The IETF-ISOC Relationship
draft-ietf-iasa2-rfc2031bis-07

Abstract

   This document summarises the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) -
   Internet Society (ISOC) relationship, following a major revision to
   the structure of the IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA) in
   2018. The IASA was revised under a new "IASA 2.0" structure by the
   IASA2 Working Group, which changed the IETF's administrative, legal,
   and financial structure. As a result, it also changed the
   relationship between the IETF and ISOC, which made it necessary to
   revise RFC 2031.

Status of This Memo

   This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the
   provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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   Task Force (IETF). Note that other groups may also distribute
   working documents as Internet-Drafts. The list of current Internet-
   Drafts is at https://datatracker.ietf.org/drafts/current/.

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   and may be updated, replaced, or obsoleted by other documents at any
   time. It is inappropriate to use Internet-Drafts as reference
   material or to cite them other than as "work in progress."

   This Internet-Draft will expire on February 22, 2020.

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1. Introduction and History

The Internet Society provides a corporate home for the administrative entity that supports the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), and the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF), and supports the work of these groups through a variety of programs.

The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) is the body that is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Internet Standards. The IETF is primarily a volunteer organization. Its driving force is a group of dedicated high-quality engineers from all over the world. In a structure of working groups, these engineers exchange ideas and experience, and through discussion and collaboration (both electronically and face-to-face) they strive to achieve rough consensus and implement the standards through running code.

The growth of the Internet over several decades also led to the growth of the IETF. More and more people, organizations, and companies rely on Internet Standards. Non-technical issues, such as legal, administrative, and financial issues had long been an undesirable but unavoidable part of the IETF. To address these issues in 1995 the IETF established the Poised95 Working Group. Its

goal was to structure and document the IETF processes in order to
maximize the flexibility and freedom of IETF engineers so that they
could work in the way the IETF had always been most successful and to
honour the IETF credo: "Rough consensus and running code".

The Poised95 Working Group concluded that the Internet Society
(ISOC), which was formed in 1992, was the best organization to handle
all of these legal, administrative, and financial tasks on behalf of
and in close cooperation with the IETF. This led to documenting
things such as the IETF standards process [RFC2026], the IETF
organizational structure [RFC2028], the IETF Nominating Committee
(NomCom) procedures <BCP10>, and the IETF-ISOC relationship
[RFC2031].

As time passed and operational experience accumulated, additional
structure was necessary. As a result, the Internet Administrative
Support Activity (IASA) was defined in 2005 and documented in
[RFC4071] and [RFC4371].

In 2018, the IASA was revised under a new "IASA 2.0" structure by the
IASA2 Working Group, which made significant revisions to the IETF's
administrative, legal, and financial structure. One critical outcome
was the formation, in close cooperation between the IETF and ISOC, of
the IETF Administration Limited Liability Company (IETF LLC) as a
subsidiary of ISOC.

As a result of the IASA 2.0 structure [I-D.ietf-iasa2-rfc4071bis] and
formation of the IETF LLC, the relationship between the IETF and ISOC
has changed. This document summarises the current state of the IETF-
ISOC relationship at a high level and replaces [RFC2031].

2. Philosophical Relationship with ISOC

ISOC and the IETF have historically been philosophically aligned.
ISOC's connection with the IETF community has always played an
important role in its policy work, which has not changed. ISOC has
always been and continued to be an advocate for multistakeholder
processes, which includes the technical community. Open standards
are an explicit part of one of the focus areas in ISOC's mission:
Advancing the development and application of Internet infrastructure,
technologies, and open standards <ISOC-Mission>.

3. Main Division of Responsibilities between IETF and ISOC

The IETF remains responsible for the development and quality of the
Internet Standards. Apart from the roles described below, the IETF
and ISOC acknowledge that ISOC as an organization has no direct
influence whatsoever on the technical content of Internet Standards

(though ISOC employees may independently continue to make technical
contributuins as individuals).

4. ISOC's Role in the IETF Standards Process

ISOC plays a small role in the IETF standards process. In
particular, ISOC assists the standards process by appointing the IETF
NomCom chair and by confirming IAB candidates who are put forward by
the IETF NomCom, as described in [RFC7437], and by acting as the last
resort in the appeals process, as described in [RFC2026].

ISOC maintains liaison relationships and memberships in other
Standards Development Organizations (SDOs) and related organizations,
which directly benefits the IETF. For example, ISOC is a Sector
Member of the ITU-T. As a result, ISOC delegates are afforded the
same rights as other ITU-T Sector Members [RFC6756].

ISOC also supports the IETF standards process more indirectly (e.g.,
by promoting it in relevant communities) through several programs.
For example, ISOC's Policymakers Program to the IETF (usually
referred to simply as ISOC's policy fellows program) gives policy
experts an opportunity to interact directly with the IETF technical
community. ISOC also performs technical work using the standards
developed in the IETF as its basis. An example of that is ISOC's
Deploy360 program, which helps encourage and support the deployment
of IETF standards like DNSSEC [RFC4033] and IPv6 [RFC8200].

Otherwise, the involvement of ISOC's employees in the IETF standards
process (e.g., as document editors or in leadership positions) is as
individual contributors rather than on institutional grounds.

5. The IETF's Role in ISOC

The IETF plays a role in the governance of ISOC. Per ISOC's by-laws,
the IETF appoints a set of trustees to the ISOC Board. The process
by which the IETF makes those appointments is defined in [RFC3677].

The charter of the IAB (Internet Architecture Board) [RFC2850] states
that "the IAB acts as a source of advice and guidance to the Board of
Trustees and Officers of the Internet Society concerning technical,
architectural, procedural, and (where appropriate) policy matters
pertaining to the Internet and its enabling technologies". This
connection between the IAB and ISOC ensures that ISOC's proposals in
the policy area are based on a sound understanding of the relevant
technologies and architectures. ISOC's strong connection to the
Internet technical community has always been one of its main
strengths.

6. **Legal Relationship with ISOC**

   The IETF LLC is a disregarded Limited Liability Company (LLC) of the
   Internet Society - established to provide a corporate legal framework
   for facilitating current and future activities related to the IETF,
   IAB, and IRTF. It was established by the ISOC/IETF LLC Agreement
   [OpAgreement] on August 27, 2018, and governs the relationship
   between the IETF LLC and ISOC.

   The IETF Trust, documented in [RFC5378], and updated in
   [I-D.ietf-iasa2-trust-rationale] and [I-D.ietf-iasa2-trust-update],
   provides legal protection for the RFC series of documents and other
   aspects of the IETF. This includes things such as protection for
   trademarks, copyrights, and intellectual property rights. As part of
   the IETF Trust arrangement, IETF standards documents can be freely
   downloaded, copied, and distributed without financial or other
   distribution restrictions, though all rights to change these
   documents lie with the IETF. The IETF Trust also provides legal
   protection in case of disputes over intellectual property rights and
   other rights. The creation of the IETF LLC has changed the way that
   the IETF Trust's trustees are selected but did not change the purpose
   or operation of the Trust. One of the IETF Trust's trustees is
   appointed by the ISOC's Board of Trustees.

7. **Financial and Administrative Relationship with ISOC**

   Under the terms of the Operating Agreement [OpAgreement] between ISOC
   and the IETF, ISOC has agreed to provide significant funding support
   for the IETF. In addition, the IETF LLC is responsible for creating
   and managing an annual operating budget for the IETF; for
   negotiating, signing, and overseeing contracts; for fundraising; for
   maintaining bank accounts; and for liability insurance. The IETF LLC
   is managed by a Board of Directors, one of whom is appointed by the
   ISOC's Board of Trustees. The intention is that ISOC and the IETF
   LLC operate at arm's length.

   The IETF LLC establishes contracts with third parties to provide
   different types of services to the IETF. Note that it is possible
   that some of those services may be provided by ISOC or involve ISOC
   staff.

   Under the new IASA 2.0 structure, the IETF LLC is solely responsible
   for its administration, including the IETF Trust, IAB, IESG, IETF
   working groups, and other IETF processes. A further exploration of
   this can be found in Section 4 of [I-D.ietf-iasa2-rfc4071bis].

[8](#). IANA Considerations

This document introduces no new IANA considerations.

[9](#). Security Considerations

This document introduces no new security considerations.

[10](#). Privacy Considerations

This document introduces no new privacy considerations.

[11](#). Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Erik Huizer for his contribution as the author of [[RFC2031](#)], which this document replaces.

[12](#). Changes from Previous Versions

RFC Editor: Please remove this section upon publication.

-00: Initial version published

-01: Several key updates to prepare WGLC based on WG feedback

-02: Fixed nits identified by Brian Carpenter on 12-21-2018, and text on the tax status from John Levine.

-03: As we entered IESG review, added a short description of what ISOC does (in relation to the IETF) that can be used in external material by both the IETF and ISOC.

-04: Clarification adding text to [Section 6](#) on legal issue.

-05: Fix nits

-06: Fix nits and other changes from IESG review

-07: Fixed one missed nit from IESG review

[13](#). References

[13.1](#). Normative References

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Authors' Addresses

   Gonzalo Camarillo
   Ericsson

   Email: Gonzalo.Camarillo@ericsson.com

Jason Livingood
Comcast

Email: jason_livingood@comcast.com