

Evolution of the RIPE Policy Development Process

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Introduction

The RIPE Policy Development Process (PDP) is important both for articulating RIPE Community values and for communicating these values formally to the RIPE NCC. The process has been revised a number of times since its introduction in order either to present it more clearly or to streamline the process.

Mirjam Kühne and I took office as RIPE Chair and Vice-Chair respectively on 1 September 2020, and had to give attention almost immediately to the first ever exercise of the Appeal Procedure in the PDP. We needed to refresh our understanding of the PDP, and found it useful to review the history of this process. This review is recorded here.

Concurrently with this review, two other related activities have been started. Mirjam Kühne and the RIPE-NCC Policy Officer, Angela Dall'Ara have been working to review the recent experience of operating the Appeal Procedure. Denis Walker has initiated a discussion of the PDP among the RIPE Working Group Chairs, in which a number of the Working Group Chairs have engaged.

I have tried to identify the significant features of the Policy Development Process, to note when they were introduced and how they evolved, and to recommend some very few changes or clarifications which I think may be opportune. I do not intend these recommendations as proposed amendments to the PDP, but rather as input for a review of the Policy Development Process in the RIPE Community.

This review contains

- A summary of recommendations,
 - A table showing the chronological evolution of the RIPE Policy Development Process through successive definitions of this process, and
 - A section-by-section analysis of the text.
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Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Mirjam Kühne for continued encouragement and helpful criticism during this work and also to Angela dall'Ara, Denis Walker, Marco Schmidt, and Sander Steffann who each very kindly agreed to review an early draft of this document. Any remaining errors or omissions are, of course, my sole responsibility.

Summary of recommendations

The following three recommendations are made further on below with motivating observations, each in the context of the relevant section of text.

1. It is recommended to consider updating the definition of the Policy Development Process either to clarify or to omit the identification of the RIPE Chair as author and owner of current definition of the RIPE Policy Development Process.
 2. It is recommended to consider updating the definition of the Policy Development Process so that the current RIPE Chair is again explicitly excluded from the WGCC in any situation where the WGCC has to make a decision which may later be appealed to the RIPE Chair.
 3. It is recommended to consider updating the definition of the Policy Development Process by inserting a non-exhaustive list of categories of individuals who must be considered to have an obligation to recuse themselves from taking part in the appellate function of the Working Group Chairs' Collective.
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Chronological evolution of process

Some provisions of the process have been updated more than once; in the following table, the most recent material revision is shown in the column headed “Status”.

Provision	Introduced	Status
Scope to include all common practices	ripe-350 2005-09	Updated ripe-470
Principles: openness, transparency, consensus	ripe-350	Current
Dedicated mailing list for announcements	ripe-350	Updated ripe-428
Each successive amendment to be published	ripe-350	Current
Multi-stage process with timelines	ripe-350	Current
Standard timelines for respective phases	ripe-350	Updated ripe-710
Iteration allowed for certain stages	ripe-350	Current
Option to withdraw proposal, absent consensus	ripe-350	Current
Process administered by RIPE NCC	ripe-350	Updated ripe-500
Implementation by RIPE NCC or (later) others	ripe-350	Updated ripe-470
Details of process: stages and transitions	ripe-350	Updated ripe-470
Process flow diagram (Appendix A)	ripe-350	Updated ripe-470
Standard template (Appendix B)	ripe-350	Updated ripe-470
Usual submission path	ripe-350	Current
Process managed by relevant Chair	ripe-350	Current
Chairs of all WGs (WGCC) to call consensus	ripe-350	Removed ripe-614
Potential for, and handling of, disputes	ripe-428 2008-02	Current
Dispute resolution and appeal procedure	ripe-428	Updated ripe-614
Definition: Appealable action	ripe-428	Current
Definition: WG Chairs’ Collective (WGCC)	ripe-428	Removed ripe-614
Appeal to WGCC of WG Chair decision	ripe-428	Current
Appeal: recusal of relevant WG Chairs	ripe-428	Updated ripe-614
Final appeal to RIPE Chair of WGCC decision	ripe-428	Current
Purpose of document declared	ripe-470 2009-05	Current
List of common practices reorganized	ripe-470	Current
Scope restricted to “Policy”	ripe-470	Current
Principles: requirement to document	ripe-470	Current
Policies to be documented in RIPE Document Store	ripe-470	Current
Process not used for implementation procedures	ripe-470	Current
Implementation by RIPE NCC, LIR, or End-User	ripe-470	Current
Implementation procedures must conform to policy	ripe-470	Current
RIPE NCC practices and procedures excluded	ripe-470	Current
Potential for implementation problems recognized	ripe-500 2010-09	Current
RIPE NCC EB to notify problems, suggest remedy	ripe-500	Current
RIPE NCC impact analysis defined	ripe-500	Current
RIPE Chair to be author and owner of document	ripe-614 2014-07	Current
Relevant WG (Co-) Chair(s) to call consensus	ripe-614	Current
Dispute resolution moved inline from appendix	ripe-614	Current
Dispute resolution text simplified	ripe-614	Current
Appeal: recusal of interested parties	ripe-614	Current
Editorial changes only	ripe-642 2015-03	
WG Chair may extend Review Phase	ripe-710 2018-09	Current

Section-by-section analysis

The order in which the sections are presented here follows the order in which the detail for each topic first appears in the most recent edition of the source document specifying the RIPE Policy Development Process; this order may differ from that used in earlier editions.

The detail describing a single topic may sometimes be spread over a number of sections of the source document. In such a case, where it has seemed opportune, material from the different relevant sections is presented together.

Introduction

Purpose, authorship, and ownership of document

- **ripe-350**: purpose left implicit
- **ripe-470**: purpose declared in introduction
- **ripe-614**: RIPE Chair identified as author and owner

Text

- **ripe-470**:

This document describes the RIPE Policy Development Process (RIPE PDP), outlining how policies relating to the operation of the Internet are developed by and for the RIPE community.

- **ripe-614 — ripe-710**:

This document describes the RIPE Policy Development Process (RIPE PDP), outlining how policies relating to the operation of the Internet are developed by and for the RIPE community. The RIPE Chair is the author and owner of this document.

Observation and recommendation

It is unclear what is intended or achieved by identifying the RIPE Chair as author and owner of current definition of the RIPE Policy Development Process.

It is recommended either to clarify or to omit this identification.

Scope

- **ripe-350**: include all common practices
- **ripe-470**: list of common practices reorganized
- **ripe-470**: scope restricted to “Policy”

Text

- **ripe-350**:

Since its creation in 1989, RIPE has from time to time agreed on common practices. These common practices may come in different forms and/or under different names:

- best common practice (or BCP),
- recommendations to the community,
- requests to the RIPE NCC,
- recommendations to the RIPE NCC,
- or just policy.

In this document they are all called ‘Policy’.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710**:

Since its creation in 1989, RIPE has been a forum for people to decide on common practices. These common practices may come in different forms and/or under different names:

- best common practice (BCP)
- recommendations and guidelines to the community
- recommendations and guidelines to the RIPE NCC
- policy

This document refers solely to “Policy”.

Principles: openness, transparency, consensus, documentation

- **ripe-350**: three principles: openness, transparency, consensus
- **ripe-470**: requirement added for documentation in RIPE Document Store

Text

- **ripe-350:**

The process that results in a policy has a few important and fundamental principles:

- a. it is open to all. Everyone interested in the well-being of the Internet may propose a policy, and take part in the discussions.
- b. it is transparent. All discussions and results are documented and freely available to all.
- c. conclusions are reached by consensus.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

The process that results in the creation of a policy has some important and fundamental principles:

- a. It is open to all and follows an established, bottom-up process of collaboration. Everyone interested in the well-being of the Internet may propose a policy and take part in the discussions that follow on from the proposal.
- b. It is transparent. All discussions and resulting actions are documented and freely available to all.
- c. Conclusions are reached by consensus.
- d. All policies are documented within RIPE Documents and placed in the RIPE Document Store.

Exclusions

- **ripe-470:** scope restricted to “Policy” (see above: [Scope](#))
- **ripe-470:** Process not used for implementation procedures
- **ripe-470:** RIPE NCC business practices and procedures excluded

The initial scope of the RIPE PDP, specified in **ripe-350** included a wide variety of “common practices”. Exclusions from this scope were introduced in **ripe-470**.

The expression “*implementation procedures*” as used in the list above is intended simply as a more compact equivalent to what appears in the text as “*specific administrative or technical procedures established in order for a policy to be applied*”.

Text

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

The policies referred to in this document are those developed through the bottom-up RIPE PDP. This document does not describe the specific administrative or technical procedures established in order for a policy to be applied.

[...]

RIPE Policies are also separate from RIPE NCC business practices and procedures. Business practices and procedures that the RIPE NCC follows are defined and governed by the RIPE NCC Executive Board and approved by the RIPE NCC membership.

Implementation and potential problems for NCC

- **ripe-470:** Implementation by RIPE NCC, LIR, or End-User
- **ripe-470:** Implementation procedures must conform to policy
- **ripe-500:** Potential for implementation or operational problems recognized; RIPE NCC Executive Board to notify such problems and suggest or recommend remedy.

Text

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

The policies referred to in this document [...]. Depending on the specifics of a

policy, procedures can be set by the Local Internet Registries (LIRs), End Users and the RIPE NCC as required. These procedures must conform to all policies that are in place.

- **ripe-500 — ripe-710:**

If a policy proposal would bring implementation and/or operational problems for the RIPE NCC if accepted, the RIPE NCC Executive Board is tasked to notify the RIPE community accordingly as well as to make necessary suggestions and recommendations about possible changes to the proposal.

The Process

Multi-stage iterative process

- **ripe-350:** description of stages of process
- **ripe-470:** rephrased more concisely

Text

- **ripe-350 — ripe-428:**

In the process of developing a policy, several distinct phases are identified:

1. Creating a Proposal
2. Discussion Phase
3. Review Phase
4. Concluding Phase

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

The process of developing a policy has four distinct phases:

1. Creating a Proposal
2. Discussion Phase
3. Review Phase
4. Concluding Phase

Timelines for each stage

- **ripe-350:** default timelines and proposal-specific variation
- **ripe-428:** editorial change
- **ripe-470:** editorial change
- **ripe-614:** editorial change

Text

Minor intermediate editorial changes are not shown.

- **ripe-350**

Each of these phases are detailed below.

In the descriptions below, timelines are mentioned. They are proposed deadlines for the various proposal phases. stages. Individual proposals may choose to vary these, however the actual timescales must be documented.

- **ripe-614 — ripe-710**

These four phases are detailed below with timelines. They are proposed deadlines for the various stages. These may be varied for individual proposals, but the actual timescales must be documented.

Justification of changes and objections

- **ripe-470:** changes and objections to be justified

Text

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710**

In all phases of the RIPE PDP, suggestions for changes to the proposal and objections regarding the proposal must be justified with supporting arguments.

Process administered by RIPE NCC

General description

- **ripe-350**: general description of administrative support role of RIPE NCC
- **ripe-470**: detail added to general description
- **ripe-500**: impact analysis introduced to general description
- **ripe-642**: editorial changes to general description

Publication and tracking

- **ripe-350**: publication and tracking activity specified
- **ripe-428**: editorial change to publication and tracking specification
- **ripe-470**: explanations added for tracking status of proposal

Successive versions

- **ripe-470**: include each version of a proposal in archive

RIPE NCC impact analysis

- **ripe-500**: requirement introduced for impact analysis

Text (general description of administrative support role)

The following extracts appear in the source documents under the heading "2. Process".

- **ripe-350**:

In this process, the RIPE NCC (the RIPE community's secretariat) gives administrative support, such as:

- administering proposals
- publication on relevant web pages
- tracking deadlines

- **ripe-470**:

In this process, the RIPE NCC (the RIPE community's secretariat) gives administrative support by:

- publishing proposals and related discussions on relevant webpages
- tracking deadlines
- making announcements to the RIPE community
- providing assistance in drafting policy proposals if requested
- providing relevant facts, statistics and an assessment of the work involved in the implementation of a policy

- **ripe-500**:

In this process, the RIPE NCC (the RIPE community's secretariat) gives administrative support by:

- publishing proposals and related discussions on relevant webpages
- tracking deadlines
- making announcements to the RIPE community
- providing assistance in drafting policy proposals if requested
- providing relevant facts and statistics
- publishing an impact analysis that points to the possible effects of the proposed policy and the work that would be involved in its implementation.

- **ripe-642 — ripe-710**:

In this process, the RIPE NCC (the RIPE community's secretariat) gives administrative support by:

- Publishing proposals and related discussions on relevant webpages

- Tracking deadlines
- Making announcements to the RIPE community
- Providing assistance in drafting policy proposals if requested
- Providing relevant facts and statistics
- Publishing an impact analysis that points to the possible effects of the proposed policy and the work that would be involved in its implementation.

Text (details of publication and tracking tasks)

The following extracts appear in the source documents under the heading “2.1 *Creating a Proposal*”.

- **ripe-350:**

The RIPE NCC identifies proposals with a number and publishes them in the appropriate section of the relevant working groups web pages.

The page will indicate the version history and status of proposals:

- Open for Discussion;
- Agreed or
- Withdrawn.

The RIPE NCC will also maintain a web page with an overview of all outstanding policy proposals.

- **ripe-428:**

The RIPE NCC identifies each proposal with a number and publishes them on a dedicated webpage. This web page contains the version history and the status of all proposals. A proposal can have the following status:

- Open for Discussion
- Accepted
- Withdrawn

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

The RIPE NCC gives each proposal its own unique identifier and publishes it on a dedicated RIPE webpage. This webpage contains the version history and the status of all proposals. A proposal can have one of the following statuses at any given time:

- **Open for Discussion:** Meaning that the proposal is still being discussed within the RIPE PDP.
- **Accepted:** Meaning that the RIPE community accepted the proposal after all stages of the RIPE PDP were completed.
- **Withdrawn:** Meaning that the proposal is withdrawn either by the proposer or by the WG chairs at one of the decision-making points.

Text (archival of successive versions)

The following extracts appear in the source documents under the heading “2.2 *Discussion Phase*”.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

Each version of the proposal is publicly archived to transparently show the history of changes to the proposal.

Text (RIPE NCC impact analysis)

- **ripe-500 — ripe-710:**

The RIPE NCC will also conduct and publish an impact analysis about the proposal before it can be moved to the Review Phase. The goal of this analysis is to provide relevant supporting information to facilitate the discussions about the proposal and provide some projections about the possible impact if it were to be accepted. This analysis will contain the following points:

- The RIPE NCC’s understanding of the proposed policy

- Impact on the registry and addressing systems (including Internet resource consumption, aggregation and fragmentation)
- Impact on RIPE NCC operations/services
- Legal impact

Process flow illustrated by diagram

The evolution of the diagram itself is shown separately in [another section below](#).

- **ripe-350**: text refers to flow diagram in Appendix A

Text

- **ripe-350 — ripe-710**:

The process flow is illustrated in a diagram, attached as Appendix A.

Potential for, and handling of, disputes

- **ripe-428**: potential for dispute recognized
- **ripe-428**: approach declared for resolution
- **ripe-470**: editorial changes

Text

- **ripe-428**

There are a number of points in the PDP at which disputes could arise. The PDP is designed so that compromises can be made and genuine consensus achieved; however, there are times when even the most reasonable and knowledgeable people are unable to agree. To achieve the goals of openness and fairness, such conflicts must be resolved through a process of open review and discussion.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710**

There are a number of points in the PDP at which disputes could arise. The PDP is designed so that compromises can be made and genuine consensus achieved. However, there are times when even the most reasonable and knowledgeable people are unable to agree on the decisions made at the end of any PDP phase. To achieve the goals of openness, transparency and fairness, such conflicts must be resolved through a process of open review and discussion.

Creating a proposal; use of standard template

The evolution of the template itself is shown separately in [another section below](#).

- **ripe-350**: text refers to template in Appendix B
- **ripe-350**: purpose of template declared
- **ripe-428**: editorial change in reference to Appendix B

Text

- **ripe-350**:

Discussions may be started by anyone at any time. Participants are welcome to discuss broad ideas as well as make detailed policy proposals. Proposals are made using a Policy Proposal template [TEMPLATE Appendix B].

The template forms a structure for the proposal. It details the reason for the proposal and any perceived consequences of the proposal.

- **ripe-428 — ripe-710**:

Discussions may be started by anyone at any time. Participants are welcome to discuss broad ideas as well as to make detailed policy proposals. Proposals are made using the Policy Proposal template, attached as Appendix B.

The template forms a structure for the proposal. It details the reason for the

proposal and any perceived consequences of the proposal.

Usual submission path

- **ripe-350**: submission via Chair of relevant WG or via RIPE Chair

Text

- **ripe-350**:

A proposal is usually submitted via the Chair of the relevant RIPE Working Group or via the RIPE Chair.

- **ripe-428**:

A proposal is usually submitted via the Chair of the relevant RIPE working group. If the proposer[iii] is not certain which working group is appropriate for discussion of the proposal, they can send the proposal to the RIPE Chair at policy-proposal@ripe.net.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710**:

A proposal is discussed publicly in the relevant RIPE Working Group (WG). The proposal is usually submitted via the chair of that WG. If the proposer is not certain which WG is appropriate for discussion of the proposal, they can send the proposal to the RIPE Chair at policy-proposal@ripe.net. In some cases, a proposal may need more than one WG's input. In such cases, before the proposal is published, the relevant WG chairs will discuss the situation and decide the WG most suited to discussion of the proposal. Necessary announcements will be made to the other WG(s) so they can follow the discussions.

Process managed by relevant Chair

Administrative support by the RIPE NCC is covered earlier, [above](#).

- **ripe-350**: WG Chair to manage process
- **ripe-428**: Proposer to consult with WG Chair on whether to proceed to review
- **ripe-428**: Proposer to decide whether to proceed
- **ripe-428**: Proposer to communicate decision to WG Chair within time limit
- **ripe-428**: WG Chair may withdraw proposal for lack of timely communication
- **ripe-428**: Editorial changes
- **ripe-470**: Decision to proceed to review requires agreement of WG Chair
- **ripe-470**: Editorial changes
- **ripe-614**: WG Chair now responsible for calling final consensus
- **ripe-710**: WG Chair may extend Review Phase
- **ripe-710**: Editorial changes

Text

- **ripe-350**:

2.2 Discussion Phase.

[...]

The Working Group chair will set a limited time period for the discussion phase, not usually less than four weeks.

2.3 Review Phase

Following the conclusion of the discussion phase, the RIPE Working Group Chair determines whether the working group has reached consensus.

[...]

2.4 Concluding Phase

When the RIPE Working Group Chair determines that the working group has reached a consensus, s/he moves the proposal to a Last Call for Comments.

- **ripe-428**:

2.2 Discussion Phase

[...]

The working group chair will set a limited time period for the discussion phase, which is usually not less than four weeks.

At the end of the Discussion Phase, the proposer, in consultation with the working group chair, should decide if the proposal will move to the next phase (Review Phase). This should be done no more than four weeks after the end of the Discussion Phase. If the proposer does not communicate this decision to the working group chair within four weeks, the working group chair can withdraw the proposal due to a lack of response from the proposer.

[...]

2.3 Review Phase

[...]

At the end of the Review Phase, the working group chair determines whether the working group has reached consensus.

[...]

If the working group chair determines that the working group has reached consensus at the end of the Review Phase, the Chair moves the proposal to a Last Call for Comments.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-500:**

2.2 Discussion Phase

[...]

Once a proposal is submitted [...]. The WG chair sets the period for the Discussion Phase and this is at least four weeks.

At the end of the Discussion Phase, the proposer, with the agreement of the WG chair, decides whether the proposal will move to the next phase (Review Phase) or if it should be withdrawn from the RIPE PDP, depending on the feedback received. This should be done no more than four weeks after the end of the Discussion Phase. If the proposer does not communicate this decision to the WG chair within four weeks, the WG chair can withdraw the proposal due to lack of response from the proposer.

[...]

If the suggested comments and changes are not so significant to require a new Discussion Phase, the proposer and WG chair can decide to move the proposal to the next phase (Review Phase) with a new version of the proposal incorporating the necessary edits.

[...]

2.3 Review Phase

[...]

At the end of the Review Phase, the WG chair determines whether the WG has reached rough consensus. If the WG chair decides that consensus has not been reached, then the WG chair can withdraw the proposal. Alternatively, the WG chair can send the proposal back to the Discussion Phase if the proposer is willing to continue to author the proposal and make the necessary changes to the proposal according to the feedback received from the community. The WG chair can also decide to have the draft RIPE Document edited and start a new Review Phase with a new version of the proposal.

2.4 Concluding Phase

If the WG chair determines that the WG has reached consensus at the end of the Review Phase, the WG chair moves the proposal to a "Last Call for Comments" and the Concluding Phase starts.

- **ripe-614 — ripe-710:**

The Concluding Phase is redefined, giving responsibility for the final consensus call to the WG Chair; previously, the WGCC was responsible for this call.

Text retained unchanged from the previous version is not repeated here.

2.4 Concluding Phase

If the WG chair determines that the WG has reached consensus at the end of the Review Phase, the WG chair moves the proposal to a “Last Call for Comments” and the Concluding Phase starts.

[...]

At the end of the Last Call period, the WG chair will evaluate the feedback received during this period and decide whether consensus has been achieved. If there is no feedback from the community at this stage, this is likely to be regarded as consensus and it will mean the previous call of rough consensus from the WG chair at the end of the Review Phase still holds.

If consensus has been achieved, the RIPE NCC will announce the decision of the WG chair and, if necessary, implement the policy.

If consensus has not been achieved, the WG chair can decide to either withdraw the proposal or send it back to one of the previous phases. The proposer (or anyone else) is free to return the proposal to the WG for further discussion after a withdrawal.

- **ripe-710:**

The Review Phase is redefined to allow this phase to be extended.

Text retained unchanged from the previous version is not repeated here.

2.3 Review Phase

[...]

At the end of the Review Phase, the WG chair determines whether the WG has reached rough consensus. If the WG chair decides that consensus has not been reached, then the WG chair can withdraw the proposal. Alternatively, the WG chair can:

- a. Send the proposal back to the Discussion Phase if the proposer is willing to continue to author the proposal and make the necessary changes to the proposal according to the feedback received from the community.
- b. Decide to have the draft RIPE Document edited and start a new Review Phase with a new version of the proposal.
- c. If not enough community input was received, extend the Review Phase for a maximum of four additional weeks.

[...]

Process detail for discussion phase

- **ripe-350:** New proposal to be announced on dedicated mailing list
- **ripe-350:** Any amendment to be published, with changes highlighted
- **ripe-428:** Requirement to send new proposal to relevant WG mailing list
- **ripe-428:** Multiple iterations of Discussion Phase may occur
- **ripe-428:** Draft RIPE Document to be prepared within four weeks
- **ripe-470:** Requirement to send new proposal to relevant WG list removed
- **ripe-470:** New version of proposal for each iteration of Discussion Phase
- **ripe-470:** Each version of proposal to be archived for transparent history
- **ripe-470:** Requirements clarified for draft RIPE Document

Text

- **ripe-350:**

2.2 Discussion Phase.

Once a proposal has been submitted it will be announced on a dedicated mailing list to which anybody can subscribe: <policy-announce@ripe.net>. This announcement will also indicate where discussion on this proposal will take place. Usually this will be the relevant working group mailing list.

Where discussion leads to an amendment of a proposal, an amended proposal will be published highlighting the changes. If there is significant comment and change suggested there may be multiple iterations of this process. Each published revision of a proposal will contain a history of changes to document this process.

- **ripe-428:**

2.2 Discussion Phase

Once a proposal has been submitted, it will be announced on the Policy Announce Mailing List (policy-announce@ripe.net), which anybody can subscribe to. This announcement will also indicate where discussion on this proposal will take place, usually the relevant working group mailing list. The proposal will also be sent to the relevant working group mailing list.

If significant comments or changes are suggested, there may be multiple iterations of this phase. Each published revision of a proposal will contain a history of changes to document this process.

[...]

If the proposer decides to take the proposal to the next phase (Review Phase), the draft RIPE Document should be prepared within four weeks.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

2.2 Discussion Phase

Once a proposal is submitted, it is announced on the Policy Announce Mailing List (policy-announce@ripe.net), which anyone can subscribe to. This announcement also indicates where discussion on the proposal will take place. This is usually sent to the relevant WG mailing list.

[...]

If significant comments or changes are suggested during the Discussion Phase, the proposer will edit the proposal and the new version of the proposal will be published. A new Discussion Phase will then start for the new version of the proposal.

[...]

Each version of the proposal is publicly archived to transparently show the history of changes to the proposal.

If the proposer decides to take the proposal to the next phase, the draft RIPE Document should be prepared within four weeks. A policy proposal can result in the modification of an existing RIPE Document or can result in publication of a completely new RIPE Document. If the proposal is a modification of an existing policy or it is a new policy that needs to be documented in an existing RIPE Document, then a draft RIPE Document clearly pointing to the changes to the existing document will be published. If the proposal requires a completely new RIPE Document to be published, the draft should be produced before the proposal can be moved to the Review Phase.

Process detail for review phase

- **ripe-350:** Alternatives to review: withdrawal or new round of discussion
- **ripe-350:** Time period for review phase: no more than four weeks
- **ripe-428:** Text added, setting out purpose of Review Phase
- **ripe-428:** Editorial changes
- **ripe-470:** Explanation of purpose extended
- **ripe-500:** Reference to Impact Analysis added to explanation of purpose

Text

- **ripe-350:**

2.3 Review Phase

Following the conclusion of the discussion phase, [...]. If consensus has not been reached, then the proposer may decide to withdraw the proposal. Alternatively, a new round of discussion and documentation may occur.

The review phase will have a limited time period, but not more than four weeks.

- **ripe-428:**

2.3 Review Phase

The purpose of this phase is to review the draft RIPE Document compiled at the end of the Discussion Phase. During the Review Phase, discussion of the proposal can continue while also focusing on the draft RIPE Document.

At the end of the Review Phase, [...]. If consensus has not been reached, then the proposer may decide to withdraw the proposal. Alternatively, the proposal may return to the Discussion Phase, which can result in new documentation.

The Review Phase should last for a maximum of four weeks.

- **ripe-470:**

2.3 Review Phase

The purpose of the Review phase is to review the full draft RIPE Document compiled at the end of the Discussion Phase so that the final documentation the proposal will lead to and all modifications made to that document are transparent to the community. During the Review Phase, discussion of the proposal can continue and within the context of the proposal, further modifications can still be suggested regarding the draft RIPE Document. The Review Phase should last for a maximum of four weeks.

- **ripe-500 — ripe-710:**

2.3 Review Phase

The purpose of the Review phase is to review the full draft RIPE Document compiled at the end of the Discussion Phase so that the final documentation the proposal will lead to and all modifications made to that document are transparent to the community. During the Review Phase, discussion of the proposal can continue, also in the light of the impact analysis that is published at the beginning of this phase, and within the context of the proposal, further modifications can still be suggested regarding the draft RIPE Document. The Review Phase should last for a maximum of four weeks.

Process detail for concluding phase

TBD: list with very short summary descriptions

- **ripe-350:** Concluding Phase comprises Last Call and decision on consensus
- **ripe-350:** Duration specified for Last Call period
- **ripe-350:** Working group chairs together to make final decision on consensus
- **ripe-350:** RIPE NCC responsible for announcement and implementation
- **ripe-350:** Proposal may be returned to WG for further discussion
- **ripe-428:** Clarified: mailing lists where announcement is to be made
- **ripe-428:** Suggestions for final changes, objections allowed
- **ripe-428:** Editorial changes
- **ripe-470:** Text added to set out purpose of Last Call period
- **ripe-470:** Editorial changes
- **ripe-614:** Chair of relevant WG to make final decision on consensus

Text

- **ripe-350:**

2.4 Concluding Phase

When the RIPE Working Group Chair determines that the working group has reached a consensus, s/he moves the proposal to a Last Call for Comments. The Last Call announcement is posted to the working group mailing list, the Last Call announcements mailing list and Chairs of all working groups. At the end of the

Last Call period, the working group chairs will decide together whether a consensus has been achieved.

The last call period will last four weeks.

If a consensus has been achieved, the RIPE NCC will announce the decision of the RIPE Working Group Chairs and implement the policy, if needed.

If consensus has not been achieved the proposer (or anyone else) is free to return the proposal to the working group for further discussion.

- **ripe-428:**

- 2.4 Concluding Phase

- If the working group chair determines that the working group has reached consensus at the end of the Review Phase, the Chair moves the proposal to a Last Call for Comments. The Last Call announcement is posted to the working group mailing list and to the Policy Announce Mailing List (policy-announce@ripe.net). Suggestions for any final changes or objections to the proposal can be sent to the working group mailing list during this phase.

- The Last Call period lasts four weeks.

- At the end of the Last Call period, the RIPE working group chairs will decide as a group whether consensus has been achieved. If there is no feedback from the community at this stage, this will likely be regarded as consensus.

- If consensus has been achieved, the RIPE NCC will announce the decision of the RIPE working group chairs and, if necessary, implement the policy.

- If consensus has not been achieved, the proposer (or anyone else) is free to return the proposal to the working group for further discussion.

- **ripe-470 — ripe-500:**

- 2.4 Concluding Phase

- If the WG chair determines that the WG has reached consensus at the end of the Review Phase, the WG chair moves the proposal to a “Last Call for Comments” and the Concluding Phase starts. The Last Call period lasts four weeks. The Last Call announcement is also posted to the WG mailing list and to the Policy Announce Mailing List (policy- announce@ripe.net).

- The purpose of this Last Call period is to provide the community with a final opportunity to comment on the proposal. This is mainly intended for those who missed the previous two phases and want to oppose the proposal. It gives time to the community after the relevant WG chair declares rough consensus at the end of the Review Phase so that suggestions for any final changes or objections to the proposal can be sent to the WG mailing list. At this stage, objections need to be justified just as in the other phases for them to be taken into account.

- At the end of the Last Call period, all RIPE WG chairs as a group will evaluate the feedback received during this period and decide whether consensus has been achieved. If there is no feedback from the community at this stage, this is likely to be regarded as consensus and it will mean the previous call of rough consensus from the relevant WG chair at the end of the Review Phase still holds.

- If consensus has been achieved, the RIPE NCC will announce the decision of the RIPE WG chairs and, if necessary, implement the policy.

- If consensus has not been achieved, the RIPE WG chairs can decide to either withdraw the proposal or send it back to one of the previous phases. The proposer (or anyone else) is free to return the proposal to the WG for further discussion.

- **ripe-614 — ripe-710:**

- 2.4 Concluding Phase

- If the WG chair determines that the WG has reached consensus at the end of the Review Phase, the WG chair moves the proposal to a “Last Call for Comments” and the Concluding Phase starts. The Last Call period lasts four weeks. The Last Call announcement is also posted to the WG mailing list and to the Policy Announce Mailing List (policy-announce@ripe.net).

The purpose of this Last Call period is to provide the community with a final opportunity to comment on the proposal. This is mainly intended for those who missed the previous two phases and want to oppose the proposal. It gives time to the community after the relevant WG chair declares rough consensus at the end of the Review Phase so that suggestions for any final changes or objections to the proposal can be sent to the WG mailing list. At this stage, objections need to be justified just as in the other phases for them to be taken into account.

At the end of the Last Call period, the WG chair will evaluate the feedback received during this period and decide whether consensus has been achieved. If there is no feedback from the community at this stage, this is likely to be regarded as consensus and it will mean the previous call of rough consensus from the WG chair at the end of the Review Phase still holds.

If consensus has been achieved, the RIPE NCC will announce the decision of the WG chair and, if necessary, implement the policy.

If consensus has not been achieved, the WG chair can decide to either withdraw the proposal or send it back to one of the previous phases. The proposer (or anyone else) is free to return the proposal to the WG for further discussion after a withdrawal.

Dispute resolution and appeal procedure

- **ripe-428**: procedure defined in [Appendix C](#)
- **ripe-500**: [Appendix C](#): not materially different from previous editions
- **ripe-614**: [Sections 3 and 4](#): new definition of procedure, simplified, rephrased considerably and moved inline: **section-specific URLs not available**
- **ripe-710**: [Sections 3 and 4](#): latest edition: not materially different from previous edition: **section-specific URLs not available**

The text is too long to cite verbatim. Extracts are cited below for analysis of specific provisions.

Terminology: Appealable Action

- **ripe-428**: defined in introduction to Appendix C
- **ripe-614**: rephrased considerably and moved inline

Text

- **ripe-428** (Appendix C: Introduction) — **ripe-500**:

In each of the situations described in Section 3 of this appendix, the action being appealed is the decision to declare consensus or lack of consensus. One cannot appeal the merits of the policy proposal itself or its technical, political or legal grounds.

- **ripe-614** — **ripe-710**:

3.1 Discussion Phase

During the Discussion Phase, anyone who has a complaint or other concern about the policy proposal or how it is being handled in the WG should first raise the matter with the chair of that WG. If the dispute cannot be resolved with the WG chair, the Appeals Procedure can be invoked.

3.2 Review & Concluding Phases

At these stages of the process – i.e. after the WG chair has declared initial consensus or the proposal is in Last Call – complaints should not be about the policy proposal itself unless there are exceptional extenuating circumstances.

Anyone who believes that the proposal has not been handled correctly or that the WG chair has made an incorrect determination of consensus should first raise the matter with the WG chair. If the dispute cannot be resolved with the WG chair, the Appeals Procedure can be invoked.

Terminology: WG Chairs' Collective (WGCC)

- **ripe-350**: term not yet defined: phrase “*Chairs of all working groups*” is used
- **ripe-428**: term defined, along with contrasting “*Working Group Chair(s)*”

- **ripe-470**: scope of WGCC definition restricted to this document
- **ripe-614**: **WGCC definition removed, but use of term retained**

A separate RIPE document entitled [RIPE WG Chair Collective - Definition and Tasks](#) was published in November 2020.

The [RIPE Working Group Chair Job Description and Procedures][ripe-692] (Nov 2017) and its [previous version][ripe-542] (Dec 2011) refer to the collective role of the RIPE WG Chairs in the Policy Development process, without defining the term.

Text

- **ripe-428**:

2.1 Working Group Chairs Collective

The term “working group chairs collective” refers to the chairs and co- chairs of all current RIPE working groups, not including the current RIPE Chair .

2.2 Working Group Chair(s)

The term “working group chair(s)” refers to the current chair and co- chairs of a working group.

- **ripe-470 – ripe-500**:

2.1 Working Group Chairs Collective

For the purpose of this document, the term “working group chairs collective” refers to the chairs and co-chairs of all current RIPE Working Groups, not including the current RIPE Chair.

2.2 Working Group Chair(s)

For the purpose of this document, the term “working group chair(s)” refers to the current chair and co-chairs of a working group.

Observation and recommendation

It is convenient to define the Working Group Chairs’ Collective (WGCC) in a dedicated document, as this allows the WGCC to be given other roles in addition to its function as an appeal board in the RIPE Policy Development Process. However, for the purposes of this process, the exclusion of the current RIPE Chair from the WGCC seems strongly desirable whenever the WGCC has to make a decision which may later be appealed to the RIPE Chair.

It is recommended to consider updating the definition of the Policy Development Process so that the current RIPE Chair is again explicitly excluded from the WGCC in such a situation.

Appeal to WGCC of WG Chair decision

- **ripe-428**: Decision by WG Chair after Discussion or Review Phase appealable to WGCC
- **ripe-614**: Decision by WG Chair after all phases uniformly appealable to WGCC

Ripe-428 provided for a decision on consensus by the WG Chair only at the end of the Discussion and Review Phases. The decision on consensus at the end of the Concluding Phase was to be made by the WGCC.

Ripe-614 transferred responsibility for the decision on consensus at the end of the Concluding Phase to the WG Chair, and provided for this decision to be appealable to the WGCC.

Text

- **ripe-428**:

The same initial stage of the appeal procedure is defined for both phases where an appeal to the WGCC is allowed.

3.1 Discussion Phase

[...]

If the dispute cannot be resolved with the working group chair(s), the matter shall be brought to the attention of the working group chairs collective, which will vote for or against upholding the decision made by the working-group chair(s). The relevant working group chairs shall recuse themselves from any related discussion within the working group chairs collective.

3.2 Review Phase

[above text is repeated]

For the **Discussion Phase only**, the decision of the WGCC on appeal was defined as final.

3.1 Discussion Phase

[...]

The decision by the working group chairs collective shall be final in relation to the appeal. However, the matter can always be brought back to the working group for consideration.

- **ripe-614 — ripe-710:**

A uniform, two-stage appeal process replaces the earlier definition

If a grievance cannot be resolved with the chair of the WG the matter can be brought to the attention of the Working Group Chairs Collective (WGCC). Anyone may submit an appeal. This must be submitted to the relevant WG mailing list(s) and to the Policy Announce Mailing List (policy-announce@ripe.net). The appeal will also be published by the RIPE NCC at appropriate locations on the RIPE web site. Any appeal should include a detailed and specific description of the issues and clearly explain why the appeal was submitted. An appeal must be submitted no later than four weeks after the appealable action has occurred.

Appeal: recusal of relevant WG Chairs

- **ripe-428:** explicit recusal of relevant WG Chairs
- **ripe-614:** implicit recusal of relevant WG Chairs among “interested parties”

Text

- **ripe-428:**

If the dispute cannot be resolved with the working group chair(s), the matter shall be brought to the attention of the working group chairs collective, which will vote for or against upholding the decision made by the working-group chair(s). The relevant working group chairs shall recuse themselves from any related discussion within the working group chairs collective.

- **ripe-614 — ripe-710:**

The WGCC will decide by consensus whether to uphold or reject appeals which have been submitted. The decision of the WGCC should be reached no later than four weeks of an appeal being made. Interested parties shall recuse themselves from any discussion or decision within the WGCC relating to the appeal.

Observation and recommendation

Experience with operation of the appeal process, although so far limited to a single case, has made it clear that simply requiring “interested parties” to recuse themselves leaves doubt as to how broad the scope of this requirement is. In particular, doubt has arisen as to whether its scope includes respectively

- the chairs of the relevant RIPE working group, and/or
- anyone who has already participated in discussion on the proposal.

It is recommended to consider updating the definition of the Policy Development Process by inserting a non-exhaustive list of categories of individuals who must be considered to have an obligation to recuse themselves from taking part in the appellate function of the WGCC.

Final appeal to RIPE Chair of WGCC decision

- **ripe-428**: Decision by WGCC after Review or Concluding Phase appealable to RIPE Chair
- **ripe-428**: Decision of RIPE Chair on appeal to be final
- **ripe-614**: Decision by WGCC after any phase appealable to RIPE Chair

Ripe-428 provided for any appeal from a decision of the WGCC to be decided by the RIPE Chair, with no further appeal. Such an appealable decision would be either a decision on initial appeal (as mentioned above) or, prior to ripe-614, determination of consensus at the end of the Concluding Phase.

Text

- **ripe-428**:

3.2 Review Phase

[...]

If the dispute cannot be resolved by the decision of the working group chairs collective, the issue should be brought to the RIPE Chair. The decision of the RIPE Chair will be final

3.3 Concluding Phase

If a community member believes that the working group chairs collective has erred in their judgement regarding consensus in the concluding phase last call, she or he should bring the issue first to the attention of the RIPE Chair. The decision of the RIPE Chair will be final.

- **ripe-614**:

In this edition of the PDP, the appeal procedure was made uniform for all phases of the process.

If the dispute cannot be resolved by the decision of the WGCC, the issue should be brought to the RIPE Chair. The decision of the RIPE Chair will be final.

Appendix A: Process flow diagram

- **ripe-350**: [diagram introduced](#)
- **ripe-428**: [re-captioned](#)
- **ripe-470**: [redrawn for clarity](#)
- **ripe-500**: [rescaled](#)

Content:

The text and graphic content of Appendix A simply illustrates material already reviewed; it is cited by reference above, rather than included in line.

Appendix B: Standard Template

- **ripe-350**: template introduced
- **ripe-428**: editorial change to heading
- **ripe-470**: options changed for item 8 (Policy term)
- **ripe-470**: editorial change for item 10a

Text:

- **ripe-350**:

[TEMPLATE Appendix B]

1. Number (assigned by the RIPE NCC)
2. Policy Proposal Name:
3. Author
 - a. name:
 - b. e-mail:
 - c. organisation:
4. Proposal Version:
5. Submission Date:
6. Suggested RIPE WG for discussion and publication:
7. Proposal type:
 - a. new, modify, or delete.

8. Policy term:
 - a. temporary, permanent, or renewable.
9. Summary of proposal
10. Policy text
 - a. Current (if modify):
 - b. New:
11. Rationale:
 - a. Arguments supporting the proposal
 - b. Arguments opposing the proposal

- **ripe-428:**

Except for a new heading, the text of Appendix B from ripe-350 was retained.

Appendix B: Policy Proposal Template

1. Number (assigned by the RIPE NCC)
[...]

- **ripe-470 — ripe-710:**

Appendix B: Policy Proposal Template

1. Number (assigned by the RIPE NCC)
 2. Policy Proposal Name:
 3. Author Details
 - a. name:
 - b. email:
 - c. organisation:
 4. Proposal Version (assigned by the RIPE NCC):
 5. Submission Date:
 6. Suggested RIPE WG for discussion and publication:
 7. Proposal Type:
 - a. new, modification or deletion
 8. Policy Term:
 - a. Temporary (time period)
 - b. Indefinite
 9. Summary of Proposal
 10. Policy Text
 - a. Current Policy Text (if modification):
 - b. New Policy Text:
 11. Rationale:
 - a. Arguments supporting the proposal
 - b. Arguments opposing the proposal
-