RIPE Task Forces: Definition and Guidelines

Definition:
A RIPE task force is a group of RIPE community members formed to study and report on a specific topic or issue within the RIPE community.

Creation and prerequisites:
When an issue is outside the scope of any RIPE working group or requires more in-depth analysis, the RIPE Chair can decide to form a new task force.

Before appointing task force members, the RIPE Chair defines the following elements:
- Rationale
- Charter
- Scope
- Methodology
- Provisional timeline

These elements provide the basic structure of the task force's work.

Appointment and composition:
The RIPE Chair issues a call for volunteers or directly selects members from the community to form a new RIPE task force. Task force members are selected based on their experience, expertise and background. Intending task force members are expected to make the RIPE Chair aware of any relevant potential conflicts of interest.

RIPE task forces are in general composed of a relatively small number of community members. This can vary depending on the scope of the work at hand.

The task force should designate one or more chairs who are responsible for making sure that progress is made and that results will be achieved within the agreed time frame.

Responsibilities:
When agreeing to join a RIPE task force, each member is required to be available for regular meetings and to be actively involved in the process. Being part of a task force can require a significant time commitment, especially around RIPE Meetings and other important deadlines.

RIPE NCC staff support:
Each RIPE task force is assigned specific RIPE NCC staff to help them during the process.

The role of RIPE NCC staff is to provide communications support and professional advice on technical issues. RIPE NCC staff can also help to capture meeting minutes and assist the task force in drafting its final output.

Output:
The final output of the RIPE task force is defined in its charter. In most cases, this takes the form of a report in which the task force makes recommendations. A task force can also be charged with developing a document for the community to reach consensus on (e.g. Code of Conduct).

Before publishing its final report, the task force should publish one or more preliminary drafts, so that the RIPE community has a chance to give feedback.

Consensus building:
In contrast to RIPE policies, consensus is not needed on a RIPE task force report. The community reviews the task force's recommendations separately from the report and it can choose to amend or reject them. However, if the final output required is a new community document, a consensus call is made by the RIPE Chair.

Time frame:
When created, each RIPE task force is given a provisional timeline for its work. At its initial meeting, the task force prepares its work plan and either confirms this timeline or proposes one which seems more realistic. The task force may wish to indicate what it expects it can achieve within the provisional timeline, as well as the time it considers necessary to complete its task. When a work plan and timeline are confirmed, the RIPE Chair will acknowledge this on the RIPE Discussion List.

Reporting to the community:
Each RIPE task force should report on its progress regularly and provide opportunities for the community to give feedback on its work.

This includes:
- Having a mailing list for community feedback
- Publishing minutes of meetings
- Scheduling BoFs or other feedback sessions with the community
- Giving regular updates to the RIPE Chair
- Keeping the task force's web page up to date

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