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Internet Architecture Board
B. Carpenter, Editor
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Charter of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB)

Status of this Memo

This document specifies an Internet Best Current Practices for the Internet Community, and requests discussion and suggestions for improvements. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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Abstract

This memo documents the composition, selection, roles, and organization of the Internet Architecture Board. It replaces RFC 1601.

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1. IAB Membership

The Internet Architecture Board (IAB) shall consist of thirteen full members, composed of the chair of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), and of twelve sitting members. The IETF chair, who is also the chair of the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG), may participate in all official IAB actions except the approval of IESG members and appeals against IESG decisions. Ex-officio and liaison members of the IAB may also attend IAB meetings but shall not participate in determination of official actions.

Members of the IAB shall serve as individuals, and not as representatives of any company, agency, or other organization. Members of the IAB shall owe no fiduciary duty of loyalty or care to IAB, IETF, IRTF or IESG.

1.1 Selection of full IAB members

Full IAB members, including the IETF chair, are selected and appointed according to the procedures defined in [BCP 10]. Normally, six sitting members are appointed each year to sit for two years, and the IETF chair is appointed every two years.

There is no limit to the number of terms that a member of the IAB may serve, subject to the process defined by [BCP 10].

Mid-term vacancies are filled as defined in [BCP 10] and do not affect the IAB's power to take decisions.

1.2 Ex-Officio and Liaison members

Ex-officio and liaison members of the IAB have no standing to participate in IAB decisions but are expected to participate in IAB discussions as appropriate to their roles. However, an ex-officio position may be held by a full member, who does not thereby lose his or her standing to participate in IAB decisions.

The chair of the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) is an ex-officio member of the IAB. The IAB has an Executive Director who is an ex-officio member of the IAB.

The Internet Society, the RFC Editor, the IANA and the IESG each appoints a liaison member to the IAB. These liaison positions may not be held by a full member of the IAB.

Vacancies in the liaison and ex officio positions do not affect the IAB's power to take decisions.

2. The Role of the IAB

The IAB is chartered both as a committee of the IETF and as an advisory body of the Internet Society. Its responsibilities include:

(a) IESG Appointment

The IETF nominating committee established under [BCP 10] annually provides a list of candidates for vacant IESG seats and for the IETF Chair if vacant. The IAB reviews the candidates, consenting to some, all, or none.

(b) Architectural Oversight

The IAB provides oversight of the architecture for the protocols and procedures used by the Internet. This point is expanded in Section 2.1 below.

(c) Standards Process Oversight and Appeal

The IAB provides oversight of the process used to create Internet Standards [BCP 9].

The IAB serves as an appeal board for complaints of improper execution of the standards process, with powers defined in [BCP 9].

(d) RFC Series and IANA

The RFC Editor executes editorial management and publication of the IETF "Request for Comment" (RFC) document series, which is the permanent document repository of the IETF. The RFC series constitutes the archival publication channel for Internet Standards and for other contributions by the Internet research and engineering community. RFCs are available free of charge to anyone via the Internet. The IAB must approve the appointment of an organization to act as RFC Editor and the general policy followed by the RFC Editor.

The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) administers various protocol parameters used by IETF protocols, delegating this administration as appropriate. The IAB must approve the appointment of an organization to act as IANA on behalf of the IETF. The IANA takes technical direction on IETF protocols from the IESG.

(e) ISOC Liaison

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. If necessary the IAB may convene panels of knowledgeable people, hold hearings, and otherwise pursue the investigation of specific questions or topics presented to it by the Internet Society.

(f) External Liaison

The IAB acts as representative of the interests of the IETF and the Internet Society in technical liaison relationships with other organizations concerned with standards and other technical and organizational issues relevant to the world-wide Internet. Liaisons are kept as informal as possible and must be of demonstrable value in improving the quality of IETF specifications. Individual members of the IETF are appointed as liaisons to other organizations by the IAB or IESG as appropriate.

2.1 Architectural oversight in more detail

A major role of the IAB is long range planning and coordination between different areas of IETF activity. The IAB, both collectively and on an individual basis, is expected to pay attention to important long-term issues in the Internet, and to make sure that these issues are brought to the attention of the group(s) that are in a position to address them. It is also expected to play a role in assuring that the people responsible for evolving the Internet and its technology are aware of the essential elements of the Internet architecture.

IAB members pay special attention to emerging activities in the IETF and to "Birds of a Feather" sessions at IETF meetings. The IAB assists the IESG in evaluating such activities and in determining whether an IETF or an IRTF group is more appropriate. When a new IETF working group is proposed, the IESG will forward a preliminary version of the charter to the IAB for review of architectural consistency and integrity. The IAB shall review these proposed charters and give feedback to the IESG as appropriate.

Pursuant to the architectural oversight function, the IAB sponsors and organizes the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) [BCP 8]. The IAB reviews proposed IRTF groups.

The IAB will convene invitational workshops to perform in-depth reviews of particular architectural issues. Such reviews may include consideration of relevant IETF and IRTF activities, and of work in other organizations, and for this purpose the workshop may invite presentations by qualified parties on the design goals and decisions, technology choices, and other pertinent aspects of these activities. The results of such a review will be a report which may give advice to the IETF community and the IESG.

The IAB may organize ad hoc bodies of independent technical experts to adjudicate technical disputes.

3. IAB Organization

3.1 IAB chair

The members of the IAB shall select one of its full members to serve as the chair of the IAB, with all of the duties and responsibilities normally associated with such a position. The term of the IAB chair shall be one year, with no restriction on renewal. The chair of the IAB may be removed at any time by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the IAB, or as a result of his or her departure from the IAB.

The chair of the IAB shall have the authority to manage the activities and meetings of the IAB.

3.2 Executive Director

The chair of the IAB shall have the authority to appoint an honorary Executive Director (ExecD) for a one-year renewable term, and to remove him or her. The ExecD shall administer the internal operation of the IAB, e.g., organization of meetings and reporting of their results.

The ExecD is an ex-officio member as defined in Section 1.2.

3.3 Selection of the IRTF chair

The IAB shall have the authority to appoint the chair of the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) for a two-year renewable term, and to remove him or her. The IRTF chair shall be responsible for the management and organization of the IRTF according to [BCP 8].

The IRTF chair is an ex-officio member as defined in Section 1.2.

3.4 Liaisons within the IETF

The chair of the IAB and another full IAB member (other than the IETF chair), to be selected by the IAB, shall serve as liaisons to the IESG. In addition, the IESG will appoint one of its members (other than the IETF chair) to serve as a liaison to the IAB. The IESG liaison may attend IAB meetings.

Vacancies in these liaison seats have no effect on the IAB's or the IESG's powers to make decisions.

3.5 Decision taking

The IAB attempts to reach all decisions unanimously. If unanimity cannot be achieved, the chair may conduct informal polls to determine consensus. The IAB may make decisions and take action if at least seven full members concur and there are no more than two dissents.

The IAB may reach decisions by face to face meeting, teleconference, Internet communication, or any combination of the above.

3.6 Openness and confidentiality

The IAB publishes minutes of all its meetings on the Internet, and conducts an open meeting at every IETF meeting. It publishes all its findings as RFCs, Internet Drafts or messages to the IETF mailing list. However, discussion of personnel matters and possibly legal and financial matters may sometimes be required to be kept confidential, and the chair may, with the consent of the full members, exclude liaison and ex officio members from such discussions.

Specifically, the IAB makes use of the second level domain iab.org and the URL <http://www.iab.org> to publish information.

Security Considerations

This memo does not raise any known security threats.

Summary of Changes from RFC 1601

This document replaces [RFC 1601]. The principal change is the removal of material now covered in [BCP 8], [BCP 9] and [BCP 10], with many consequent editorial changes. Additional changes are:

- description of decision making when unanimity cannot be achieved
- note on openness and confidentiality
- addition of liaison seats for the Internet Society and the IANA
- revised text concerning the IANA and the RFC Editor
- clarifications following legal review

References

- [RFC 1601] Huitema, C., "Charter of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB)", RFC 1601, March 1994.
- [BCP 8] Weinrib, A., and J. Postel, "IRTF Research Group Guidelines and Procedures", BCP 8, RFC 2014, October 1996.
- [BCP 9] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", BCP 9, RFC 2026, October 1996.
- [BCP 10] Galvin, J., "IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", BCP 10, RFC 2282, February 1998.

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