

IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process:  
Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees

Status of this Memo

This document specifies an Internet Best Current Practices for the Internet Community, and requests discussion and suggestions for improvements. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

Abstract

The process by which the members of the IAB and IESG are selected, confirmed, and recalled has been exercised four times since its formal creation. The evolution of the process has relied principally on oral tradition as a means by which the lessons learned could be passed on to successive committees. This document is a self-consistent, organized compilation of the process as it is known today.

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1. Introduction

By 1992, many aspects of the operation of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), and the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) had been reviewed and changes were being implemented. Included in those changes was the process by which members of the IAB and IESG are selected, confirmed, and recalled. Since 1992, the process of selection and confirmation has been exercised four times: 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995. The recall process has not been exercised.

A single paragraph in RFC1602 is the extent to which the process has been formally recorded to date. Informally, following the 1992 exercise of the process, an internet draft was distributed recording many of the details of the operation of that first nominating committee. In addition, in both 1994 and 1995, the POISED working group met, which facilitated the "oral tradition" transference of the selection and confirmation process lessons learned, including the email archives of the working group mailing list. This document is a self-consistent, organized compilation of the process as described by each of these sources.

The process described here includes only items for which the consensus of those participating in the various discussions was easily recognized. As a result, two assumptions are made.

- (1) The Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) and Internet Research Steering Group (IRSG) are not a part of the process described here.
- (2) The organization (and re-organization) of the IESG is not a part of the process described here.

In addition, this document specifies time frames for which the frame of reference is IETF meetings. The time frames assume that the IETF meets at least once per year with that meeting occurring during the North American Spring time, i.e., the IETF meets at least on or about March of each year.

The remainder of this document is divided into four major topics as follows.

#### General

This a set of rules and constraints that apply to the selection and confirmation process as a whole.

#### Nominating Committee Selection

This is the process by which volunteers from the IETF community are recognized to serve on the committee that nominates candidates to serve on the IESG and IAB.

#### Nominating Committee Operation

This is the set of principles, rules, and constraints that guide the activities of the nominating committee, including the confirmation process.

## Member Recall

This is the process by which the behavior of a sitting member of the IESG or IAB may be questioned, perhaps resulting in the removal of the sitting member.

## 2. General

The following set of rules apply to the selection and confirmation process as a whole. If necessary, a paragraph discussing the interpretation of each rule is included.

- (1) The principal function of the nominating committee is to recruit and nominate candidates for open IESG and IAB positions.

The nominating committee does not select the open positions to be filled; it is instructed as to which positions to fill. At a minimum, the nominating committee will be given the title of the position to be filled. The nominating committee may be given a desirable set of qualifications for the candidates nominated to fill a position. The nominating committee does not confirm its candidates; it presents its candidates to the appropriate confirming body as indicated below.

- (2) The annual selection and confirmation process is expected to be completed within 3 months.

The annual selection and confirmation process is expected to be completed one month prior to the friday of the week before the Spring IETF. It is expected to begin 4 months prior to the friday of the week before the Spring IETF.

- (3) One-half of each of the then current IESG and IAB positions is selected to be refilled each year.

A given position is selected every other year. The intent is to replace no more than 50% of the sitting IESG and IAB members in any one year.

A position may be refilled with its sitting member, if the sitting member is nominated by the nominating committee.

- (4) Confirmed candidates are expected to serve at least a 2 year term.

All member terms end during the Spring IETF meeting corresponding to the end of the term for which they were confirmed. The term ends no later than the second to last

day and no sooner than the Open Plenary session of the Spring IETF, as determined by the mutual agreement of the confirmed candidate and the currently sitting member. The term begins no later than the last day and no sooner than the Open Plenary session of the Spring IETF meeting, as determined by the mutual agreement of the confirmed candidate and the currently sitting member.

- (5) Mid-term IESG vacancies are filled by the same rules as documented here with four qualifications. First, the most recently constituted nominating committee is reconvened to nominate a candidate to fill the vacancy. Second, the selection and confirmation process is expected to be completed within 1 month, with a prorated time period for all other time periods not otherwise specified. Third, the confirming body has two weeks from the day it is notified of a candidate to reject the candidate, otherwise the candidate is assumed to have been confirmed. Fourth, the term of the confirmed candidate will be either:
  - a. the remainder of the term of the open position if that remainder is not less than one year.
  - b. the remainder of the term of the open position plus the next 2 year term if that remainder is less than one year.
- (6) Mid-term IAB vacancies are filled by the same rules as documented here with four qualifications. First, the most recently constituted nominating committee is reconvened to nominate a candidate to fill the vacancy. Second, the selection and confirmation process is expected to be completed within 1 month, with a prorated time period for all other time periods not otherwise specified. Third, the confirming body has two weeks from the day it is notified of a candidate to reject the candidate, otherwise the candidate is assumed to have been confirmed. Fourth, the term of the confirmed candidate will be either:
  - a. the remainder of the term of the open position if that remainder is not less than one year.
  - b. the remainder of the term of the open position plus the next 2 year term if that remainder is less than one year.
- (7) All deliberations and supporting information of all the participants in the selection and confirmation process are private. The nominating committee and confirming body members will be exposed to confidential information as a result of

their deliberations, their interactions with those they consult, and from nominees who provide requested supporting information. All members and all other participants are expected to handle this information in a manner consistent with its sensitivity.

- (8) Unless otherwise specified, the advise and consent model is used throughout the process. This model is characterized as follows.
- a. The IETF Executive Director advises the nominating committee of the IESG and IAB positions to be refilled.
  - b. The nominating committee selects candidates and advises the confirming bodies of them.
  - c. The sitting IAB members review the IESG candidates, consenting to some, all, or none.

If all of the candidates are confirmed, the job of the nominating committee with respect to filling the open IESG positions is considered complete. If some or none of the candidates are confirmed, the nominating committee must reconvene to select alternate candidates for the rejected candidates. Any additional time required by the nominating committee should not exceed its maximum time allotment.

- d. The Internet Society Board of Trustees reviews the IAB candidates, consenting to some, all, or none.

If all of the candidates are confirmed, the job of the nominating committee with respect to filling the open IAB positions is considered complete. If some or none of the candidates are confirmed, the nominating committee must reconvene to select alternate candidates for the rejected candidates. Any additional time required by the nominating committee should not exceed its maximum time allotment.

- e. The confirming bodies decide their consent according to a mechanism of their own choosing, which must ensure that at least one-half of the sitting members agree with the decision.

At least one-half of the sitting members of the confirming bodies must agree to either confirm or reject each individual nominee. The agreement must be decided within a reasonable timeframe. The agreement may be decided by conducting a formal vote, by asserting consensus based on informal exchanges (email), or by whatever mechanism is used to conduct the normal business of the confirming body.

### 3. Nominating Committee Selection

The following set of rules apply to the creation of the nominating committee and the selection of its members.

- (1) The committee is comprised of at least a non-voting Chair, 10 voting volunteers, and 2 non-voting liaisons.

A Chair is permitted to invite additional non-voting advisors to participate in some or all of the deliberations of the committee.

- (2) The Internet Society President appoints the non-voting Chair, who must meet the usual requirements for membership in the nominating committee.

The nominating committee Chair must agree to invest the time necessary to complete the duties of the nominating committee and to perform in the best interests of the IETF community during the performance of those duties.

- (3) The Chair obtains the list of IESG and IAB positions to be refilled and publishes it along with a solicitation for names of volunteers from the IETF community willing to serve on the nominating committee.

The list of open positions is published with the solicitation to facilitate community members choosing between volunteering for an open position and volunteering for the nominating committee.

The list and solicitation must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (4) Members of the IETF community must have attended at least 2 of the last 3 IETF meetings in order to volunteer.
- (5) Internet Society Board of Trustees, sitting members of the IAB, and sitting members of the IESG may not volunteer.
- (6) The Chair randomly selects the 10 voting volunteers from the pool of names of volunteers.
- (7) The sitting IAB and IESG members each appoint a non-voting liaison to the nominating committee from their current membership who are not sitting in an open position.
- (8) The Chair may solicit additional non-voting liaisons from other organizations, who must meet the usual requirements for membership in the nominating committee.

#### 4. Nominating Committee Operation

The following rules apply to the operation of the nominating committee. If necessary, a paragraph discussing the interpretation of each rule is included.

The rules are organized approximately in the order in which they would be invoked.

The term nominee refers to an individual under consideration by the nominating committee. The term candidate refers to a nominee that has been selected by the nominating committee to be considered for confirmation by a confirming body. A confirmed candidate is a candidate that has been reviewed and approved by a confirming body.

- (1) All rules and special circumstances not otherwise specified are at the discretion of the Chair.

Exceptional circumstances will occasionally arise during the normal operation of the nominating committee. This rule is intended to foster the continued forward progress of the committee. All members of the committee should consider whether the exception is worthy of mention in the next revision of this document and followup accordingly.

- (2) The Chair must establish and publicize milestones, which must include at least a call for nominations.

There is a defined time period during which the selection and confirmation process must be completed. The Chair must establish a set of milestones which, if met in a timely fashion, will result in the completion of the process on time. The Chair should allow time for iterating the activities of the committee if one or more candidates is not confirmed.

The milestones must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (3) The Chair must establish a voting mechanism.

The committee must be able to objectively determine when a decision has been made during its deliberations. The criteria for determining closure must be established and known to all members of the nominating committee.

- (4) At least a quorum of committee members must participate in a vote. A quorum is comprised of at least 7 voting members.

- (5) The Chair may establish a process by which a member of the nominating committee may be recalled.

The process, if established, must be agreed to by a 3/4 majority of the members of the nominating committee, including the non-voting members since they would be subject to the same process.

- (6) All members of the nominating committee may participate in all deliberations.

The emphasis of this rule is that no member, whether voting or non-voting, can be explicitly excluded from any deliberation. However, a member may individually choose not to participate in a deliberation.

- (7) The Chair announces the open positions to be filled and the call for nominees.

The announcements must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (8) Any member of the IETF community may nominate any member of the IETF community for any open position.

A self-nomination is permitted.

- (9) Nominating committee members must not be nominees.

To be a nominee is to enter the process of being selected as a candidate and confirmed. Nominating committee members are not eligible to be considered for filling any open position.

- (10) Members of the IETF community who were recalled from any IESG or IAB position during the previous two years must not be nominees.

- (11) The nominating committee selects candidates based on its understanding of the IETF community's consensus of the qualifications required to fill the open positions.

- (12) Nominees should be advised that they are being considered and must consent to their nomination prior to being confirmed.

The nominating committee should help nominees provide justification to their employers.



A nominee's consent must be written (email is acceptable) and include a commitment to provide the resources necessary to fill the open position and an assurance that the nominee will perform the duties of the position for which they are being considered in the best interests of the IETF community.

- (13) The nominating committee advises the confirming bodies of their candidates, specifying a single candidate for each open position and a testament as to how each candidate meets the qualifications of an open position.

The testament may include a brief resume of the candidate and a summary of the deliberations of the nominating committee.

- (14) With respect to any action to be taken in the context of notifying and announcing confirmed candidates, and notifying rejected nominees and candidates, the action must be valid according to all of the rules specified below prior to its execution.
- a. Up until a candidate is confirmed, the identity of the candidate must be kept strictly confidential.
  - b. The identity of all nominees must be kept strictly confidential (except that the nominee may publicize their intentions).
  - c. Rejected nominees may be notified as soon as they are rejected.
  - d. Rejected candidates may be notified as soon as they are rejected.
  - e. Rejected nominees and candidates must be notified prior to announcing confirmed candidates.
  - f. Confirmed candidates may be notified and announced as soon as they are confirmed.

It is consistent with these rules for a nominee to never know if they were a candidate or not.

It is consistent with these rules for a nominating committee to reject some nominees early in the process and to keep some nominees as alternates in case a candidate is rejected by a confirming body. In the matter of whether a confirmed candidate was a first choice or an alternate, that information need not ever be disclosed and, in fact, probably never should be.

It is consistent with these rules for confirmed candidates to be notified and announced as quickly as possible instead of requiring all confirmed candidates to wait until all open positions have been refilled.

The announcements must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

## 5. Member Recall

The following rules apply to the recall process. If necessary, a paragraph discussing the interpretation of each rule is included.

- (1) Anyone may request the recall of any sitting IAB or IESG member, at any time, upon written (email is acceptable) request with justification to the Internet Society President.
- (2) Internet Society President shall appoint a Recall Committee Chair.

The Internet Society President must not evaluate the recall request. It is explicitly the responsibility of the IETF community to evaluate the behavior of its leaders.

- (3) The recall committee is created according to the same rules as is the nominating committee with the qualifications that the person being investigated and the person requesting the recall must not be a member of the recall committee in any capacity.
- (4) The recall committee operates according to the same rules as the nominating committee with the qualification that there is no confirmation process.
- (5) The recall committee investigates the circumstances of the justification for the recall and votes on its findings.

The investigation must include at least both an opportunity for the member being recalled to present a written statement and consultation with third parties.

- (6) A 3/4 majority of the members who vote on the question is required for a recall.

If a sitting member is recalled the open position is to be filled according to the mid-term vacancy rules.

## 6. Security Considerations

Any selection, confirmation, or recall process necessarily involves investigation into the qualifications and activities of prospective candidates. The investigation may reveal confidential or otherwise private information about candidates to those participating in the process. Each person who participates in any aspect of the process has a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of any and all information not explicitly identified as suitable for public dissemination.

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