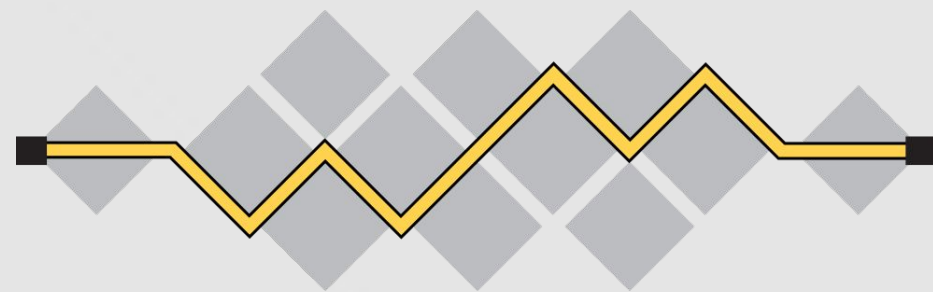


IESG work on WG Chairs



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Background

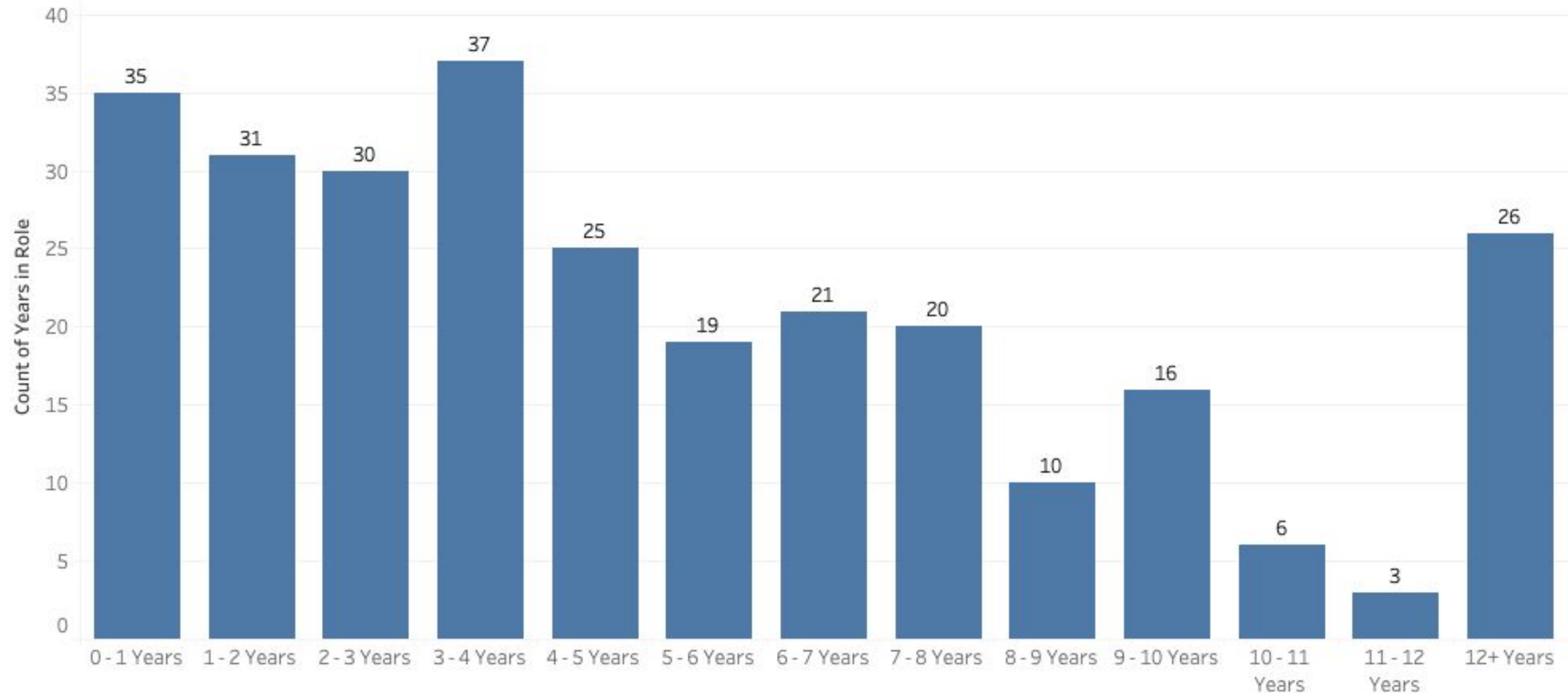
The IESG has asked the LLC to support its work with WG Chairs

- WG Chairs as a whole are a key part of the IETF and as individuals they are major contributors to the work.
- WG Chairs are formally 'managed' by their respective ADs, an important part of the AD role.
- There is a loose self-management of WG Chairs (and RG Chairs) through the wgchairs@ietf.org mailing list and the WG Chairs Forum.
- Training is provided for WG Chairs through the IETF LLC, with the content identified and developed in coordination with the IESG, EODIR and WG Chairs. The IETF LLC has also stood up <https://chairs.ietf.org> as a central resource for WG Chairs.
- While the WG Chairs as a whole work well, there are a set of known problems that need reviewing.

WG Chair demographics

Using data from December 2023

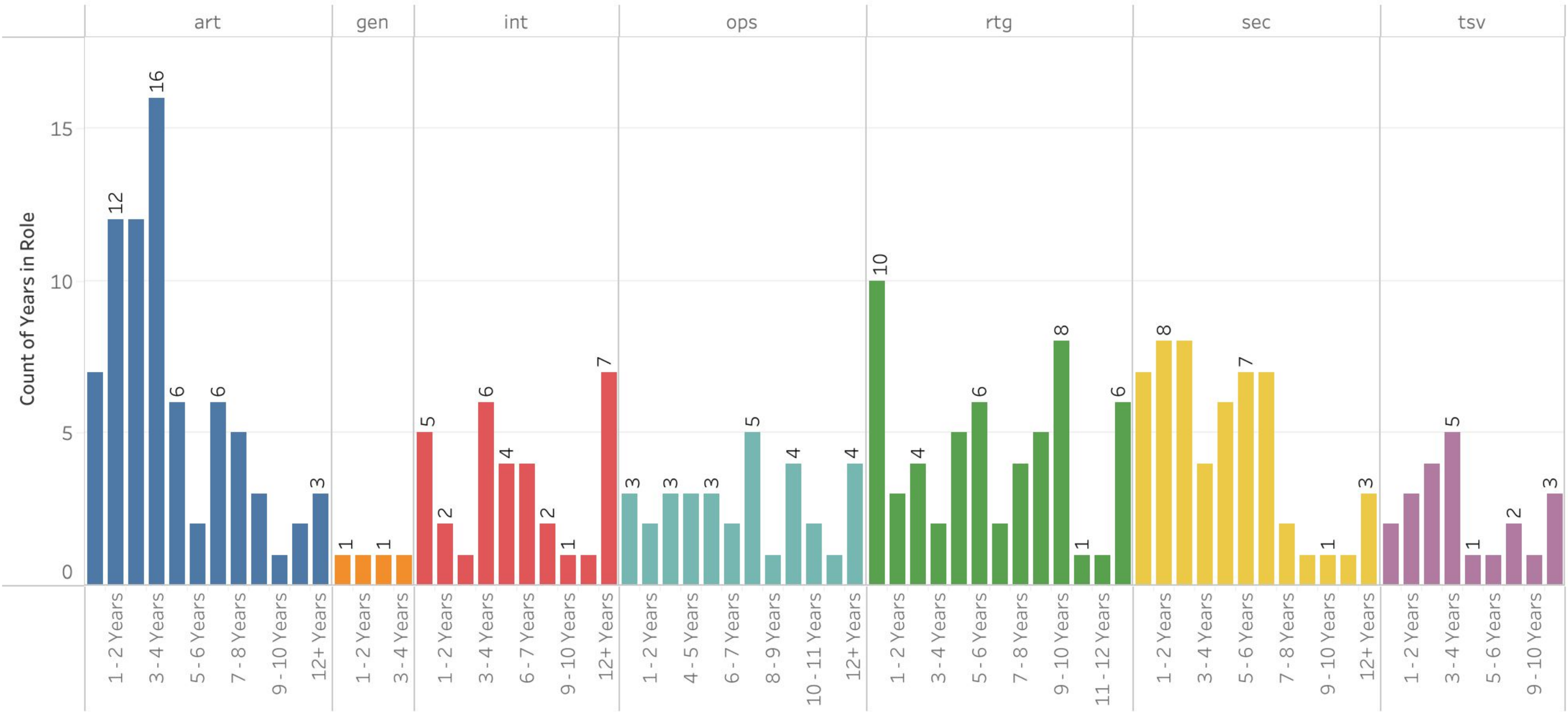
Chairs by Time in Post



WG Chair demographics

Using data from December 2023 (pre-WIT)

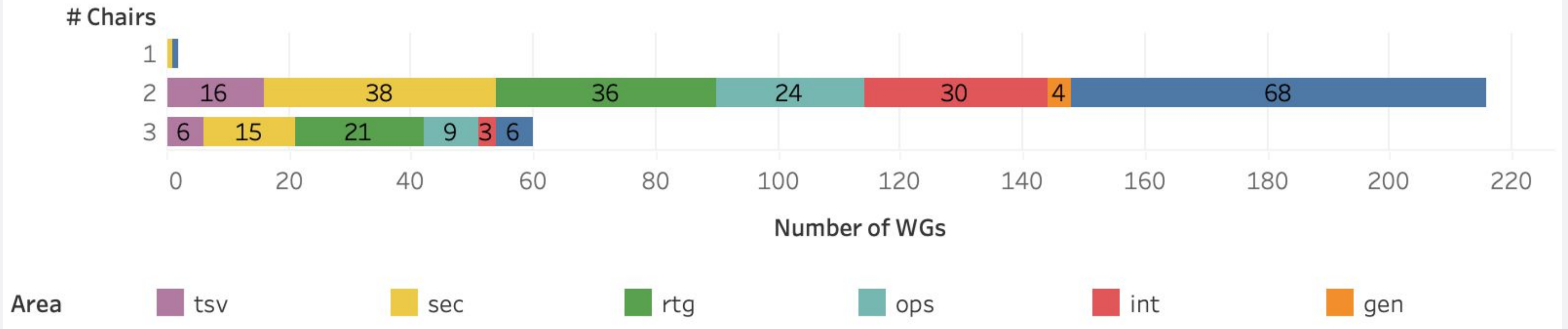
Chairs by Time in Post by Area



WG Chair demographics

Using data from December 2023 (pre-WIT)

WGs by Number of Chairs by Area

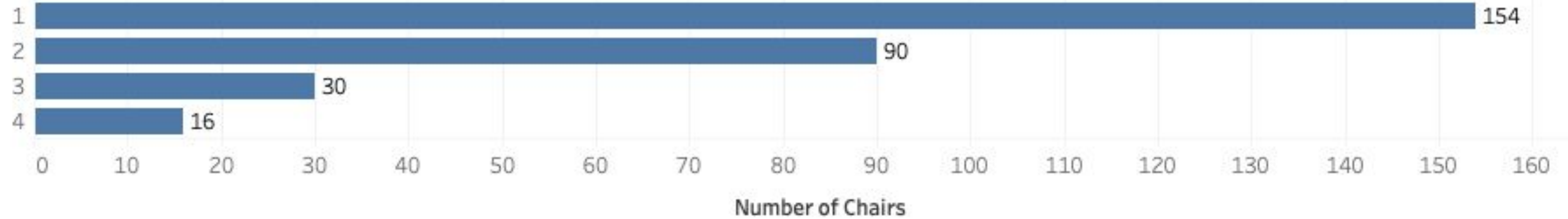


WG Chair demographics

Using data from December 2023 (pre-WIT)

WGs per Chair

WGs Chaired



PART ONE

Skills development framework (underway)

Problems

From interviews and informal conversations with WG Chairs, as well as postings to wgchairs@ietf.org, we know:

- Knowledge and skills is uneven.
- Lack of a baseline understanding of the responsibilities or standard practices involved with chairing working groups, including knowledge of the support resources available.
- WG Chairs discovering on their own what tasks they need to do, and how to complete them, including sometimes creating their own tools and information, even when similar resources already exist.
- Different practices across WG groups, different experiences for WG participants, and in the extreme case, practices in WGs that may not meet requirements documented in RFCs and IESG statements.

PART ONE

Skills development framework (underway)

Underway actions

Overseen by the IESG and in coordination with WG Chairs and EODIR the IETF LLC is working to:

- Develop a list of required and desired skills for WG Chairs, including all significant tasks for WG operation and management.
- Ensure that all the key subjects are covered by online training courses, both live and on-demand, supported by a full set of essential materials and resources.
- Investigate some form of individual learning tracker (TBD) and possibly self-assessment tool.

NOTE: there is no requirement for any WG Chair to undertake any of this training.

PART TWO

Informed decision making (Active consideration)

Problems

1. The IESG has very little data on WG Chairs and that is hampering multiple things related to planning and where the IESG allocates resources.
2. At the individual WG Chair level, the IESG does not know key data, such as how WG participants rate them across a range of factors such as effectiveness and fairness, nor does it know how they rate themselves and their views on the support they need. ADs receive direct feedback where there is a problem, but better data would provide advance warning and reduce the need for rapid intervention.
3. At the cohort level, there is a lot the IESG does not know, including the basic demographic breakdown and key role data such as the turnover rate. The IETF Community Survey gives some idea of the overall rating of WG Chairs for the same factors as above but it could be much better. Some of the role data is in Datatracker but the data models are not quite good enough for the level of data needed.

PART TWO

Informed decision making (Active consideration)

Actions being considered

Overseen by the IESG and in coordination with WG Chairs and EODIR, the IETF LLC may be asked to deliver the following:

1. Improve the data model in Datatracker to enable better recording of key 'life' events for WGs and their chairs.
2. Annual survey of each WG with questions about the chairs for an agreed range of factors. (This would replace the questions in the IETF Community covering the same things).
3. Annual survey of WG Chairs to collect key demographic information and self-perceptions, needs, etc.
4. An annual report and/or dashboard using the data above in an aggregated and anonymized form.

PART THREE

Chairing opportunities (Under discussion)

Problems and Risks

1. ADs report that there is in general paucity of suitable candidates for a chair role. This can make finding a replacement WG Chair a difficult and stressful process, in particular if a WG Chair steps down abruptly and there is an urgent need for a replacement.
2. Finding a new WG Chair requires considerable effort by ADs, both to encourage candidates and to assess candidate suitability. While not as bad for new WGs, it is still far from ideal.
3. Forcibly removing a long-standing WG Chair has been shown to lead to a significant reaction from some in the community and sometimes causes long-lasting personal rancor.
4. The lack of opportunities for people to put their names forward as a WG Chair risks people not preparing for such opportunities and therefore not being able to put their name forward or not a good choice if they do.
5. The IETF risks being seen as a members club where those who have been here the longest control the organization. *(the counter to this is that this prevents capture by a coordinated group of newcomers).*

PART THREE

Chairing opportunities (Under discussion)

Problems and Risks

6. When a WG Chair opportunity arises, there is a risk that a group of participants promoting a particular technology/approach will band together to push for candidates favorable to their cause.
7. The WG Chair role is sufficiently time-consuming and difficult that good WG Chairs might choose to step down rather than go through any form of assessment or reapplication process.
8. The strong reaction to removing a long-standing chair risks ADs avoiding tackling underperforming WG Chairs and instead trying to work around them.
9. Saying no to a candidate for a WG Chair position can cause personal rancor and the more often that has to be done, the more often there is that risk.
10. We might create a class of “professional” WG Chairs who are good at chairing, well trained and with good experience and they end up moving from WG to WG thereby reducing opportunity in an unforeseen way.

PART THREE

Chairing opportunities (Under discussion)

Actions being considered

NONE - The IESG is still discussing this whole area and it seems prudent to wait for survey data (if that is agreed) before considering actions.

「thank you.」