

Problem Statement
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IETF Structural Problems Improvement Process
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Abstract

This document suggests a possible process to address the structural problems identified in the IETF Problem Statement as requested in Version 02 of the IETF Problem Resolution draft.

The process proposes that the IESG delegate responsibility for coordinating, moderating and synthesising proposals for solutions to parts of the structural problems to a Synthesis and Action Panel

(SAP) selected through a variant of the nomcom selection process. The SAP should, if possible, deliver an integrated set of proposals for changes derived from community input, both unsolicited and, if necessary, solicited. The SAP would act as a moderator between authors of alternative proposals in attempting to achieve a proposal on which the community could agree. The agreed plan would be delivered to the IESG for final approval and action.

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1. Introduction

Version 02 of the Problem Resolution draft[4] solicited proposals from the community for processes to resolve the more structural problems identified in the Problem Issues draft[1]. This document offers one possible process.

The process proposed requests the IESG to delegate responsibility for identifying the changes that need to be made to rectify all or most of the existing structural problems identified in [1] to a Synthesis and Action Panel (SAP). The SAP would coordinate and moderate between authors of community proposals for change in order to synthesise an integrated plan of action leading to a reinvigorated IETF.

1.1 Acknowledgements

The development of this proposal was assisted by Dave Crocker, and Spencer Dawkins.

2. A Proposal for Changing the Structure and Practices of the IETF

A significant number of the issues that were identified in the IETF Problem Statement appear to require alterations to the structure of the IETF and/or the core practices which effectively characterize the IETF.

The process documented in this section is designed to overcome the objections that lead to the rejection of the working group process which was proposed in earlier versions of the Problem Resolution draft[4]. It is intended to produce, in a well-defined period of time,

- o a proposal for such structural changes to the IETF as the community finds necessary to allow the various issues to be resolved, together with
- o a migration plan which will allow the IETF to transform itself as painlessly as possible.

In outline the plan requires:

- o Selection of a Synthesis and Action Panel (SAP) which will moderate the process and own the final proposal for change under the general oversight of the IESG.
- o Generation of a list of issues that appear to require attention, initially in this document, but subject to additions

by agreement of the SAP.

- o Solicitation of contributions from individuals or groups of IETF stakeholders which will address solutions to any part of the problem space as described in the Problem Issues draft[1].
- o Moderation between contributors and synthesis of the resulting contributions by the SAP in order to create a proposal which appears to result in an organization which will, so far as is possible, no longer suffer from the issues identified, and a minimally disruptive changeover process.
- o Acceptance of the proposal initially by as large a part of the IETF community as possible through open discussion by email and at plenary session(s), and finally by the existing IESG at the time of completion.

The plan will be subject to a tight timetable, enforced by the SAP with the backing of the IAB, IESG and ISOC that is intended to deliver an accepted proposal at the second IETF meeting after the inception of the SAP.

The following sections expand on the plan outline and give details of the way in which the work should be carried out.

2.1 Constitution and Selection of the SAP

The SAP will comprise a number of members that is sufficiently low so that the group is able to take decisions rapidly and effectively. The members of the SAP (SAPs) will be selected to represent the interests of as wide a range of the stakeholders in the IETF as is possible. To this end one group of the SAPs will be nominated by the existing management structures of the IETF (IESG, IAB and ISOC) whilst the remainder will be selected through a re-use of the latest nomcom selection process.

There will be eleven members of the SAP as follows:

- o Two members of the current IESG nominated by the IESG.
- o Two members of the current IAB nominated by the IAB.
- o One member of the current ISOC Board nominated by the ISOC Board.
- o Six members selected by the same process as is used to select the nomcom as described in [RFC 2727\[2\]](#) and [RFC2777\[3\]](#) but using an extended eligibility period as is currently being suggested

by the nomcom working group in the revisions to [RFC 2727](#)[10] and [RFC 2777](#)[11] (i.e. attendance at least 3 out of the preceding 5 IETF meetings).

The SAP will elect its chair from amongst its members in the same way as the IAB does at present.

We believe that is important that the full range of stakeholder interests should be represented. To this end, we encourage people from all parts of the community to put their names forward, so that subject to the luck of the draw, there will be a true diversity of views in the SAP.

2.2 Initial List of Issues to be Considered

The following issues taken from the problem statement document and the analysis in [4]:

- o The Mission Problem (Section 4.1 of [4], [9]),
- o the Complex Problems problem (Section 4.3 of [4], [5], [8]),
- o the Standards Hierarchy problem (Section 4.4 of [4], [6]),
- o the Management Scaling problem (Section 4.6 of [4], [8], [5], [2]), and
- o The longer-term portions of the Engagement Problem (Section 4.5 of [4], [7])

(Additional references on each item indicate associated documents that may need to be updated as a result of this process).

The SAP will discuss this list and may add further issues if it is deemed necessary.

2.3 Open Solicitation of Contributions to the Solution

The IESG will issue an invitation for proposals and actively encourage people to contribute to the change process. Proposals are solicited for both single items and comprehensive problems. Individuals and groups are invited to participate. In addition the SAP will approach people individually or as groups as they see fit and ask for suggestions to address structural problems not adequately covered by any other contributions. THE SAP will publish all contributions in order to ensure transparency and to allow people to get involved at each stage of the process.

2.4 Achieving an Integrated Solution

The SAP's chief task will be to generate an integrated proposal, which includes solutions to all items of the issue list (if possible) and a transition or migration plan. This task requires moderating the communication between all contributors, ascertaining consensus among contributors and producing a synthesis of the various proposals.

2.5 Acceptance of the Integrated Solution

The SAP will publish the proposed integrated solution as widely as possible. Since the IETF lacks an all-embracing forum which is guaranteed to place the result in front of all all stakeholders, various mailing lists and plenary meetings will be used for final community input and to confirm the overall acceptance of the proposed solutions.

After final modifications based on community feedback, the SAP will send the proposed solutions to the IESG for implementation.

3. Conclusion

The IETF has problems, and we need to work to solve those problems, both via focused immediate improvements and via an integrated effort to build an IETF organizational structure and develop processes that can better handle our current size and complexity.

The proposed solicitation process and the Sythesis and Answer Panel aims at including input of as many IETF members as possible to the solution of the more structural problems of the IETF. At the same time, the proposed solution process allows for faster results than a regular working group.

4. Security Considerations

This document contains suggestions for processes that the IETF could use to resolve process-related and organizational problems with the IETF. Although the structure and quality of the IETF's processes may have an affect on the quality of the IETF's security- related work, there are no specific security-related issues raised in this document.

Normative References

- [1] Davies, E., Ed., "IETF Problem Statement",
[draft-ietf-problem-issue-statement-02](#) (work in progress), Jun

2003.

- [2] Galvin, J., "IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", [RFC 2727](#), Feb 2000.
- [3] Eastlake, D., "Publicly Verifiable Nomcom Random Selection", [RFC 2777](#), February 2000.
- [4] Davies, E., Ed. and J. Hofmann, Ed., "IETF Problem Resolution Processes", [draft-ietf-problem-process-02](#) (work in progress), August 2003.

Informative References

- [5] Alvestrand, H., "An IESG charter", [draft-iesg-charter-03](#) (work in progress), Apr 2003.
- [6] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", [RFC 2026](#), Oct 1996.
- [7] Bradner, S., "IETF Working Group Guidelines and Procedures", [BCP 25](#), [RFC 2418](#), September 1998.
- [8] Carpenter, B., "Charter of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB)", [RFC 2850](#), May 2000.
- [9] Harris, S., "The Tao of IETF - A Novice's Guide to the Internet Engineering Task Force", [RFC 3160](#), August 2001.
- [10] Galvin, J., Ed., "IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", [draft-ietf-nomcom-rfc2727bis-07](#) (work in progress), August 2003.
- [11] Eastlake, D., "Publicly Verifiable Nomcom Random Selection", [draft-eastlake-rfc2777bis-selection-02](#) (work in progress), June 2003.

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