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**Generic Subtype for BGP Four-octet AS specific extended community  
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**Abstract**

Maintaining the current best practices with communities, ISPs and enterprises that are assigned a 4-octet AS number may want the BGP UPDATE messages they receive from their customers or peers to include a 4-octet AS specific extended community. This document defines a new sub-type within the four-octet AS specific extended community to facilitate this practice.

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## **1. Introduction**

Maintaining the current best practices with communities, ISPs and enterprises that are assigned a 4-octet AS number may want the BGP UPDATE messages they receive from their customers or peers to include a 4-octet AS specific extended community. This document defines a new sub-type within the four-octet AS specific extended community to facilitate this practice.

For example, [[RFC1998](#)] describes an application of BGP community attribute ([[RFC1997](#)]) to implement flexible routing policies for sites multi-homed to one or multiple providers. In a two-octet AS environment, the advertised routes are usually associated with a community attribute that encodes the provider's AS number in the first two octets of the community and a LOCAL\_PREF value in the second two octets of the community. The community attribute signals the provider edge routers connected to the site to set the corresponding LOCAL\_PREF on their advertisements to the IBGP mesh. In this way, customers can put into practice topologies like active-backup.

When such a provider is assigned a four-octet AS number, the existing mechanism of using communities is not sufficient since the AS portion of the [RFC 1997](#) community cannot exceed two bytes. The natural alternative is to extend the same mechanism using extended communities since it allows for encoding eight bytes of information.

[RFC5668] defines a format for a four-octet AS specific extended community with a designated type field. That document defines two sub-types: Four-octet specific Route Target extended community and Four-octet specific Route Origin extended community. This document specifies a generic sub-type for the four-octet AS specific extended community to provide benefits such as the one cited above as the Internet migrates to four-octet AS space.

### **1.1. Requirements Language**

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC 2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)].

## **2. Generic Sub-type Definition**



```

0          1          2          3
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
| 0x02 or 0x42 |      0x04      |      Global      |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+
|      Administrator      |      Local Administrator      |
+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

```

This is an extended type with Type Field comprising of 2 octets and Value Field comprising of 6 octets.

The high-order octet of this extended type is set to either 0x02 (for transitive communities) or 0x42 (for non-transitive communities). The low-order octet or the sub-type is set to 0x04.

The Value Field consists of two sub-fields:

Global Administrator sub-field: 4 octets

This sub-field contains a four-octet Autonomous System number.

Local Administrator sub-field: 2 octets

This sub-field contains a value that can influence routing policies. This value has semantics that are of significance for the Autonomous System in the Global Administrator field.

### 3. Deployment Considerations

There are situations in peering where a 4-octet AS specific generic extended community cannot be used.

A speaker with a 4-octet AS may not support 4-octet extended communities; or the speaker may have a customer or peer that does not support 4-octet extended communities. In all such cases, the speaker may need to define an appropriate standard community value for the same purpose. As an example, a peer may tag its routes with a community that encodes AS\_TRANS [RFC4893] as the first two octets.

Similarly, as per [[RFC4893](#)], a 2-octet Autonomous System number can be converted into a 4-octet Autonomous System number by setting the two high-order octets of the 4-octet field to zero. As a consequence, at least in principle, an Autonomous System that has a 2-octet AS number could use either a standard community or the 4-octet AS specific generic extended community. This is undesirable, as they would be treated as different communities, even if they had



the same values.

Therefore, for backward compatibility with existing deployments and to avoid inconsistencies between standard communities and 4-octet extended communities, Autonomous Systems that use 2-octet Autonomous System numbers SHOULD use standard 2-octet communities as defined in [RFC1997](#) rather than the 4-octet AS specific extended community as defined in this document.

#### **4. Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to thank Paul Jakma, Bruno Decraene and Cayle Spandon for their useful comments on the document.

#### **5. IANA Considerations**

This document defines a specific application of the four-octet AS specific extended community. IANA is requested to to assign a sub-type value of 0x04 for the generic four-octet AS specific extended community.

This document makes the following assignments for the generic four-octet AS specific extended community:

Name	Value
----	-----
transitive generic four-octet AS specific	0x0204
non-transitive generic four-octet AS specific	0x4204

#### **6. Security Considerations**

There are no additional security risks introduced by this design.

#### **7. Normative References**

- [RFC1997] Chandrasekeran, R., Traina, P., and T. Li, "BGP Communities Attribute", [RFC 1997](#), August 1996.
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- [RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate





Requirement Levels", [BCP 14](#), [RFC 2119](#), March 1997.

- [RFC4360] Sangli, S., Tappan, D., and Y. Rekhter, "BGP Extended Communities Attribute", [RFC 4360](#), February 2006.
- [RFC4893] Vohra, Q. and E. Chen, "BGP Support for Four-octet AS Number Space", [RFC 4893](#), May 2007.
- [RFC5226] Narten, T. and H. Alvestrand, "Guidelines for Writing an IANA Considerations Section in RFCs", [BCP 26](#), [RFC 5226](#), May 2008.
- [RFC5668] Rekhter, Y., Sangli, S., and D. Tappan, "4-Octet AS Specific BGP Extended Community", [RFC 5668](#), October 2009.

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