
ICANN80 | PF – RSS GWG Work Session (1 of 4)

Tuesday, June 11, 2024 – 13:45 to 15:00 KGL

OZAN SAHIN:

Hello, and welcome to the Root Server System Governance Working Group meeting. My name is Ozan, and I will be the remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior. During this session, questions or comments submitted in chat will only be read aloud if put in the proper form as noted in the chat. I will read questions and comments aloud during the time set by the chair or moderator of the session. If you would like to ask your question or make your comment verbally, please raise your hand. When called upon, kindly unmute your microphone and take the floor.

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BRAD VERD:

Thanks, Ozan. Welcome everyone. I hope everybody had time to do their homework or at least look through it. I wanted to turn this down so I feel like I'm super loud. No? I'll just keep talking. So the first thing I wanted to do was kind of rehash or kind of just quickly run through the highlights of the phone conversation we had last couple weeks ago. If we could pull those slides up for me, please. You guys have all seen this. We go to slide two there.

I did make a few modifications, really not a few. I think there's one modification to this slide based upon the conversation. In the original slide, I had left the RSOs out. That was an error on my part because, again, I was trying to take everything that was in the original diagram that we had created in San Juan on the left and identify the different components of the governance structure, which you can see on the right in blue.

And then as I stated last time, there were three other categories or components that I added. One was governance and operations dollars funding, essentially, which we spent a lot of time talking on. And then there was this idea of norms versus obligations.

So we go to the next slide. Actually, let's go back. Anybody disagree with that? Because there was some comments on this when we talked about it on the phone, which is why the edit was made. Everybody agree with the components identified here so far? I don't see any disagreement. No hands.

Next slide. Then we've got, again, this slide, the only change that was made was adding the RSOs to the left there on the list of components

that feed into the RSS GS. The deliverable is directly out of our charter. And the goal here is to talk about a roadmap that I feel we need to come up with.

Next slide. And then I talked about kind of the starting point where we all started with this. The RSOs initiated this process a number of years back with RSSAC 37, was further enabled by RSSAC 55 and 58. And when this group started, it's been mentioned a number of times. I've said it a number of times. We've agreed to it a number of times that success of the new root server system government structure depends on the assenting parties accepting the model and obligations put upon them. Essentially, the success of our recommendation will be based upon what the assenting parties do with it.

Next slide. So in trying to figure out how to move forward, I spent a lot of time going around talking to a couple of people. And to me, a staged approach is kind of the only way that I can see anything happening here. And I'll get into that in a minute. But I wanted to try to share an example, an example that I found that I thought was close to home here was the creation of ICANN and the number of different steps that it went through in getting to where we are today. We had the creation of ICANN in 1998, the joint project agreement in 06, the affirmation of commitments in 09, and then the stewardship transition in 16. So it was a number of different stages as further obligations and or responsibilities were given to ICANN, just an example. Not to say this is the timeline we want to follow, I'm just saying this is an example, as I stated on the phone call.

Next slide. So then we ended up here, which was kind of like this is a blank slate. We have our components on the left. You can see I added one new row at the very bottom called acceptance criteria. Seems like if we're having a staged approach to anything, you've got to have like what is the acceptance criteria to get to it and to get to the next stage. So that seemed like a natural progression there, not something that we had identified previously where all the other items we pretty much had. And I broke it into two different pieces. There's the -- and I just I put four stages here. There could be two stages, there could be 10 stages, there could be whatever people think there needs to get to a functioning RSS governance structure.

On the left-hand side in green, I put kind of what the GWG recommendation is, because I feel like, we need to kind of map out what these stages are, and then we need to kind of map out where the responsibility or the role of the GWG recommendation ends. And the role and the responsibilities of what happens in each stage are picked up by what at some point will be the governance structure. Everybody follow that? Again, this should be a recap of the phone call.

So any questions? Next slide. Kurt, you have your hand up.

KURT PRITZ:

So I'm remote. So I don't know if there's the appropriate time for this, but I'm wondering how foreseeable each of these stages are. And if you could go back as an example, if you could go back to the previous slide. Here, it was always kind of foreseen that ICANN would become independent of the USG and that IANA would go through some sort of

transition. But if you take another example, say the GNSO, step one was, creation of the DNSO. So D as in dawned, which was a combination of ccTLDs and gTLDs. And then that evolved in just to a gTLD oriented organization.

And then the voting structure for that evolved from, one large set of constituency groups to the sort of bicameral structure they have now. And then it further evolved into the creation of working groups, which involves not just GNSO entities, but the broader ICANN community. And I think that, I think that, boy, those steps to me weren't predictable, although they were logical looking back on them. So maybe that's a better example of a staged approach, but I don't know how we're going to be able to fill in those steps competently. So I have a concern about that, but I'll shut up now.

BRAD VERD:

Thanks, Kurt. As I stated on the phone call, this is only meant to be an example. The other example that I used on the phone call was the multiple stages of RSSAC when RSSAC got rebooted, I believe in 2012 or somewhere around there. There's been a number of stages RSSAC has gone through where it was rebooted. Probably the first stage, we defined a bunch of things that RSSAC was going to do. Second stage was probably, you could say, was to create the caucus, which didn't exist previously. There's another stage in there where the bylaws were changed, where RSSAC was not appointed by the board.

So I think, there's any number of different examples you could come up with. This was meant to be nothing more than an example. This is

not meant to be, we need to do it this way. This is not meant to be, it's ICANN, so it has to happen like this. This was meant to be an example. So I really hope we don't get wrapped around the axle on that. The GNSO is another example. I'm sure there's a dozen other ones we could talk about how to build a car in stages too. That's all. I was trying to be relatable with this example. Nothing more.

Next slide. Let's jump two ahead. We covered this one. So then at the end of the last phone call, there was a request for kind of a narrative from myself so that people knew what was being asked of them in their homework. And so I tried to capture that here. The goal here was, and here at ICANN80, hopefully we develop a roadmap for a staged approach to the governance structure. When I stated that on the phone call, there was lots of nodding the heads, and everybody said, that seems like a reasonable thing to do. One of the outcomes that I'd like to see, whether or not it's possible, I don't know. We'll see by the end of -- by this time tomorrow, is to identify the discrete tasks needed to be documented by the GWG for whatever these stages are.

And I think that picture will become more clear as we start to walk through and maybe put pieces in of the puzzle that is the staged approach. And then what my ask was for homework for everybody, I asked everybody to consider, I tried to think about how I went about it. And how I went about it was, well what's the end game look like? What's the turn, the turnkey model look like? What are all the different pieces of it? And then I started to back into it and try to figure out what was truly doable in different stages and what some of the roadblocks were or I'll say showstoppers. It was just say blockers were

to get from one stage to another. And as I did that, to me, the picture became very, very clear. And that's what I'm hoping we work through here with everybody.

So if you go to the next slide, the next slide is the one that I sent to everybody for homework. It's a little prettier than the one that I presented on Thursday because I had a little bit more time on it. And people wanted examples so they could kind of understand. Again, pieces in the blue are the root server system governance structure as not to be conflated or confused with the pieces for what the GWG will be delivering. What the GWG will be delivering is essentially documentation. It'll be a couple documents or a handful of documents or many documents. It depends on what this group wants to do. But the governance structure, within each of the components, there was this idea of what the function is and the powers given at each stage.

And then, again, continuing with just my simple example of four stages. We don't have to use four. This is just my simple example to kind of articulate what I was trying to get done was stage one is this minimum viable governance structure, which we had talked about on the phone call as a minimum viable product. I didn't want to call it a product, so I put in good governance structure.

The second piece would be the minimum viable functioning governance structure, so where it's actually doing something. And then, to me, stage three was a mature governance structure. And then stage four was turnkey, which I think everybody in here might have a

different picture of. And then I put in some examples. I put functions and power. To me, if you talk about the council, I thought it was pretty obvious. I don't think there'll be any debate on this. But one of the powers that a turnkey governance structure would have, the council would have a power to designate and remove an RSS. We've all talked about that. That's been listed many times, talked about many times.

That seems like a power that would be in the final stage. So I put that in as an example. Doesn't mean it goes in stage four. It just means that's, to me, that's somewhere in whatever the final or the turnkey model is. And then I wanted to cover funding, because funding we talked about extensively here. RSSAC 37 has been criticized many times for kind of leaving that portion out. And it's been voiced in this room and others that this funding piece needs to be addressed. And we can't let it go again. We can't kick it down the road. So to me, again, in the turnkey model, funding is collected and dispersed. Seems like that's what would be happening in a turnkey model.

And then, again, I just backed into that is what I have here in a mature governance structure. And this can all change. This is nothing more than an example. I'm going to say it a million times here because it doesn't seem to resonate. But in stage three, I put committed as for funding. Stage two, I said defined. And stage one, maybe that's just self-financed by the RSOs as they are today. Again, examples, nothing more than examples.

As far as the other example you'll see here is acceptance criteria. I thought, and again, this is my interpretation. I'm not trying to dictate

anything. This is just the way I thought. In order to get to a turnkey model where a council has the ability to designate and or remove RSOs, you would first have to put them under contract. So acceptance criteria to go from stage three to stage four to me just sounded like RSOs are under contract. So that's the type of conversation I want to have with the group today.

And to me, the best place to start is the turnkey model. So I'll pause for a moment, get some thoughts, questions. Everybody did their homework or we're ready to fill in blanks? I see smirks and no people nodding their heads. Wes.

EDMON CHUNG: Does this one work? This one works.

BRAD VERD: All right, guys in the Zoom room, hold on while we work out some technical issues here.

WES HARDAKER: Thank you very much. Masterful sound engineers at work. Appreciate it. I think this is a good approach, Rob.

BRAD VERD: Russ.

WES HARDAKER: Brad, what did I say?

BRAD VERD: Rob, that's okay. I called you Russ, so we're good.

WES HARDAKER: It's been a long one day of a conference so far, as I'm sure that's all I've spent here. I think it's a good approach. What I struggle with is how to think about the four stages that you have proposed. I know they're just examples and we can play with the number of stages over time. But the definition of minimally viable versus I have a hard time struggling what that means in concept, which is probably what we need to define first rather than try and fill in boxes. I can give you a weird example. I think that your designation removal one is the obvious one because that's the one that seems important.

I would actually be tempted to split that where removal was more important to get done before approval. So removal before addition in part because that's more likely to be a critical one, whereas an addition we know is not needed right now. So that's just an example of how I could see splitting things up. So I understand the reason for what you've laid out in terms of how do we put this together in a slow model. What I fail to understand is can we get agreement on what each of the stages really means? What does minimally viable mean? But thank you.

BRAD VERD:

Well, I would challenge you. So I have no objection to what you stated about separating. I'm sure six, one half does and the other doesn't really make any difference to me. What would be needed in order for you to remove someone? That's the type of discussion we need to have. So what are the powers or what needs to be in place in those different components and those functions in order for you to remove someone?

And so we got to figure that out and like we can sit here and say what goes into what stage. And I think that's maybe a bit of a waste of time, which is why this was sent out to you guys last week, which is what does the turnkey solution look like? Let's put it all in there, figure out what it is. And then you start figuring out, what does it take to get to this point?

So the easy example I gave right here was just in order to hire or fire somebody seems like you got to have them under contract. And if you got to have under contract, maybe there's needs to be money involved. I've been channeling the group. This is not my opinion. This is what you guys have all said throughout the last couple of years. So if this is wrong, I need you guys to speak up. So I just started to back into these things.

And so I would really like to hear from you guys as to what a turnkey model looks like. And I think as you guys go through this exercise, you're going to identify really quickly that some of the things that we've been wrapped around the axle talking about aren't necessarily needed for the GWG to be wrapped around the axle talking about. And

I think it's going to be for the RSS GS to figure out. That's what happened to me. I'm not going to say it's going to happen. It's going to happen to everybody. That's what happened to me when I went through this. So can we go to the spreadsheet? Robert.

ROBERT CAROLINA:

I think I'm in this odd position of agreeing with everything that everybody has said so far. And I'm also trying to figure out if that if that's actually going to advance us, the fact that we're all sort of-- the fact that I'm broadly in agreement with things. So let me just go through a couple of points.

One of them is that I take Kurt's point, and I think it's a good one that we should always keep in mind that we don't know exactly what the turnkey solution will look like from a governance perspective, because if we knew exactly what it would look like, we could simply adopt it now and be done. Or at least we don't agree on what it is right now. I think that's probably closer to the truth is that we're not going to agree on exactly how it should function.

We might know what we think it should have the powers to do. And I continue to believe that that is the single most important list of things we ought to be looking at. Which is what do we think this council that we're proposing to create should have the authority to do either at a starting stage, at an end stage or in between stage. I think all of those are valuable considerations. I would really hesitate to use phrases like being under contract as an example of success criteria, and I think it's

going to be extraordinarily difficult to establish detailed stage by stage success criteria at this point.

Because Brad, unlike you, I'm not really persuaded necessarily that contracts will be a part of the end solution. They might well be, they might not be. I don't know. I don't think we can prejudge that. More than anything else, I think what we need in order to move from one stage to the next and eventually to reach that end state where we have a governance structure that has a long list of enumerated powers or a short list of enumerated powers, depending on what we think about it. What we need more than anything else is trust and confidence in the governance structure that we're trying to build.

And sitting here today, that's what nobody has, because we don't know what it will function like. We don't know how it will work in practice. We can sit here and write all the position papers and all the process documents we want. We can draft constitutions, we can lawyer the living hell out of it. We could, but it won't tell anybody, but it won't give anybody in this room or the broader group of stakeholders an intuitive sense of how it works in operation.

And I think that's the value of the staged approach. The staged approach creates a series of environments where each environment slightly ups the risk of everyone participating, slightly, slightly ups the stakes in the game that we're playing, so that everyone is comfortable. I might not like it, but I don't have that much to lose in stage one, so I'll participate and I'll get to know the other people who are playing. And we will work collaboratively together and we will get to through a

process where we are developing policy collaboratively, where we're developing plans collaboratively, whatever it is we're going to develop collaboratively, we'll start to get to understand that.

And it's that process of working together that then we'll start to shine a light, not on what do we think the stage two structure needs to be capable of doing. But how will we have the trust and confidence that we're all prepared to jump into and raise the stakes that little bit more. So that the end state is, if the end state is the RSOs are agreeing to participate in a system which could result in their designation being removed, that's a pretty big commitment to make, no matter how it's papered, no matter what the mechanism is.

And similarly, if the TLD registries are going to get into a system in which they are going to be expected to play a more significant role, I'll decode that later. They're going to have to have trust and confidence that they're agreeing to participate in the system that they have trust and confidence in. And no matter how much goodwill we have in the room, no matter how much work we do, that's why I say if we knew what the turnkey solution looked like, we would just draft it, recommend it, everyone would agree it, and we'd be done with it. But there's just no practical way to accomplish that without having that opportunity for everyone to work together collaboratively in a lower stakes environment until they can then collaboratively define what that higher stakes environment looks like.

BRAD VERD:

Thank you, Robert. So I'm going to, I'm going to agree and then push back a little bit. And that is, I said this on the phone call, I will say it again. One of these stages are coming, I feel like whatever the GWG recommends, one stage, two stage, 100 stages, they, based on what your comment is, and I agree with it, is we don't know what the last stage looks like, what the turnkey looks like today.

We have an idea of what some of the things that we think should be involved in it, but we can only make our recommendation based upon the data that we have today in front of us. And I believe, as my personal opinion, is that whatever recommendation we give, especially if it's a staged approach, the GWG is responsible for maybe stage one or stage two, and then the rest of the stages are going to come out of that governance structure.

And the governance structure, which I would imagine a lot of people in this room would be a part of, would then evaluate and maybe make a different ending for each of those stages. But this is a roadmap. And just like any roadmap, it is just that. It is meant to be a guide. It is not meant to say you can only get to point D by going through A and B and C. It means you could go in any other direction, but, think about, we think you should end up here. Maybe you end up past there. I don't know, but it is nothing more than, guess what, a recommendation. Thoughts?

ROBERT CAROLINA:

Yes, I agree with what you're saying. I think that's right. The one concrete recommendation I would have in terms of the process that

we use to figure this out is that rather than starting at stage one, what we view as a minimum viable governance structure, I think it's worthwhile refreshing our recollection of stage zero, which is, what are we doing now? What is the current state of the RSS governance structure?

And in our RSSAC 058 and in other discussions we've been having over the course of the past few years, we've made it clear or we have openly begun to acknowledge that there is a very informal collaborative governance structure that exists. It's not overly documented, shall we say. It's based on norms of behavior. It's based on close collaboration. If it has an instantiation that exists, it currently exists in the form of Root Ops. It's self-financed. Operations are self-financed by the RSOs. Governance is self-financed by the RSOs.

That forum has no authority to demand anything of anyone and has never claimed to have authority to designate new RSOs. So there's a lot of powers it doesn't have, but nonetheless, it has functioned for the purposes that it was needed. It's functioned very well. It has been criticized. I'm just going to like shortcut here because we all want to try to get to a solution rather than let this play out. It's been criticized by many for lack of transparency. It's been called a star chamber. It's been called all kinds of crazy things by people who are worried about these sorts of stuff. And like any criticism, there's a grain of truth to all of that, and that ought to be explored.

But I think let's start with this stage zero, and then when we look at stage one, let's figure out what is it that we can accomplish now?

What can we make better now? What can we achieve now that everyone will agree is a step forward, not a step backward. It doesn't get us to what you're calling the turnkey solution immediately because nothing can, but it will certainly propel us along that path of working more collaboratively with our stakeholders.

I'm speaking now as an RSO, working more collaboratively with our stakeholder communities to build that degree of trust, to build those ongoing relationships that make it possible. And I also want to make sure that to get on, that I agree with you that the role of GWG, the Governance Working Group that we're in right now, I think it naturally comes to a conclusion when we deliver the recommendation in whatever form it's going to include. The principles documents in some form, a report of some form, a roadmap in some form, whatever it is, and then stages two through N are developed by whatever becomes the stage one governance structure. That's I think where we are and how to get to where we need.

Now in terms of how many stages, to me it feels like a minimum of two or three, a maximum of four. Any more than that I've never been able to conceptualize. And if we go too far out, we -- so like I say, the end state is, I think is a good discussion to have about the powers that we want our governance structure to have in due course. And then reverse backwards and say, and what can we do now to make our stage zero, to go from stage zero to stage one and view that as a significant step.

BRAD VERD: Sam?

SAMANTHA EISNER: Thanks. So I agree in large part, but I think one of the things that we need to also do or that I would propose that we do is make sure that we're keeping 037 in mind and making sure we're identifying, if 037 is what this group was formed to help implement, right, to give those recommendations to help implement it, it kind of gives the guideposts of the things that are seen as the necessary outcomes.

So if we can use that to help have within our stage one identification of whether we're meeting it in stage one, the output that 037 identified, or have stage one start identifying the roadmap to lead to how that, whichever particular portion of 037 we're thinking of will be, or is expected to be integrated into further stages, because I think it's important to make sure 037 was, RSSAC did work on 037 for a reason, to address some of the challenges that Robert raised and to make sure that there is this ability of the root servers to come together and have external understanding of how the root servers came together.

So I think there are some, in that concept of minimum viable governance structure, it's also like, what are the minimum things we think we need to have there to have some confidence that the structure that's set up can keep moving forward? And so I think we can either do it working back from a turnkey, or we can do it by saying what is the minimum that we need to have within that stage one? But we have to start from one side or the other, I think, to go and I'm supportive of whichever way.

BRAD VERD:

Well, let me ask a question, Sam. So I feel like 037 has been foundational in everything we've done, including the principles, including to how we got here today, which is identifying all the components on the left-hand side. I'm a little, curious in what you're trying to get at to say, let's not forget about 037 and what it says, because that's what we've used to get where we are here. So I'm missing the point.

SAMANTHA EISNER:

Sure. I'll give an example. So one of the things is making sure that there is the performance monitoring system. So what are the minimum functions that we think need to be as part of a performance monitoring function of this governance system in stage one, if it's not the final turnkey solution. So test against those components. Are we ready to have every part of that component built out based on the principles we've developed, et cetera, on the designation and removal?

Are we ready to have that when we get into stage one, or will we just have a roadmap to get to a designation and removal function, or if we have, as someone suggested earlier, if we have a designation function and a removal function. But making sure that we're really on the path and not leaving components out. Not that I think that we will, but that's what I think the output of this group will be tested against. Have we looked at it? Do we have a plan to get to good on each one of those, even if it's not within that first stage?

BRAD VERD:

Rob?

ROBERT CAROLINA:

I just wanted to jump in and say, I agree with Sam. Again, to take specific examples. Stage one. Will it be possible to create a stage one governance structure that has clear authority to remove a designation? Almost certainly not, no. End stage, yes. Absolutely possible at stage three, four, whatever it is. But that doesn't mean, as Sam rightly points out, that doesn't mean that we ignore the designation and removal function. As she rightly points out, we build a roadmap that explains what groundwork do we need to do in order to lay a foundation to create the designation and removal power, not just the function, but the power to do it.

So there's any number of things that could be done in a stage one and stage two governance structure, such as more detailed work applying the principles that we've already discussed to answer the question, what detailed process should we be going through if we need to designate another RSO? And what detailed set of processes should we be going through prior to removal? What sort of protections do we think need to be in place?

There's work to be done on a deliverable that's been much discussed, but I don't know to what extent it's been formalized, and that is recommendations, engineering technically-led recommendations on what is an optimal number of root server operators. I know research

has been done on that. I think that a stage one governance structure should spend time reviewing, commenting, revising, and publishing some solid recommendations on questions like that, and testing the community's response to things of that nature.

Similarly, that kind of analysis you can repeat through each of the functions that shows up in 037, and to get to the point of what can we do to implement the authority that we see to do things as opposed to the process of building a roadmap to get to that authority by building recommendations that give people confidence that lead to that endpoint.

BRAD VERD:

So we can continue to agree, because I agree, everything everybody said, but I feel like there's a disconnect in the room, and so what I'd like to just ask for clarity on from both of you is, given the examples, so Rob, the example you just gave, there's a subtle difference between what Sam said and you said, at least from the way I heard it. The way I heard it was the GWG gives a recommendation for stage one.

Stage one might take and create all those documents and create more documents or more understanding of how to get to those next stages, to get to those different things that everybody has identified as what they picture in their head in the turnkey model of designation, removal, monitoring, and all these other things, but that isn't necessarily, the GWG is not going to sit down and write a document on how many root servers is a good number.

That happens in the governance structure, and so I just want to be very clear to everybody in the room that happens later in the governance structure. We are just trying to put together a structure and help that structure bootstrap and then kind of evolve to what I feel everybody thinks in their head is that turnkey version. Wes.

WES HARDAKER:

For clarity, given our charter, do we all agree, I hate to say this, that your column four, for example, the turnkey solution is the mandate of the GWG and beyond that is where the GS takes over once it's established and the turnkey has been turned, because the charter says final model.

BRAD VERD:

Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG:

And building on what you just said, it seems like then we might not be able to fill out all the boxes until we get to a certain point as well. We might only be able to fill certain boxes in stage one, and if you look back at how ICANN evolved as well, we didn't have a roadmap 20 years ago of how we got to now here as well. That being said, we might need to think a little bit about what structures, not structure is not a good word, what could be there in those boxes that makes enough sense so that we can see the end of the roadmap, but there will be things in the roadmap that might need ability to change as we go

along. That's sort of what I heard when putting a few of the things that were said together.

BRAD VERD:

That's exactly what I was trying to point out. Other thoughts? Wes, to your point, I believe the GWGs recommendation should address, regardless of what the charter says, I don't think we're able to address a turnkey solution, and I think that's what I wanted to point out here. I wanted to kind of draw this out. Either we can start at the beginning and think what we think minimum viable product is, or we can start at what everybody, again, like Sam used three different examples out of 37, like, well, you said you're going to have this, this, and this.

We start putting those things in what we think the turnkey is and then what it takes to get to those things. One of which things we just stated was, technical documents need to be written as to what the metrics are, that on how tall you have to be to ride the ride. I don't think the GWG is responsible for that.

I see everybody nodding their head no, they aren't. So if they're not, then we're not giving that piece of the turnkey model. That has to be done within the GS and evolved to it. So that's really what I'm trying to get across here. And so when I sat down and did this exercise, it became abundantly clear to me that the GWG can't do what is in the charter. And so I wanted to -- so let's lay out a roadmap to what that charter says and then back in back up from it to see what we can do. And I've been throwing ideas out here for a number of weeks here. And this is where I ended up with. So, Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Liman here. I hear a lot of good stuff here. What if we were to interpret the word final as in the final proposal from the GSS, which could be the starting point of what will have to evolve forward? Because I totally agree with you. We cannot cast something in stone and say this is going to work for eternity. What we deliver, the final product that we deliver must be something that can evolve on its own legs, so to speak. And if we take that approach, I think we can reconcile your two statements. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: I would love to remove that word altogether and change the charter. Jeff.

JEFF OSBORN: Forget how to use these things. I'm just trying to grasp what you're saying about parts of these are going to have to be done by the organization we're developing. Do you see a line up here somewhere that is the separation of the GWG and the future GS? Is there an obvious line?

BRAD VERD: The GWG is not a governance structure. Do we agree on that? So we're not a governance structure for the root server system. We're just giving a recommendation. So the GWG needs to give a

recommendation to, in theory, bootstrap the governance structure, correct?

JEFF OSBORN: Right. I'm just trying to figure out at what point on here does the caterpillar become the butterfly?

BRAD VERD: That's what I'd like to figure out too. I think there's a lot of people in this room or have been in this room that think we're delivering a butterfly. And what I'm trying to point out is based upon what we've identified, we, this group, based upon 37 and all our documents and the principal's documents, what we've identified as the components and, the questions around funding and everything else, that butterfly is kind of out of our control. Rob.

ROBERT CAROLINA: I definitely think we're not delivering a butterfly. We might be delivering a caterpillar. For that matter, we might be delivering an egg. But I think the way to look at it, and Brad, I think the way to simplify the success criteria for each of the stages, what is it that allows you to move from stage one to stage two?

I think it's the same success criteria in each box. The success criteria for moving from stage one to stage two is that the participants in the stage one governance structure agree that they're prepared to move

to stage two. And the success criteria for the stage two structure is that the participants agree that they're ready to move to stage three.

And in terms of like the delineation between the GWG and what we're talking about here, GWG, this group, makes its recommendation. It produces a body of work based on what we've been working on this time, which is already, actually, it's an abundance of material that will assist with the process of evolving the governance structure. We deliver it, we wrap it up in a tidy bundle, we put together a roadmap of what we think the thing, the powers that need to be accreted, gathered up over time, deliver that as a recommendation to the community, and we all go home.

And then it's up to relevant members of the community to decide if they're going to launch the stage one governance structure in the way that it's described or not, and whether they do or not is not the GWG's issue. And then if they do, if the stage one structure moves forward, the GWG doesn't exist anymore. It'll be the stage one structure that will be having this next generation discussion about how do we move from egg to caterpillar and how do we move from caterpillar to butterfly. That's how I see it.

BRAD VERD: Yes. Sam.

SAMANTHA EISNER: So, if we look at stages, I wonder if it's necessarily agreement of all the stakeholders or hitting milestones. So, like if you think about a

destination, or think about performance metrics. So, stage one could be that there's the research about which are the right performance metrics, and then the group collectively agrees upon that. But if we also have a stage one for designation, or let's talk about removal, because I don't think the harder one.

So, stage one for removal is, and for designation as well, we need to know that that work that's on the optimal number of root servers, that kind of research is completed to then allow a certain level of work to conclude to move us to the next stage. Do we need each of these functions to move sequentially within the stages at the same time? Or can we advance the work on performance and removal function or performance metrics function versus if the designation removal is taking more time? But we also should think, what does agreement mean versus hitting milestones and hitting the appropriate levels of work to get it done? And it could be one and the same. It could be some consensus-based agreement on the outcome of that stage.

But I think we probably shouldn't build in a system that says unless everyone consents to move to the next stage, we can't move to the next stage. Because I think we need to deliver something that has a possibility of moving forward without putting in gating factors that might be too hard to meet.

BRAD VERD:

Well, so a couple things there, if I may, Rob, really quick. So gating factors that we might not be able to meet, you just pointed out the

fact, like, if there are gating factors we can't meet, then we can't deliver on the final model. You just said it.

SAMANTHA EISNER:

Well, I would say a gating factor that we can't meet is requiring unanimous consent to move to each new stage. That is something that probably wouldn't be an acceptable thing to put into a document to have a future. But there could be other consensus things that it's that level of thing.

BRAD VERD:

Going to your first point about you keep referencing performance and metrics, as stated earlier in San Juan in the original diagram, that's a committee. We talked about finance committee, we talked about performance and monitoring committee, we talked about, I don't remember all of them off the top of my head, I have them here a sec. We talked about strategy and architecture committee, designation removal committee, which could be broken up into two if we wanted to, finance committee, we talked about the audit committee, we talked about performance monitoring and measurement committee.

So if that's the case, then it goes to the first question is, well, what do you need in order to make a committee? That seems like a prerequisite. So I kind of see how my conversation went, you started to back into these things. So, everybody keeps jumping to the end. And very quickly, what about this? And what about that? And as Rob said, I think we have a lot of the work is there, a lot of it is there. It's

just putting it together to understand the different pieces and put together a roadmap. Rob, your hand is up. Apologize for stepping up.

ROBERT CAROLINA:

No, that's fine. I appreciated your comments as well. I first want to say that I think Sam makes a good point. And I just to clarify, I didn't mean to suggest that each of these stages would, of necessity, all be a function of unanimous consent of all participating members. That I use the word agreement and I intended to use it in a very loose manner. Having said that, I think that it does make a certain degree of sense to try to establish milestones, even if the milestones have a, I don't think they need to be, let's say, defined to a degree of scientific precision, but they should give an indication of the things that we expect to be accomplished before moving on.

However, Sam, I think where we're going to come a cropper with this is that eventually the success criteria is going to be that the participants, using whatever mechanism has been preordained, will have to agree, however that's defined, that the milestones have been achieved, because it has to come internally.

What it can't have is some sort of external forcing mechanism where an external power says, oh, in my opinion, those achievements have been achieved and therefore you are now required to go to stage two. It has to come organically from within the governance structure itself. Now going, Sam, to your very, very good question about can they be done, do they have to be done in serial order? Can they be done in

parallel or can they be done, can you advance one part of the structure without the others?

My initial thinking is very probably not. I think that as so often happens, many of these functions that we're trying to develop will have counterparts in the structure, and I think we're going to find it's difficult to tease the participants into believing that they should invest trust in giving up this much authority over that function if somebody else in the room is not yet prepared to give up that much authority over some other function.

So I suspect that we'll find that most of these things have to proceed as a group. It'll be sort of a big step where a lot of things are worked on. And if we don't do that, I fear that -- well, I'll go back to how we started making a lot of progress in discussing principles when we adopted the mini Helsinki discussion process. We agreed that we would, we just arbitrarily put things into three different categories, three different baskets of issues, and we said, well, we don't have to finish each of those before we start discussing the others. And suddenly we were discussing a lot of issues that we were making progress on all of them and we really got to borrow one of Brad's favorites.

We got wrapped around the axle, was that it? We really got wrapped around the axle because nobody wanted to make advances on one set of issues without discussing the other, no one wanted to discuss the other without having resolved the first, et cetera, et cetera. So I do

think it'll be sort of, they'll have to go as a group. I think it's going to be difficult to move the structure along one thread at a time.

BRAD VERD: Jeff Osborn.

JEFF OSBORN: My father used to always say the best way to start something is to begin. I'm wondering whether staring at this blank piece of paper isn't a little paralyzing, and it just occurred to me, I think we have the ability to fill in an entire row and an entire column. And that it also furthers Rob's idea that the trust needs to start somewhere. So I would argue that the column of acceptance, we begin with the discussion of is that required unanimity majority consensus what to go to the next step.

And then further, I think this filling in the stage zero is a really good idea, because if we don't know where we are, it's very hard to say where we're going. Because if you don't have the stage zero filled in then stage one can feel like a leap. And if you have it filled in, then it just looks like progress. That's just because otherwise we're continuing to stare at something and nobody's filled anything in except for what you did. So, just a thought.

BRAD VERD: I'm in full support of that if everybody else is. So we just start on stage zero, any objection. I was giving the room opportunity to talk this through before and I figured the next session we would be doing this

but I'm happy to jump right in now. So who's the council stage zero. Speak up people, who's the council?

WES HARDAKER: Nobody?

KEN RENARD: Root Ops.

ROBERT CAROLINA: If we could go to the top the question is, well the question here is what powers does the corollary of the council at stage zero is Rudolph's. So the question is, I'm sorry was there. I see Wes's hand is up so I'm waiting for lots and lots of disagreement on that statement. But the corollary to the stage zero council is in my preliminary opinion, Rudolph's. What does Rudolph's have the authority to compel answer zero. So one thing to fill in here, no authority to compel anyone to do anything.

What is it comprised of, what is its membership, its membership is restricted to and solely limited to the RSOs. It's an RSO only club. Club's the wrong term, forgive me. It's an RSO only working environment. What else does it do? Well, it does publish documents from time to time but it doesn't have what I would call the most profligate publication history. It puts out things occasionally. I have a feeling it probably doesn't put out as much as it might because now that RSSAC exists RSSAC has become a place in which

recommendations get adopted as an alternative source for something like that.

What monitoring and performance functionality does Rudolph's do? Well, reasonable minds could differ on the answer to that question. On the one hand, there all seem to be very, very closely attuned to engineering day to day. There's a clear set of mechanisms for dealing with systemic catastrophe. But as we've seen recently, there does not appear to be a working system for minor disruption to the orderly function of some small parts of the root service system that have no impact on the world that we can see.

But nonetheless, there's a limit there. How much work does it do? Those kinds of things. That's what we have currently. What characterizes that system? Operational norms, principles, adhering to a system of shared beliefs, decision-making is based on consensus. The decision-making model is consensus. What else do we need to know to describe it? I see some hands went up, some hands went down.

BRAD VERD:

Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN:

Thanks, Liman here. My reflex when you start to say that was that I don't really see that comparison between a council and the current Root Ops. Because I think that we are trying to design something with a council that doesn't mean that we already have something that can

be compared to that. So I would argue that we have nothing. As you continue to describe and explore, I do see some similarities there. So I will step back from the strong nothing standpoint that I first had.

One thing that you didn't mention that I also think needs to characterize what we have today is that it's on a volunteer basis. You're not only self-funded. I am a member of Root Ops because I choose to be, and we all choose to be, and that's good. But if I were to back out of that, the rest of Root Ops or anyone else couldn't really say anything about it. I have no plans to, don't worry. But there's a volunteer property to it that we probably have to change in shape or color, at least in the future. So it is a property of the current system, I would argue. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Jeff, you had your hand up? No? Wes? Wes?

WES HARDAKER: Let Hans Petter and Hiro go first. I'd like to hear more people.

BRAD VERD: Hiro?

HIRO HOTTA: Thanks for the console. How about ICANN board? Because it may be informally, but it acknowledges who are the RSOs.

BRAD VERD: I'm sorry, can you please say that into the mic? You turned your head there at the end. It acknowledges, and then I couldn't hear you.

HIRO HOTTA: Acknowledges who are the RSOs.

BRAD VERD: Hans?

HANS PETTER HOLEN: Well, I lowered my hand again, but I think Liman said something in line with what I'm thinking that if it is Root Ops, I'm not sure the right people are there. But then I think Root Ops was set up for something else. So trying to repurpose it into a console for the RSS GS may be like trying to turn a tent into a skyscraper. It may be easier to start to build on the side of it rather than fortifying the tent to become the foundation of the skyscrapers.

BRAD VERD: This is again where I feel like we get wrapped around the axle and trying to compare apples to apples. What we have today is not what we're going to have tomorrow. And if you, we, the RSOs, put my RSO hat on right now, in RSSAC 58 abundantly made a statement that we are the governance of the root server system today. There's a

sentence in there. I can pull it up. You guys can all pull it up and look at it.

So if you look at – that's what I just said, I said me as in RSOs with my RSO hat on. RSOs wrote 58 and then handed it over to RSSAC to then go through its formal process and make a number document out of it. And the RSOs stated that the current governance is done by the RSOs and has been for 30 plus years. If that's what you want to call it, sure. It's the RSOs. Yes, I don't have the answer for you. We as a group have to figure this out. I'm not the one with the answers.

HANS PETTER HOLEN:

With your explanation, you sold it to me. I'm fine with that. But Root Ops as I see it is, much more of a technical coordination, but I'm not, I haven't even attended a Root Ops meeting. So I don't really know what Root Ops is doing even. So I'm speaking against better knowledge here, but the RSOs collectively, sure. I'm with you on that.

BRAD VERD:

Wes.

WES HARDAKER:

Actually, before I begin, can I get a clarification is, no, no, no, I think it's an easy one, Brad. Is stage zero in your mind where we are now?

BRAD VERD: Stage zero was suggested by Rob as putting this where we are today, right now, meaning we as in the RSS governance. Is that fair to say, Rob?

ROBERT CAROLINA: Yeah.

BRAD VERD: And that today falls within the 12 independent RSOs.

WES HARDAKER: Great. I just wanted to make sure that I wasn't misinterpreting what I believe that column was. We're in line. I would argue that stage zero is not Root Ops entirely because though aspects of a governing system is in it, it is not a governing system to the rest of the world. There is no easy communication mechanism. As Rob said, it can't make changes. Hiro's point of the ICANN board makes a lot of sense.

I think that the governance system consists of multiple places right now. Who can tell IANA to make a change to the root hints file. That's not Root Ops. In theory, they might be able to request it. Who would they request it to, IANA or to the ICANN board? In theory, the ICANN board could demand a change to IANA. That's what's missing. So I don't see trying to put a single entity in that box as successful. Because the reality is that it's split functionality and it's missing functionality across a lot of stuff. Jeff clearly agrees with me.

JEFF OSBORN: What Wes said. Is there any problem anybody's got with having RSOs/Root Ops/ICANN board/IANA/? All those powers exist in a bunch of places. That's not a problem. It's just recognizing, if it was good, we wouldn't be fixing it.

WES HARDAKER: What we have now is broken. That's why stage zero shouldn't be exist. We need to move away.

JEFF OSBORN: I also want to say that I think the reason we were having a hard time thinking of a stage one, two, three, and four is look how hard a time we're having figuring out where we are now. I think this is a really useful exercise. And unfortunately, like everything else we do, it's going to take time and that's...

BRAD VERD: You're taking the words out of my mouth.

JEFF OSBORN: Physics.

BRAD VERD: So I'm happy to read this statement in RSSAC 58 really quickly. It's one sentence. Says from the very early days of the DNS, before the establishment of ICANN, the RSOs have undertaken both the

operational and the collective governance role in delivering the DNS root service. Rob.

ROBERT CAROLINA:

I think there is a risk that the discussion we're having is starting to drift away from how do we govern the root server system and we're starting to get some scope creep into who governs the contents of the root zone and who governs naming and numbering or ultimately who governs the internet. And to that extent, I'd kind of like to roll it back a little bit. And we're only talking about the root server system. Just the root server system.

And in that context, if I've heard everyone correctly over the past few years, I think that that list begins with RSOs potentially includes something like Root Ops, because it's the only forum I can find where root operators have been collaborating on how to make things work for a very, very long time and where they pressure each other to do the right thing as they see it. And that's it, because we're only talking about the root server system.

BRAD VERD:

Peter.

PETER KOCH:

Thanks, Brad. This is Peter. My understanding is that this should and actually can only be an approximation of the current situation. One reason being that if we would have complete equivalence, then that

structure or the union of those structures would actually already be able to solve the problems at hand. And we agreed that that is not the case. Maybe lacking the explicit empowerment, but also when we name these groups here, then obviously it's not only -- excuse me, it's not only the heads in there.

Otherwise, we wouldn't need RSOs and root servers but it's also the role and function of those. On that historic note that you quoted from RSSAC 58, I believe, I'm wondering whether that covers the cases where at some point it was decided to add I, J, K, L, and M and whoever made that decision should appear here in this list. Same thing for that one. I think that predates this other action, the renaming of the root name servers. So again, whoever was that needed to be on that list. And it might have been IANA or something else which I just see appeared here.

BRAD VERD: Wes, back to you.

WES HARDAKER: So two things. I helped write 58. I think we've agreed that 38, my numbers are now dead. I helped write both of those documents. We've agreed that those documents are not perfect and we have holes in them based on past observation. I would argue that that one sentence probably is some missing things that we would have in hindsight. Part two, I would propose that we accept this answer as sufficient and move on to discuss other things because we've already

come to agreement that it exists in a lot of places. And what else? The council doesn't really exist today. So defining it perfectly, as people have said, is very challenging. So let's try a different box because that's probably the best answer that we're going to get, my belief.

BRAD VERD:

We just got a ton of hands that came up and we've got three minutes left, guys. So, it's fascinating how this group works. I'll go to Edmon and we'll see where we go on time.

EDMON CHUNG:

Just very quickly. I'm still trying to wrap my head around ICANN Board. The problem I have is, does that mean that at some point in time, ICANN Board is removed from here? But ICANN Board, this role. If ICANN Board always has a particular role in PTI, IANA, then it wouldn't fall into the stage zero council box either. I don't know whether it makes sense.

The thing is, ICANN Board still has some role, even at the butterfly stage. Because it works through IANA and IANA publishes its own file and so on. So whether we do put it here, I know what Wes said and maybe we should move on, but I think I want to park this as whether ICANN Board or IANA that actually should be in the box or some other role should be put there for them.

BRAD VERD:

I think my feedback on that would be, I think what you see up there as an answer is an answer that's kind of throw everything on the wall just to protect ourselves. When in reality, the reason we are here today is because the only people in that box today are the RSOs. ICANN today doesn't have any powers over the RSOs. And neither does IANA. They hand up, they deliver the root zone. And the reason we're here is because of that. That's why we're here. We're trying to figure out what those relationships are and to define accountability going forward. And that's why we're here. But with that, I'll give it to Hans.

HANS PETTER HOLEN:

So I was kind of also thinking like, Wes, let's accept what's in that box now and go through them to see what's in there because I think if my quick assessment, no, I would say no in several of these boxes. And that's the problem. We need to establish something. So trying to describe what it is today and spending a lot of time on that when the problem is, as you said, there is nothing there today. That's the problem we're trying to solve. So we need to move to the right.

And maybe as you suggested earlier on, do the bottom line to see what does it take to move from A to B. In the beginning, we may need to start with consensus at the other end, we may have simple majority or two-thirds majority once this organization or this setup gets more mature. So with that, I file a motion for coffee.

BRAD VERD:

Jeff, less than 30 seconds.

JEFF OSBORN: Absolutely less than 30 seconds. The reason to put all that up there in stage zero is stage zero only exists as a substrate to build stage one. So the idea that we are somehow giving up our control of things to all those groups is not the idea. It's just when we're thinking about what stage one looks like, we need to think about is any of our stuff in their worlds and we need to address it? Is any of this stuff that should go to them? But to say these people all have legitimate veto and vote and everything else in what we're doing, I don't think the issue. And I love what they said. Let's just leave it there and populate the box. We're doing this in pencil, not with a chisel.

BRAD VERD: Rob, you want to close it out?

ROBERT CAROLINA: If we want to leave this and move on, I think there are only two answers that make sense in this square. Either say RSOs, period, or say unclear, period. Either of those I think are acceptable answers.

BRAD VERD: With that, we will go to coffee and you guys can think about it, but you can see how this is going to be a fun two days. See you back here in 30 minutes, guys. We're adjourned.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]