                        IESG Procedures for
          Handling of Independent and IRTF Stream Submissions

Abstract

   This document describes the procedures used by the IESG for handling
   documents submitted for RFC publication from the Independent
   Submission and IRTF streams.

   This document updates procedures described in RFC 2026 and RFC 3710.

Status of This Memo

   This memo documents an Internet Best Current Practice.

   This document is a product of the Internet Engineering Task Force
   (IETF). It represents the consensus of the IETF community. It has
   received public review and has been approved for publication by the
   Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Further information on
   BCPs is available in Section 2 of RFC 5741.

   Information about the current status of this document, any errata,
   and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at http://www.rfc-
   editor.org/info/rfc5742.

1. Introduction and History

   RFC 4844 [N1] defines four RFC streams. When a document is submitted
   for publication, the review that it receives depends on the stream in
   which it will be published. The four streams defined in RFC 4844
   are:

      - The IETF stream
      - The IAB stream
      - The IRTF stream
      - The Independent Submission stream

   The IETF is responsible for maintaining the Internet Standards
   Process, which includes the requirements for developing, reviewing
   and approving Standards Track and BCP RFCs. These RFCs, and any
   other IETF-generated Informational or Experimental documents, are
   reviewed by appropriate IETF bodies [N2] and published as part of the
   IETF stream.

   Documents published in streams other than the IETF stream might not
   receive any review by the IETF for such things as security,
   congestion control, or inappropriate interaction with deployed
   protocols. Generally, there is no attempt for IETF consensus or IESG
   approval. Therefore, the IETF disclaims, for any of the non-IETF
   stream documents, any knowledge of the fitness of those RFCs for any
   purpose.

   IESG processing described in this document is concerned only with the
   last two categories, which comprise the Independent Submission stream
   and the IRTF stream, respectively [N1].

   Following the approval of RFC 2026 [N2] and prior to the publication
   of RFC 3932 [I1], the IESG reviewed all Independent Submission stream
   documents before publication. This review was often a full-scale
   review of technical content, with the Area Directors (ADs) attempting
   to clear points with the authors, stimulate revisions of the
   documents, encourage the authors to contact appropriate working
   groups (WGs), and so on. This was a considerable drain on the
   resources of the IESG, and because this was not the highest priority
   task of the IESG members, it often resulted in significant delays.

   In March 2004, the IESG decided to make a major change in this review
   model, with the IESG taking responsibility only for checking for
   conflicts between the work of the IETF and the documents submitted.
   Soliciting technical review is deemed to be the responsibility of the
   RFC Editor. If an individual AD chooses to review the technical

content of the document and finds issues, that AD will communicate
these issues to the RFC Editor, and they will be treated the same way
as comments on the documents from other sources.

Prior to 2006, documents from the IRTF were treated as either IAB
submissions or Independent Submissions via the RFC Editor. However,
the Internet Research Steering Group (IRSG) has established a review
process for the publication of RFCs from the IRTF stream [I2]. Once
these procedures are fully adopted, the IESG will be responsible only
for checking for conflicts between the work of the IETF and the
documents submitted, but results of the check will be reported to the
IRTF. These results may be copied to the RFC Editor as a courtesy.

This document describes only the review process done by the IESG when
the RFC Editor or the IRTF requests that review. The RFC Editor will
request the review of Independent Submission stream documents, and
the IRTF will request review of IRTF stream documents. There are
many other interactions between document editors and the IESG, for
instance, an AD may suggest that an author submit a document as input
for work within the IETF rather than to the RFC Editor as part of the
Independent Submission stream, or the IESG may suggest that a
document submitted to the IETF is better suited for submission to the
RFC Editor as part of Independent Submission stream, but these
interactions are not described in this memo.

For the convenience of the reader, this document includes description
of some actions taken by the RFC Editor, the IAB, and the IRSG. The
inclusion of these actions is not normative. Rather, these actions
are included to describe the overall process surrounding the
normative IESG procedures described in this document. No RFC Editor,
IAB, or IRSG procedures are set by this document.

1.1. Changes since RFC 3932

RFC 3932 provided procedures for the review of Independent Submission
stream submissions. With the definition of procedures by the IRSG
for the IRTF stream, it has become clear that similar procedures
apply to the review by the IESG of IRTF stream documents.

The IAB and the RFC Editor have made updates to the formatting of the
title page for all RFCs [N3]. With these changes, the upper left
hand corner of the title page indicates the stream that produced the
RFC. This label replaces some of the information that was previously
provided in mandatory IESG notes on non-IETF-stream documents.

The IESG may request the inclusion of an IESG note in an Independent
Submission or IRTF stream document to explain the specific
relationship, if any, to IETF work. In case there is a dispute about

the content of the IESG note, this document provides a dispute
resolution process.

2. Background Material

The review of Independent Submissions by the IESG was prescribed by
RFC 2026 [N2], Section 4.2.3. The procedure described in this
document is compatible with that description.

The procedures developed by the IRTF for documents created by the
Research Groups also include review by the IESG [I2].

The IESG Charter (RFC 3710 [I5], Section 5.2.2) describes the review
process that was employed in Spring 2003 (even though the RFC was not
published until 2004); with the publication of RFC 3932 [I1], the
procedure described in RFC 3710 was no longer relevant to documents
submitted via the RFC Editor. The publication of this document
further updates Section 5.2.2 of RFC 3710, now covering both the IRTF
and the Independent Submission streams.

3. Detailed Description of IESG Review

The RFC Editor reviews Independent Submission stream submissions for
suitability for publication as RFCs. As described in RFC 4846 [I3],
the RFC Editor asks the IESG to review the documents for conflicts
with the IETF standards process or work done in the IETF community.

Similarly, documents intended for publication as part of the IRTF
stream are sent to the IESG for review for conflicts with the IETF
standards process or work done in the IETF community [I2].

The IESG review of these Independent Submission and IRTF stream
documents results in one of the following five types of conclusion,
any of which may be accompanied by a request to include an IESG note
if the document is published.

1. The IESG has concluded that there is no conflict between this
   document and IETF work.

2. The IESG has concluded that this work is related to IETF work done
   in WG <X>, but this relationship does not prevent publishing.

3. The IESG has concluded that publication could potentially disrupt
   the IETF work done in WG <X> and recommends not publishing the
   document at this time.

   4. The IESG has concluded that this document violates IETF procedures
       for <Y> and should therefore not be published without IETF review
       and IESG approval.

   5. The IESG has concluded that this document extends an IETF protocol
       in a way that requires IETF review and should therefore not be
       published without IETF review and IESG approval.

   The RFC headers and boilerplate [N3] is intended to describe the
   relationship of the document to the IETF standards process. In
   exceptional cases, when the relationship of the document to the IETF
   standards process might be unclear, the IESG may request the
   inclusion of an IESG note to clarify the relationship of the document
   to the IETF standards process. Such a note is likely to include
   pointers to related IETF RFCs. The dispute resolution process in
   Section 4 is provided to handle situations in which the IRSG or RFC
   Editor is concerned with the content of the requested IESG note.

   The last two responses are included respectively, for the case where
   a document attempts to take actions (such as registering a new URI
   scheme) that require IETF Review, Standards Action, or IESG Approval
   (as these terms are defined in RFC 5226 [I6]), and for the case where
   there is a proposed change or extension to an IETF protocol that was
   not anticipated by the original authors and that may be detrimental
   to the normal usage of the protocol, but where the protocol documents
   do not explicitly say that this type of extension requires IETF
   review.

   If a document requires IETF review, the IESG will offer the author
   the opportunity to ask for publication as an AD-sponsored individual
   document, which is subject to full IETF review, including possible
   assignment to a WG or rejection. Redirection to the full IESG review
   path is not a guarantee that the IESG will accept the work item, or
   even that the IESG will give it any particular priority; it is a
   guarantee that the IESG will consider the document.

   The IESG will normally complete review within four weeks of
   notification by the RFC Editor or IRTF. In the case of a possible
   conflict, the IESG may contact a WG or a WG Chair for an outside
   opinion of whether publishing the document is harmful to the work of
   that WG and, in the case of a possible conflict with an IANA
   registration procedure, the IANA expert for that registry.

   If the IESG does not find any conflict between an Independent
   Submission and IETF work, then the RFC Editor is responsible for
   judging the technical merits for that submission, including
   considerations of possible harm to the Internet. If the IESG does
   not find any conflict between an IRTF submission and IETF work, then

the IRSG is responsible for judging the technical merits for that
submission, including considerations of possible harm to the
Internet.

The RFC Editor, in agreement with the IAB, shall manage mechanisms
for appropriate technical review of Independent Submissions.
Likewise, the IRSG, in agreement with the IAB, shall manage
mechanisms for appropriate technical review of IRTF submissions.

4. Dispute Resolution

Experience has shown that the IESG and the RFC Editor have worked
well together regarding publication recommendations and IESG notes.
Where questions have arisen, they have been quickly resolved when all
parties become aware of the concerns. However, should a dispute ever
arise, a third party can assist with resolution. Therefore, this
dispute procedure has an informal dialogue phase followed by an
arbitration phase if the matter remains unresolved.

If the IESG requests the inclusion of an IESG note and the IRSG or
the RFC Editor intends to publish the document without the requested
IESG note, then they must provide a clear and concise description of
the concerns to the IESG before proceeding. A proposal for alternate
IESG note text from the IRSG or the RFC Editor is highly encouraged.

If the IESG does not want the document to be published without the
requested IESG note, then the IESG must initiate an informal
dialogue. The dialogue should not take more than six weeks. This
period of time allows the IESG to conduct an IETF Last Call
concerning the content of the requested IESG note (and not on the
document as a whole) to determine community consensus if desired. At
the end of the dialogue, the IESG can reaffirm the original IESG
note, provide an alternate IESG note, or withdraw the note
altogether. If an IESG note is requested, the IRSG or the RFC Editor
must state whether they intend to include it.

If dialogue fails to resolve IRSG or RFC Editor concerns with the
content of a requested IESG note and they intend to publish the
document as an RFC without the requested IESG note, then the IESG can
formally ask the IAB to provide arbitration. The IAB is not
obligated to perform arbitration and may decline the request. If the
IAB declines, the RFC Editor decides whether the IESG note is
included. If the IAB accepts, the IAB review will occur according to
procedures of the IAB's own choosing. The IAB can direct the
inclusion of the IESG note, direct the withdrawal of the IESG note,
or leave the final decision to the RFC Editor. Unlike the IAB
reviews specified in RFC 4846 [I3], if the IAB directs the inclusion

or withdrawal the IESG note, the IAB decision is binding, not
advisory.

5. Examples of Cases Where Publication Is Harmful

   This section gives a couple of examples where delaying or preventing
   publication of a document might be appropriate due to conflict with
   IETF work. It forms part of the background material, not a part of
   the procedure.

   Rejected Alternative Bypass:

      As a WG is working on a solution to a problem, a participant
      decides to ask for Independent Submission stream publication of a
      solution that the WG has rejected. Publication of the document
      will give the publishing party an RFC number before the WG is
      finished. It seems better to have the WG product published first,
      and have the non-adopted document published later, with a clear
      disclaimer note saying that "the IETF technology for this function
      is X".

      Example: Photuris (RFC 2522), which was published after
      IKE (RFC 2409).

      Note: In general, the IESG has no problem with rejected
      alternatives being made available to the community; such
      publications can be a valuable contribution to the technical
      literature. However, it is necessary to avoid confusion with the
      alternatives adopted by the WG.

   Inappropriate Reuse of "free" Bits:

      In 2003, a proposal for an experimental RFC was published that
      wanted to reuse the high bits of the "fragment offset" part of the
      IP header for another purpose. No IANA consideration says how
      these bits can be repurposed, but the standard defines a specific
      meaning for them. The IESG concluded that implementations of this
      experiment risked causing hard-to-debug interoperability problems
      and recommended not publishing the document in the RFC series.
      The RFC Editor accepted the recommendation.

   The RFC series is one of many available publication channels; this
   document takes no position on the question of which documents are
   appropriate for publication in the RFC Series. That is a matter for
   discussion in the Internet community.

6. IAB Statement

   In its capacity as the body that approves the general policy followed
   by the RFC Editor (see RFC 2850 [I4]), the IAB has reviewed this
   proposal and supports it as an operational change that is in line
   with the respective roles of the IESG, IRTF, and RFC Editor. The IAB
   continues to monitor discussions within the IETF about potential
   adjustments to the IETF document publication processes and recognizes
   that the process described in this document, as well as other general
   IETF publication processes, may need to be adjusted to align with any
   changes that result from such discussions.

7. Security Considerations

   The process change described in this memo has no direct bearing on
   the security of the Internet.

8. Acknowledgements

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   Olaf Kolkman, and Andy Malis.

9. References

9.1. Normative Reference

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         Series and RFC Editor", RFC 4844, July 2007.

   [N2] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3",
         BCP 9, RFC 2026, October 1996.

   [N3] Daigle, L., Ed., and O. Kolkman, Ed., "RFC Streams, Headers,
         and Boilerplates", RFC 5741, December 2009.

9.2. Informative References

   [I1]   Alvestrand, H., "The IESG and RFC Editor Documents:
          Procedures", BCP 92, RFC 3932, October 2004.

   [I2]   Falk, A., "Definition of an Internet Research Task Force (IRTF)
          Document Stream", RFC 5743, December 2009.

   [I3]   Klensin, J., Ed., and D. Thaler, Ed., "Independent Submissions
          to the RFC Editor", RFC 4846, July 2007.

   [I4]   Internet Architecture Board and B. Carpenter, Ed., "Charter of
          the Internet Architecture Board (IAB)", BCP 39, RFC 2850, May
          2000.

   [I5]   Alvestrand, H., "An IESG charter", RFC 3710, February 2004.

   [I6]   Narten, T. and H. Alvestrand, "Guidelines for Writing an IANA
          Considerations Section in RFCs", BCP 26, RFC 5226, May 2008.

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