buy gas, and it can go to the next one. And then people who have other reasons to push the car without the gas, or for whatever reason, they find other means to link these incentives and make [inaudible].

I fully agree that, today, if we go by those metrics, all of the work that we have done we will be lost, like all the goodwill we have

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put—the money, the efforts—for basically nothing to run the service. That will be lost. So we need a) to think about how we are going to deal with that, and b) if we want to continue such a model—let’s say RIPE NCC, a not-for-profit.

And assuming that we decide not to get any financial help or support or anything, any payback, I still need to design my machinery in a way that, in that environment, I still have right incentives to do so. So I have a narrative that says, “Hey, there is money, but I’m avoiding that. I’m getting it from here. And this is a loop that I can continue. So I can fit it for not only this year, for the next 10 years sustainable.” Correct?

So I think actually going in that direction helps us to make a more sustainable model. But there are a lot of gaps in between. I really like to see incentives really align and really clear. Like, there’s money. You do the work. Now, there are people who would want to do the work for no money. Still, let’s find the incentive.

And then how we make sure they do a good job, how we make sure that they are on par with others and all of that. These are all the issues we need to tackle. But I think it will all of our benefit if we redefine the working machinery and basically all incentives aligned.

KEN RENARD:

Wes.

WES HARDAKER:

Thanks. And Jeff, as always, you bring up good points. But I do want to make sure that we separate out two of the distinctions that you were bringing up. Right? The governmental oversight can be sought after even without benefits, to some extent. The United Nation kind of falls into that. Right? Why would a government join unless they get something else out of it?

My previously referred to university professor and Governmental Philosophy. My favorite example out of that—okay, it's the only example I actually remember—is that you give up the right of revenge in order to create a judicial system. Right? You're giving up the right of solving the problems yourself by creating something that everybody trusts as an equal and unbiased way.

And you can do that because it's the right thing to do, even if you're not getting anything else out of it. And in this case, we're giving up the right and fair judgment and things like that for if give up the right of revenge.

But finances is not the only thing that we might get out of this subject. And as a non-profit, trust me, I have to go explained to my budget every year and, like, why in the world are we doing this? Right? And that's always ... I get tired of that argument. I would certainly love something just to recoup costs.

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But do remember that there are structures to just cover costs. For my previous research entities that I worked for, even though I was doing governmental research, we could never take an NSF contract. And the reason being is because we couldn't do cost plus fixed fee. So the National Science Foundation prohibits you from taking a fee. You can only do basically cost. And that's salary and everything else. But no positive benefit aside from that. There's no extra bottom line.

And I think it would be very easy in the ICANN world to do something similar where if you're doing this for the good of the world ... I don't know what we'd be giving up. But you can't get fee. You only get to recover cost, and that takes away the commercialization incentive. And sort of, that's in part of what you were referring to.

KEN RENARD: Tripti.

TRIPTI SINHA: I just wanted to add more to what Kaveh said. Jeff, you said that ICANN said to us, "Give us something" some years ago. And just to take you back to the genesis of this work, I was co-chair at the time, so I remember this very well. It was 2014 when the Transition had just kicked off. We were not part of the Transition. And in the 2015-2016 time frame and just looking at the

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landscape, the dozen of us operators had been doing this since the early days of the Internet. This had become an unfunded mandate. We are a dying breed. Right? There was no governance around the operations of the service. The sustainability of the service.

And Kaveh used the metaphor of a car. But what I'm trying to say is we realized, "Wait, this is not a good thing to not have any kind of structure around it." And we are just good, global citizens who are just offering the service, but we need to put a model around it. So really, ICANN didn't come to us and say, "Give us a model." It was almost self-propelled by this group, the RSSAC. So I just wanted to give you that background because I think you came after the work was underway. Thank you.

KEN RENARD: Jeff.

JEFF OSBORN: I need to chew on that for a minute. What I just want to be clear on, though, is that this is an unusual discussion we've been having for years now in that it has never been clear to me what exactly it is we're getting. But we talk all the time about what we're given up. So the financial thing is two letters on a sheet, and no amounts have ever been brought up. ICANN has never said

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they're willing to be even part of that payment process, that I've ever heard. So it's just ...

It's a funny thing to be years into a negotiation where usually the first thing you establish is the price, and the second thing is the details. So just, most people in the room are engineers. I'm a businessman. And it is really weird to negotiate for years without thinking what you're going to get and what it's going to cost. It's just, it's an odd way of doing things.

KAVEH RANJBAR:

Can I add to that? So, I agree with you, Jeff. I fully agree. I think we haven't discussed what we would get. But the thing is, and I think that's where the separation begins. ICANN as the org on its own is not going to decide that they will find this or that. Correct? If they want to make a decision, basically the community has to give that mandate to ICANN. And then ICANN will say, "Okay, we allocate this much money to this project" or "[inaudible] budget." So on their own, they cannot come up with that. Correct?

So the process, at least the idea, my understanding is if here we get to consensus and we have a very good standing within the ICANN community between different SOs and ACs, basically we would convince them that this is the model that we all collectively think would work. And this is how we think it should be funded.



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And if it needs to go the way of ICANN Org as one of the funding sources or any of the reserves ICANN has, if the company wants it, it's basically there. But it's not that the CEO of ICANN says, “Oh, yeah. We will give \$5 million”—billion, whatever—“every year to RSOs.” And it will happen. Correct?

So my thinking of the process which, yes, seems a bit broken is that a) we need to make sure that we are happy with what we are going to propose, and b) we sell that to the ICANN community which we have good standing at. And from there, then anything that we wish and we can convince the community will happen. But if we cannot convince SOs and ACs, basically there is no chance we can get anything. Correct?

So it's basically on us to be able to make that happen if we want, or anything we want. That's how I understand this model, which is different from, yes, when you're making a deal because there's no buyer here on the other side of the table.

KEN RENARD: Erum.

ERUM WELLING: Thank you. As a member of the RSSAC Caucus and an observer here, I'd just like to just mentioned that the kind of trigger from what Tripti said.

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The reason the RSOs are around the table for this meeting is because you have the expertise. You have proven the ability to see the need for something and participate as a group to see something come to fruition. So what I ask is that you don't give that up. Whatever model it is.

The SO model seems to reflect that currently a little bit better than the affiliate model. But I think the value that is provided by the diverse input from the RSOs should be maintained if possible. Thank you.

KEN RENARD:

Jim.

JIM REID:

I want to go back to what Jeff said a few minutes ago about the negotiation point. It's all very well to talk about what the funding [inaudible] might be and the negotiations are, but I think you also need to consider what the recipients of that money we do in exchange for any kind of funding support. It's not just a question, I think, of just saying, "We will faithfully answer communities to Port 53 and perform lookups." There may be other things that may be required.

And I remember, it must be about 20 years ago, the difficulties and the long time it took to get all the Root Server Operators ready to do DNSSEC, and also to get IPv6. So there may be things

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like that that could crop up in the future. I don't know. [inaudible] requirements reporting of information, of statistics, and all the rest of it. So [inaudible] part of some kind of national service level agreement or some kind of contractual obligation. So we need to think about that aspect, too.

I think the idea that you're just going to get money in exchange for trading service for answering communities is perhaps naïve. And we need to look at some of these other issues, too.

KEN RENARD: Brad.

BRAD VERD: Jim, just to, I don't know, put color on the history, I don't think anybody has ever assumed to get money just for providing service. Ever. I think RSSAC037 made that very clear. It was "if money was provided," there were strings attached. And the strings attached were exactly what you just listed. Right? And so nobody has ever, in my conversations throughout the years, said, "Give me money for what I'm doing" without signing up for doing something more.

JIM REID: Well, thanks for that, Brad. And thanks, also, for what Tripti was saying about this as well in support of you. But, just, the

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conversation today seemed to me [inaudible] little bit one- sided.  
That's all.

KEN RENARD: Wes.

WES HARDAKER: [inaudible], I was going to repeat what Brad just said. But thinking back a little bit, even more generically, there are two ways to go about approaching some sort of problem with a cost associated with it.

And so, Jeff, you're right that I've been in part of many negotiations where you know the pot of money is this size and you're going to say, "What can you do for it?" Right? So you start with the money. And I go after grants sometimes. It's like the upper limit on, especially ... Like, National Science Foundation grants are always some limit. And so you're trying to figure out how much you can get done under that limit if you have sort of an expansive list.

The other thing that happens all the time in different parts of the governments where you don't know what the total cost is that you can expend. And this happens all the time when you go to voters. You're like, "I want to build a high speed rail system from Sacramento to LA." Right? I was one of the people that voted for that a long time ago. It's still not there yet, but somebody came

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up with the design and a plan. This how much it's going to cost the citizens. And you come up with a design first and then you cost it out.

And I feel like we're more in that second camp. And as to what Jim just said, when there's new things that come on the table—IPv8 or, I don't know, some other aspect—there will be a cost associated with that. And I think one of the hardest things that we've never talked about in this group yet is that it may not be consistent year to year if new features are going to come down the road that requires significant revamp of technology. I don't know what that would be. There's nothing on the horizon that I have now because we don't ...

You know, everything that's on the horizon now is not DNSSEC and IPv6 or anycast. Right? There are not major changes in deployment. I can't imagine that something will come up in the future that will suddenly increase cost to the RSOs, at least on a temporary schedule.

KEN RENARD: Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Thank you. I was sitting here thinking that there are also other values that we don't measure in dollars and services and cost for computers and networking. Such as we may yield independence

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in exchange for a system of accountability and a system that helps us perpetuate this Root Server System into the future. So by building organizational structure, we gain a future by yielding some independence. So these are other types of values that we can balance as well.

But I do think that you have a point, Jeff, that we need to keep in mind, at least, what values are balanced in this, both monetary values and other values. Thanks.

KEN RENARD: [That was] somewhat diverged from the RSSO model, but it's all good discussion.

BRAD VERD: If I may, Ken.

KEN RENARD: Yes.

BRAD VERD: I think it was a really good discussion, a really healthy discussion. We clearly don't have answers to everything yet, but I think it applies to any model that goes forward. These are all questions and concerns that need to be addressed. So it's a healthy discussion.

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Ken, back to you if you have more.

KEN RENARD: I was just going to solicit any other further questions on the RSSO model or anything else that you want to discuss specific to that before closing that.

BRAD VERD: And we have five minutes left. Any other questions that people want to throw out there?

ERUM WELLING: [inaudible] exactly important.

BRAD VERD: Erum.

ERUM WELLING: Thanks. Is there any usefulness to mapping against the success criteria or not? I'm just thinking big picture, as far as coming up with the appropriate model. Are we looking to adjust one or both models to the success criteria? Thank you. Just looking for next steps. Thanks.

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KEN RENARD: I think we've done that individually, in the PRS model presentation that Wes did and this one. And we don't have a chart of scores for each one that we can calculate numerically. But I'll go to Brad for the next step.

BRAD VERD: Yeah. I think we're going to pick that up in the closing session today to talk about next steps and how to work forward and work our way through this.

KAVEH RANJBAR: If I add to that. If we follow the model we discussed earlier that basically any of the models we adopt, we make sure that they take the 11 or 12 principles that we have. Then basically, it should mean that they fully come to the success criteria because success criterial also derived from that. So actually, that would put it into test, which would be like double accounting. Correct?

So I suggest if any model that we want to seriously consider, we go through that exercise and explain why they would satisfy the 11 or 12 principles. And my expectation is that when we do that, we should automatically have a list that should definitely fulfill the success criteria because success criteria is also derived from all of those. We have the table which has that.



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WES HARDAKER: I think one important takeaway from both of these two presentations is that I think both Ken's group in my group came to the conclusion that both of these models could adapt to the success criteria. And whether or not everything is there right now, that's actually not the decision we need to make—which one scores better. But rather, which sort of structure do we want.

And as Suzanne put it to me multiple times, even the PTI model is not the only thing that can adapt as well. So the important takeaway for me is that both structures can succeed in matching the success criteria.

BRAD VERD: Yeah, and I think that's been what has been stated all along. It's just which one ... I'm sorry. Tripti, your hand.

TRIPTI SINHA: So here's a thought. And Peter actually put this thought in my head. Both models clearly are good, but he made a very clean distinction which is, the affiliate model is in service to IANA, clearly. I think no one of us would disagree with that. And we have policy written into RSSAC037 and RSSAC058, and policy is developed on the SO side, then the other side of the house. So it's almost like we might end up with two ...

Both models work and we might end up with two bodies. One is the affiliate, and you still need an RSSAC of some kind. The RSSAC

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could be RSSAC or an SO or whatever the case be to develop the policies that we talked about. So let's not discount the fact that we might end up with using both models and end up with two bodies.

WES HARDAKER: That's why ,in my presentation—or I should say in [Duane's] diagram—RSSAC was still there as part of ICANN for exactly that reason.

BRAD VERD: All right. We have 60 seconds. Any last words of everybody? All right, again, thanks for the healthy discussion. I thought this was very, very good. And we'll see everybody in ... I'm sorry.

[OZAN SAHIN]: 30 minutes.

BRAD VERD: In 30 minutes. Thanks. We're adjourning.

OZAN SAHIN: Please stop the recording.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**