

The Roles and Responsibilities of ICANN's Security and Stability Advisory Committee and Root Server System Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committees for Security and Stability (SSAC) and for the Root Server System (RSSAC) were established to channel technically expert advice to the ICANN Board, ICANN Community, and Internet technical communities. The SSAC has a particular focus on the Internet identifier systems, and this is interpreted broadly to include such subjects as Internet addressing, domain name system abuse, domain name system security, internationalized domain names, registration services, root server system, registration data directory services (WHOIS/RDAP), and ICANN planning. The RSSAC members are root server operators who bring their expertise on the root server system and the root zone to their advisory work.

Both the SSAC and RSSAC select non-voting liaisons to the ICANN Board. They participate in Board considerations, providing their own technical knowledge as well as acting as channels of communication between the Board and the Advisory Committees.

The SSAC forms internal work parties that focus on issues of security and stability and prepare reports to share with the larger Internet community, as well as specific technical groups and the ICANN Board.

The Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

The SSAC is made up of technical experts from a wide range of Internet specialties. Its role as defined in the ICANN Bylaws is to advise the ICANN community and Board on matters relating to the security and integrity of the Internet's naming and address allocation systems.

The SSAC's responsibilities as defined in the ICANN Bylaws include:

1. To communicate on security matters with the Internet technical community and the operators and managers of critical DNS infrastructure services, to include the root name server operator community, the top-level domain registries and registrars, the operators of the reverse delegation trees such as in-addr.arpa and ip6.arpa, and others as events and developments dictate. The Committee shall gather and articulate requirements to offer to those engaged in technical revision of the protocols related to DNS and address allocation and those engaged in operations planning.
2. To engage in ongoing threat assessment and risk analysis of the Internet naming and address allocation services to assess where the principal threats to stability and security lie, and to advise the ICANN community accordingly. The Committee shall recommend any necessary audit activity to assess the current status of DNS and address allocation security in relation to identified risks and threats.
3. To communicate with those who have direct responsibility for Internet naming and address allocation security matters (IETF, RSSAC, RIRs, name registries, etc.), to ensure that its advice on security risks, issues, and priorities is properly synchronized with existing standardization, deployment, operational, and coordination activities. The Committee shall monitor these activities and inform the ICANN community and Board on their progress, as appropriate.
4. To report periodically to the Board on its activities.
5. To make policy recommendations to the ICANN community and Board.

The Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

The role of the RSSAC is to advise the ICANN community and Board on matters relating to the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the Internet's Root Server System. It is composed of representatives from each of the root server operators and liaisons from the root zone maintainer (RZM), Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), and the SSAC.

The RSSAC's responsibilities include:

1. Communicate on matters relating to the operation of the Root Servers and their multiple instances with the Internet technical community and the ICANN community. The Committee shall gather and articulate requirements to offer to those engaged in technical revision of the protocols and best common practices related to the operation of DNS servers.
2. Communicate on matters relating to the administration of the Root Zone with those who have direct responsibility for that administration. These matters include the processes and procedures for the production of the Root Zone File.
3. Engage in ongoing threat assessment and risk analysis of the Root Server System and recommend any necessary audit activity to assess the current status of root servers and the root zone.
4. Report periodically to the Board on its activities.
5. Make policy recommendations to the ICANN community and Board.

The RSSAC Caucus, which consists of individuals who have expressed willingness to work on RSSAC documents, produces the majority of the RSSAC documents, such as reports and advisories. The membership of the RSSAC Caucus consists of DNS experts who apply and are approved by the RSSAC, and RSSAC members.

The purpose of the RSSAC Caucus is to provide:

- a well-defined pool of motivated experts to author, edit and review documents about the Root Server System for publication as RSSAC documents;
- transparency to the community at large about the people doing the work of the RSSAC; and
- a framework for the RSSAC Caucus members to formalize their availability and execute the work.