16 February 2022

Ted Hardie
Chair, Root Server System Governance Working Group

RE: Request for adjustments from the GWG

Dear Ted,

On behalf of the ICANN Board, I would like to thank you and the Root Server System Governance Working Group (GWG) for your 17 January 2022 letter. The Board appreciates your swift adoption of RSSAC058 as a source document. The development of success criteria is an important step in the process of evolving root server system (RSS) governance based on RSSAC037 and within the ICANN community.

As requested, the Board is prepared to update the GWG charter to allow for participation of representatives from each of the root server operators (RSOs). Given the consent to this request, the Board encourages the GWG to seek full RSO participation in the GWG at this time, while updates to the charter are pending. Furthermore, the ICANN Board encourages ongoing consultations between the GWG and the RSOs and, ultimately, concurrence from the RSOs before the GWG publishes and submits its proposal for RSS governance. This approach affirms our correspondence from June 2021 and ensures the RSOs still have "a significant say in policies that govern them (in their capacity as RSOs)" as explained in RSSAC058.

The Board acknowledges the GWG's request to update the GWG charter to require consensus of the GWG. Upon review of the existing charter, the Board confirms that consensus is already the defined working method, so no change appears to be necessary beyond removing an option for voting. The Board defers to the GWG's existing ability to set its own working methods within the bounds of the charter. These working methods include how the GWG determines consensus, makes decisions, and approves outcomes. Indeed, the Board believes the GWG should have the responsibility and flexibility to choose the working methods that will best advance the next phase of its work.

In consideration of the GWG's note that an extension of the work plan is needed, the Board requests the GWG to provide a report about its progress in the last two years as soon as is feasible. The Board expects that the next phase of GWG work will focus on further refinements of the GWG proposal to align with adopted source documents. The Board reiterates its support for the GWG and looks forward to reviewing its proposal for RSS governance.

Best regards,

Maarten Botterman
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

CC   Akinori Maemura, ICANN Board Alternate Liaison to the GWG
        Göran Marby, ICANN President and CEO
        David Olive, ICANN Senior Vice President, Policy Development Support
        Tripti Sinha, ICANN Board Liaison to the GWG
        RSOs via Fred Baker, RSSAC Chair, and Ken Renard, RSSAC Vice Chair

Enclosure   Revised RSS GWG Charter and Operating Procedures_2022