

RZERC Operational Procedures - Draft 8/03/2017

The Operational Procedures of the ICANN Root Zone Evolution Review Committee
August 2017

Preface

These are the Operational Procedures of the Root Zoot Evolution Review Committee (RZERC). The RZERC reviews proposed architectural changes to the content of the DNS root zone, the systems including both hardware and software components used in executing changes to the DNS root zone, and the mechanisms used for distribution of the DNS root zone. The RZERC was formed as the result of the IANA Stewardship Transition.

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1. Introduction

The Root Zone Evolution Review Committee (hereinafter referred to as the “Committee” or “RZERC”) reviews proposed architectural changes to the content of the DNS root zone, the systems including both hardware and software components used in executing changes to the DNS root zone, and the mechanisms used for distribution of the DNS root zone. As determined necessary by the Committee, It provides recommendations to the ICANN Board of Directors related to these proposed changes.

Resolution 2016.08.09.02 of the ICANN Board establishes the Charter of the Committee.¹ This document contains a set of procedures, developed by the Committee, regarding its operation. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are current.

2. Formal Structure

2.1 Composition

The composition of RZERC is defined by its charter:

The Committee shall be comprised of 9 committee members as follows:

- *One ICANN Board member*
- *One senior IANA Function Operator administrator or their delegate*
- *The Chair or delegate of the Security and Stability Advisory Committee*
- *The Chair or delegate of the Root Server System Advisory Committee*
- *The Chair or delegate of the Address Supporting Organization*
- *The Chair or delegate of the Internet Engineering Task Force*
- *A representative selected by the Registries Stakeholder Group of the Generic Names Supporting Organization*
- *A representative selected by the Country Code Names Supporting Organization*
- *A representative of the organization identified to serve as the Root Zone Maintainer*

The Committee will select its chair. Appointment of members shall follow each organization/group’s internal process.

¹ See Board Resolution 2016.08.09.02-03. Available at: <<https://www.icann.org/resources/board-material/resolutions-2016-08-09-en#2.a>>

2.2.1 Appointment and Participation

An appointing organization's chair or executive point of contact shall notify the RZERC Chair, via email, regarding the member it appoints to the Committee. The RZERC Chair shall then notify the Committee and instruct ICANN support staff to add the member to the Committee distribution list.

The following outlines the process by which the new members are integrated into the Committee:

- The member is given access to the Committee resources (e.g., distribution lists, internal websites, etc) and can participate in meetings.
- The member is invited to all meetings.
- The member may participate in any discussion, official decision, or formal action of the RZERC.

The Committee Chair, with the support of staff, may provide an onboarding briefing that includes a review of the charter/operating procedures and background briefing on current issues that Committee is deliberating.

2.2.2 Removal and Replacement

When an appointing organization replaces a member of the Committee, the RZERC Chair shall instruct ICANN support staff to remove the departing member from the RZERC distribution list and restrict his/her access to RZERC resources.

2.3 The RZERC Chair

2.3.1 Chair Duties

The Chair of the Committee is responsible for setting agendas and chairing the meeting, as well as working closely with ICANN Staff on the Committee's business.

The Chair represents RZERC at ICANN meetings and other venues and when the need arises. Unless explicitly tasked by the committee, the chair will speak as a member, not for the committee.

RZERC Chair coordinates, when required, the interaction with ICANN SO/ACs and other committees as appropriate. He also coordinates the work of the Committee and may delegate one or more of these duties as needed or appropriate.

2.3.2 Chair Eligibility and Terms

All members of the Committee are eligible to be selected as the Chair.

The term of the Chair ends at the earlier of (i) the close of the first Committee meeting held after the two-year anniversary of the Chair's appointment; or (ii) the Chair's leaving the Committee.

A person may only serve for two consecutive terms. The eligibility status for a previous Chair is reset one year after having stepped down.

2.3.3 Chair Selection Procedure

One month prior to the election, nominees will be accepted for the Chair position from the RZERC members and announced on the distribution list. RZERC members can also self-nominate. Nominations will be accepted up until one week before the election.

During the meeting that includes selection of a chair on its announced agenda, all nominees will indicate their intentions: to accept or to decline their nomination. There will be an opportunity for the nominees to address the Committee about his/her candidacy.

In the event that only one candidate is standing for election, the Committee may select the new Chair by acclamation.

In the event that two or more candidates are standing for election, staff will make arrangements for an online anonymous vote as soon as practical after the meeting that includes selection of the chair.

Members will indicate their selection anonymously via an online system within 7 days after the poll opens. A simple majority (half plus one) of the voting members will establish the new Chair.

In the event a simple majority is not achieved due to having more than two nominees, the nominee with the least number of votes is eliminated and the voting is repeated with the reduced slate of names.

The process is repeated until one nominee achieves a simple majority.

In the event of a tie, candidates will get some time on the next call to address the group, after which another vote occurs. A subsequent tie initiates an immediate coin toss.

2.4 Support Staff

ICANN staff provide support for the RZERC meetings and activities.

3. Meetings

The RZERC holds regular, executive, and public meetings.

3.1 Types of Meetings

3.1.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings are closed to the public and are held to conduct the work of the RZERC. Regular meetings are held periodically via teleconference with appropriate supporting technology for recording and managing the meeting. The Committee will meet as frequently as necessary, with at least one meeting per calendar year. In-person regular meetings may be held at ICANN meetings or other venues as deemed appropriate.

Participation in regular meetings shall normally be limited to Committee members and ICANN support staff. The Committee may, from time-to-time, invite experts or other relevant individuals to participate in its regular meetings.

3.1.2 Executive Meetings

Executive meetings are closed to the public and may be held, in extraordinary circumstances, to conduct confidential discussions of sensitive matters. Executive meetings may be held via teleconference or in person, with or without supporting technology for recording the meeting.

Participation in executive meetings shall normally be limited to Committee members, with or without ICANN support staff. The Committee may invite experts or other relevant individuals to participate in executive meetings.

3.1.3 Public Meetings

The RZERC may have a need, from time-to-time, for public meetings. It is expected that such meetings will take place at the regularly scheduled ICANN community meetings. Such public meetings may be convened to:

- Report to the community on the status of particular proposals under consideration by the committee; or
- Solicit public feedback on particular proposals or issues before the committee.

3.2 Calling Meetings

Regular and executive meetings may be called upon no less than fourteen (14) days notice by either (i) the RZERC Chair or (ii) any two members of the Committee acting together.

Public meetings may be called upon no less than thirty (30) days notice by the RZERC Chair. Public meetings shall be announced on the Committee's website and ICANN meeting site.

In exceptional circumstances, an RZERC regular, executive, or public meeting may be called with shorter notice provided there is a legitimate reason and unanimous consensus for doing so. The reason(s) for calling a meeting with short notice shall be discussed during the meeting itself.

Staff will send out an agenda of every meeting at least one week before the meeting is scheduled to occur, or as soon as possible for meetings called under exceptional circumstances.

3.3 Minutes, Recordings, Transcripts

Per the RZERC Charter:

The Committee shall operate openly and transparently. Committee meetings shall be recorded. Any minutes or other records of the meetings shall be publicly posted as soon as possible following approval by the committee.

In the event that making certain deliberations public would create a risk to the security or stability of the DNS, the Committee shall specifically identify that as a reason for withholding parts of their meeting records.

Accordingly:

- The RZERC mailing list archive is open. The link to the mailing list archive will be posted on the RZERC website.
- The Committee may, by consensus decision, choose to not publish confidential or sensitive topics that were discussed during separate executive sessions. In such circumstances, Support Staff may be asked to keep confidential notes regarding the meeting.

After each regular meeting, ICANN staff will produce the minutes of the meeting which include a summary of the discussion and all decisions. Meeting minutes will be presented for approval at the next regular meeting. Following approval, ICANN staff will publish the minutes on the RZERC web site.

All regular and public Committee meetings shall be recorded and transcribed. ICANN staff will publish recordings and transcripts on the RZERC website when they become available.

4. Decision Making

Per the RZERC Charter:

Decisions and actions of the Committee shall be taken by consensus. Such consensus shall be documented and may be determined via Internet-based discussions without the need for a meeting.

Accordingly:

Decisions and actions of the Committee shall be taken by consensus of *all* members. Such consensus shall be determined by the Chair and documented by Support Staff.

The levels of consensus used in the Committee are:

- **Full consensus** - when no one in the group speaks against the recommendation in its last readings. This is also sometimes referred to as Unanimous Consensus.
- **Rough Consensus** - a position where only a small minority disagrees, but most agree. Such consensus is achieved when all the issues and viewpoints are considered, but not necessarily accommodated (see RFC 7282).

Every effort should be made by the Committee to reach full consensus. When such consensus is not possible, efforts should be made to document that variance in viewpoint and to present any minority view recommendations that may have been made. The Committee Chair should encourage the submission of minority viewpoint(s).

5. Consideration of Issues / Proposals

5.1 Receiving Proposals

Per the RZERC Charter:

The Committee will consider issues or proposals raised to the Committee by any of its members, PTI staff, or by the Customer Standing Committee (CSC)...

Accordingly, proposals to the Committee should state clearly:

- The issues or proposed changes for the Committee's consideration
- The potential impact to the DNS root zone
- The timeline requested for the review, and
- Any supporting documentations and references.

5.2 Considering Proposals

Upon receiving the proposal, the Committee will convene a meeting on the proposal.

In general, the Committee will consider proposals the following manner:

- First, the Committee seeks to determine whether the proposal/issues falls within its charter remit, and that they are architectural in nature.
- If the Committee decides that the proposal does not fall within its charter remit, it will reply to the requestor with its reasons in writing.
- In cases where it does, the Committee will engage a consultation process as outlined in section 5.3.

5.3 Consultations

Per the RZERC charter:

The RZERC will not necessarily be the group that considers the details of the issues under consideration, it will be responsible for ensuring that those involved in the decision include all relevant bodies and have access to necessary expertise. As such, the RZERC will coordinate with relevant organizations and communities, and if appropriate, external experts, to confirm that all affected parties are involved in discussions and recommendations regarding architectural changes to the root zone.

Accordingly:

The first step of the consultation begins with the Committee identifying a) what kind of expertise from the relevant communities are needed to respond to the proposal, b) whether any kind of research or empirical study is needed, and c) whether immediate feedback from the community is needed on the proposal.

- In case where additional experts are needed, the RZERC members are expected to take the issues and proposals in consideration back to their respective communities and/or organizations and ask them to identify and nominate experts.
- Once the suitable experts have been identified, the Committee will deliberate on the proposal based on processes outlined in section 5.4 below.
- In case the Committee decides that community feedback is needed on the proposal, the Committee will open a public comment period soliciting input from the Internet community at large, on matters in deliberation. During this process, the RZERC may consult, through its members, the input from the community. It may also hold public consultations on the proposals.

If information required in order to formulate a response is not available and cannot be immediately provided by the ICANN staff or the community, the Committee may request ICANN staff to gather the data/information to inform its deliberation.

5.4 Deliberation and Decision Making

For a given proposal, the Committee may convene a study group that includes a subset (or all) of its members in addition to selected experts. The study group will consider the proposal, the public comment input (if any), and the results of any empirical or research studies. Based on these, the study group will produce an initial report with recommendations.

The initial report will be reviewed by the full Committee. The Chair shall seek consensus regarding the initial report following its review. Once consensus has been reached, the recommendation shall go through a public comment process, managed by ICANN, to solicit additional input from the Internet Community.

Based on the input the RZERC received through its community consultations, and any other additional data the RZERC gathers, the Committee will produce a final report. All RZERC work products are assigned a unique number in a monotonically increasing sequence. This number always appears on the cover or title page of the published work product. This number starts at “1” the first time a publication is released to the public, in the case of a public publication, or to the requester, in the case of a private publication. It is incremented by 1 each time the document is revised and released.

The response and the recommendations of the Committee will be communicated to the requesting entity, the ICANN Board, and posted on the Committee’s website.

6. Miscellaneous Items

6.1 Access to Proprietary Information

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

6.2 Disclosure of Interest Statement

Per the RZERC Charter:

Committee members must provide statements of interest that identify potential conflicts of interest in their committee service.

Accordingly:

Every member should provide the support staff a written disclosure of interests: A statement made by an RZERC member that provides a declaration of personal, financial, business, or other relationships that might affect or reasonably be perceived to affect the RZERC member's judgment on any matters within the scope of RZERC. Committee members are expected to recuse themselves in the deliberation and decision making on the issues in which the member has a conflict of interest.

Disclosure of interests documents shall be updated at least annually, with reminders sent by support staff as necessary. Disclosures of Interests will be posted on the RZERC web page, and will therefore be public documents.

RZERC members shall provide answers to the following questions in their disclosures of Interests:

1. Please identify your current employer(s) and position(s).
2. Please identify the type(s) of work performed at #1 above.
3. Please list any financial or other material relationship beyond de minimus stock ownership that you, your employer, or an immediate family member/significant other has with ICANN or with any individual, company, or other entity that to your knowledge has a current or planned financial or other material relationship with ICANN.

The Chair and Support Staff shall work diligently to acquire disclosure of interest statements from all Committee members. RZERC has the discretion to remove a member who fails to provide a disclosure of interests.

6.3 Review of Charter and Operational Procedure

Per the RZERC Charter:

The Charter of the Committee shall be reviewed at least every 5 years, and a review may be initiated more frequently if determined necessary. All reviews of the Charter shall be subject to ICANN public comment processes.