

## Guidelines on RIPE NCC Staff Engagement with the RIPE Community

**Date:** January 2024

1. The [RIPE NCC Code of Conduct \(CoC\)](#) is applicable to all staff, consultants, interns and staff working via Employer of Record at all times. Section 9 of the CoC (Representing the RIPE NCC Externally) and the text on adhering to the RIPE NCC's values are the relevant sections for these guidelines. The [RIPE Code of Conduct](#) is applicable to all those participating in the RIPE community, including RIPE NCC staff.
2. The RIPE NCC wants you to engage with the RIPE community and asks that you exercise common sense and good judgment when doing so. Good engagement with the community can benefit the staff member and their work, or it can benefit the community. The best engagement does both. The following tips can help you with good engagement:
  - a) Be friendly and informal when appropriate; be serious and formal when necessary
  - b) Avoid being argumentative, long-winded or pedantic
  - c) Be factual when providing information
  - d) If someone else puts forward an opinion you agree with, support them rather than repeat their input. Everyone likes to feel there is support for their ideas.
  - e) Don't forget to interact positively - it's perfectly fine to point out what you don't like, but it's just as important to say what you support.
3. Below are six areas where you should check internally before commenting, or where you should be careful not to sway the community's opinion. However, in these cases you are encouraged to provide facts and information that would help the community to reach a decision. You should make the Executive Team, your direct manager or the responsible team aware if you think it would be useful to provide information to the community:
  - a) In the Policy Development Process (PDP), where the community creates the policies that the RIPE NCC must implement. Talk to the Policy Development Officer if in doubt.
  - b) When the RIPE NCC asks the RIPE community for its guidance on specific matters. Where such a consultation has been initiated, it would not be appropriate to tell the community what its opinion should be. Talk to the person leading the consultation if in doubt.

- c) On Registry Services issues (for staff not working in that area), where misleading information can result in incorrect requests or information being asked by members. Talk to someone in Registry Services if in doubt.
  - d) On corporate governance issues where communication is coordinated with the Managing Director and/or Executive Board (General Meeting matters, elections, etc.). Talk to someone in Membership Engagement if in doubt.
  - e) Where the RIPE NCC has made a decision and announced it to the community. Decisions should be made following good discussion with relevant internal and external stakeholders. Care should be taken to avoid causing confusion internally and externally by questioning decisions after they have been communicated by the RIPE NCC.
  - f) Where there is a legal implication (topics involving such things as GDPR, any of our legal documents, etc.) then you will need to first talk to our Legal Team. "IANAL but..." will not suffice in these cases.
4. You are encouraged to talk to colleagues before engaging with the community to avoid confusion or statements that conflict with the RIPE NCC's position or with facts that are best understood by the teams working on the service or activity you want to comment on. Trusted colleagues can also give a sanity check that can help you provide good interactions. Interactions rarely need to happen immediately, and asking for advice doesn't take long and is time well spent. You should use your common sense and experience when applying this guideline.
  5. Comms should review any communications that are sent on behalf of the organisation (announcements, product launches/decommissions, governance issues, etc.). This does not apply if you are interacting with the community generally. Although Comms can always help by checking your messaging if you want it.
  6. When interacting with the community, do not indicate that the RIPE NCC will carry out work without first checking with the teams who carry out that work. It might not be possible or it can give the community unrealistic expectations, which can result in friction internally.
  7. Many of us are experts in a wide range of fields. You are strongly encouraged to share your expertise with the community where it does not conflict with guideline 3 above.
  8. You are employed by the RIPE NCC to advance its mission, so removing your RIPE NCC hat is not possible, especially when discussing the RIPE NCC or its services/activities. However, you can comment freely on areas of interest to you while doing your best to make sure the community knows who you work for and while paying attention to the areas where extra care is needed (see Guideline 3).

9. Community positions, including Working Group Chair and Head of a Task Force, require approval from the Managing Director. Such approval will only be given in exceptional circumstances. These groups often need RIPE NCC Secretariat support (Legal, Comms, technical specialist, etc.) and when requested by the community these positions should be appointed by the relevant teams.
10. If you are engaged in community activities separate from your RIPE NCC work, make sure the RIPE NCC is aware you are carrying out these activities and do not conduct them during work hours without manager approval. And be careful not to use RIPE NCC materials or expense the RIPE NCC for costs incurred when carrying out these activities.
11. It's important to remember that good engagement involves a time-and-effort commitment. Even something as simple as replying to a comment on a mailing list requires you to keep track of discussions in that thread in case you are asked to follow up or provide further interactions.
12. It's important to remember that engagement is always judged subjectively and there is often no right or wrong way to interact with the community. Be tolerant of people who interact in ways that you disagree with. Authentic engagement by its nature requires people to interact in ways that are different from how you might interact.