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## RFC 9280

# RFC Editor Model (Version 3)

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### Abstract

This document specifies version 3 of the RFC Editor Model. The model defines two high-level tasks related to the RFC Series. First, policy definition is the joint responsibility of the RFC Series Working Group (RSWG), which produces policy proposals, and the RFC Series Approval Board (RSAB), which approves such proposals. Second, policy implementation is primarily the responsibility of the RFC Production Center (RPC) as contractually overseen by the IETF Administration Limited Liability Company (IETF LLC). In addition, various responsibilities of the RFC Editor function are now performed alone or in combination by the RSWG, RSAB, RPC, RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE), and IETF LLC. Finally, this document establishes the Editorial Stream for publication of future policy definition documents produced through the processes defined herein.

This document obsoletes RFC 8728. This document updates RFCs 7841, 8729, and 8730.

### Status of This Memo

This document is not an Internet Standards Track specification; it is published for informational purposes.

This document is a product of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB) and represents information that the IAB has deemed valuable to provide for permanent record. It represents the consensus of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB). Documents approved for publication by the IAB are not candidates for any level of Internet Standard; see Section 2 of RFC 7841.

Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at <https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc9280>.

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# 1. Introduction

The Request for Comments (RFC) Series is the archival series dedicated to documenting Internet technical specifications, including general contributions from the Internet research and engineering community as well as standards documents. RFCs are available free of charge to anyone via the Internet. As described in [\[RFC8700\]](#), RFCs have been published continually since 1969.

RFCs are generated and approved by multiple document streams. Whereas the stream approving body [\[RFC8729\]](#) for each stream is responsible for the content of that stream, the RFC Editor function is responsible for the production and distribution of all RFCs. The four existing streams are described in [\[RFC8729\]](#). This document adds a fifth stream, the Editorial Stream, for publication of policies governing the RFC Series as a whole.

The overall framework for the RFC Series and the RFC Editor function is described in [\[RFC8729\]](#) and is updated by this document, which defines version 3 of the RFC Editor Model. Under this version, various responsibilities of the RFC Editor function are performed alone or in combination by the RFC Series Working Group (RSWG), RFC Series Advisory Board (RSAB), RFC Production Center (RPC), RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE), and IETF Administration Limited Liability Company (IETF LLC) [\[RFC8711\]](#), which collectively comprise the RFC Editor function. The intent is to ensure sustainable maintenance and support of the RFC Series based on the principles of expert implementation, clear management and direction, and appropriate community input [\[RFC8729\]](#).

This document obsoletes [\[RFC8728\]](#) by defining version 3 of the RFC Editor Model. This document updates [\[RFC7841\]](#) by defining boilerplate text for the Editorial Stream. This document updates [\[RFC8729\]](#) by replacing the RFC Editor role with the RSWG, RSAB, and RSCE. This document updates [\[RFC8730\]](#) by removing the dependency on certain policies specified by the IAB and RFC Series Editor (RSE). More detailed information about changes from version 2 of the RFC Editor Model can be found in [Section 9](#).

## 2. Overview of the Model

This document divides the responsibilities for the RFC Series into two high-level tasks:

1. Policy definition governing the RFC Series as a whole. This is the joint responsibility of two entities. First, the RFC Series Working Group (RSWG) is an open working group independent of the IETF that generates policy proposals. Second, the RFC Series Approval Board (RSAB) is an appointed body that approves such proposals for publication in the Editorial Stream. The RSAB includes representatives of the streams [[RFC8729](#)] as well as an expert in technical publishing, the RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE).
2. Policy implementation through publication of RFCs in all of the streams that form the RFC Series. This is primarily the responsibility of the RFC Production Center (RPC) as contractually overseen by the IETF Administration Limited Liability Company (IETF LLC) [[RFC8711](#)].

As described more fully in the remainder of this document, the core activities and responsibilities are as follows:

- The RSWG proposes policies that govern the RFC Series as a whole, with input from the community, the RSAB, and the RSCE.
- The RSAB considers those proposals and either approves them or returns them to the RSWG, which may make further changes or remove them from further consideration.
- If approved, such proposals are published as RFCs in the Editorial Stream and thus define the policies to be followed by the RSWG, RSAB, RSCE, and RPC.
- The RSCE provides expert advice to the RPC and RSAB on how to implement established policies on an ongoing and operational basis, which can include raising issues or initiating proposed policy changes within the RSWG.
- The RPC implements the policies defined by the Editorial Stream in its day-to-day editing and publication of RFCs from all of the streams.
- If issues arise with the implementation of particular policies, the RPC brings those issues to the RSAB, which interprets the policies and provides interim guidance to the RPC, informing the RSWG of those interpretations.

This model is designed to ensure public processes and policy documents, clear lines of responsibility and authority, transparent mechanisms for updates and changes to policies governing the RFC Series as a whole, and effective operational implementation of the RFC Series, thus meeting the requirements specified in [Section 4](#) of [[RFC8729](#)].

The remainder of this document describes the model in greater detail.

## 3. Policy Definition

Policies governing the RFC Series as a whole are defined through the following high-level process:

1. Proposals must be submitted to, adopted by, and discussed within the RFC Series Working Group (RSWG).
2. Proposals must pass a Last Call for comments in the working group and a community call for comments (see [Section 3.2.3](#)).
3. Proposals must be approved by the RFC Series Approval Board (RSAB).

Policies under the purview of the RSWG and RSAB might include, but are not limited to, document formats, processes for publication and dissemination of RFCs, and overall management of the RFC Series.

### 3.1. Structure and Roles

#### 3.1.1. RFC Series Working Group (RSWG)

##### 3.1.1.1. Purpose

The RFC Series Working Group (RSWG) is the primary venue in which members of the community collaborate regarding the policies that govern the RFC Series.

##### 3.1.1.2. Participation

All interested individuals are welcome to participate in the RSWG; participants are subject to anti-harassment policies as described in [Section 3.2.5](#). This includes but is not limited to participants in the IETF and IRTF, members of the IAB and IESG, developers of software or hardware systems that implement RFCs, authors of RFCs and Internet-Drafts, developers of tools used to author or edit RFCs and Internet-Drafts, individuals who use RFCs in procurement decisions, scholarly researchers, and representatives of standards development organizations other than the IETF and IRTF. The IETF LLC Board members, staff and contractors (especially representatives of the RFC Production Center), and the IETF Executive Director are invited to participate as community members in the RSWG to the extent permitted by any relevant IETF LLC policies. Members of the RSAB are also expected to participate actively.

### 3.1.1.3. Chairs

The RSWG shall have two chairs, one appointed by the IESG and the other appointed by the IAB. When the RSWG is formed, the chair appointed by the IESG shall serve for a term of one (1) year and the chair appointed by the IAB shall serve for a term of two (2) years; thereafter, chairs shall serve for a term of two (2) years, with no term limits on renewal. The IESG and IAB shall determine their own processes for making these appointments, making sure to take account of any potential conflicts of interest. Community members who have concerns about the performance of an RSWG Chair should direct their feedback to the appropriate appointing body via mechanisms such bodies shall specify at the time that the RSWG is formed. The IESG and IAB shall have the power to remove their appointed chairs at their discretion at any time and to name a replacement who shall serve the remainder of the original chair's term.

It is the responsibility of the chairs to encourage rough consensus within the RSWG and to follow that consensus in their decision making, for instance, regarding acceptance of new proposals and advancement of proposals to the RSAB.

### 3.1.1.4. Mode of Operation

The intent is that the RSWG shall operate in a way similar to that of working groups in the IETF. Therefore, all RSWG meetings and discussion venues shall be open to all interested individuals, and all RSWG contributions shall be subject to intellectual property policies, which must be consistent with those of the IETF as specified in [\[BCP78\]](#) and [\[BCP79\]](#).

When the RSWG is formed, all discussions shall take place on an open email discussion list, which shall be publicly archived.

The RSWG is empowered to hold in-person, online-only, or hybrid meetings, which should be announced with sufficient notice to enable broad participation; the [IESG Guidance on Face-to-Face and Virtual Interim Meetings](#) provides a reasonable baseline. In-person meetings should include provision for effective online participation for those unable to attend in person.

The RSWG shall operate by rough consensus, a mode of operation informally described in [\[RFC2418\]](#).

The RSWG may decide by rough consensus to use additional tooling (e.g., GitHub as specified in [\[RFC8874\]](#)), forms of communication, and working methods (e.g., design teams) as long as they are consistent with this document and with [\[RFC2418\]](#) or its successors.

Absent specific guidance in this document regarding the operation of the RSWG, the general guidance provided in [Section 6](#) of [\[RFC2418\]](#) should be considered appropriate.

The IETF LLC is requested to provide necessary tooling to support RSWG communication, decision processes, and policies.

The IAB is requested to convene the RSWG when it is first formed in order to formalize the IAB's transfer of authority over the RFC Editor Model.

### 3.1.2. RFC Series Approval Board (RSAB)

#### 3.1.2.1. Purpose

The RFC Series Approval Board (RSAB), which includes representatives of all of the streams, shall act as the approving body for proposals generated within the RSWG, thus providing an appropriate set of checks and balances on the output of the RSWG. The only policy-making role of the RSAB is to review policy proposals generated by the RSWG; it shall have no independent authority to formulate policy on its own. It is expected that the RSAB will respect the rough consensus of the RSWG wherever possible, without ceding its responsibility to review RSWG proposals, as further described in [Section 3.2.2](#).

#### 3.1.2.2. Members

The RSAB consists primarily of the following voting members:

- A stream representative for the IETF Stream: either an IESG member or someone appointed by the IESG
- A stream representative for the IAB Stream: either an IAB member or someone appointed by the IAB
- A stream representative for the IRTF Stream: either the IRTF Chair or someone appointed by the IRTF Chair
- A stream representative for the Independent Stream: either the Independent Submissions Editor (ISE) [[RFC8730](#)] or someone appointed by the ISE
- The RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE)

If and when a new stream is created, the document that creates the stream shall specify if a voting member representing that stream shall also be added to the RSAB, along with any rules and processes related to that representative (e.g., whether the representative is a member of the body responsible for the stream or an appointed delegate thereof).

The RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE) is a voting member of the RSAB but does not act as a representative of the Editorial Stream.

To ensure the smooth operation of the RFC Series, the RSAB shall include the following non-voting, ex officio members:

- The IETF Executive Director or their delegate (the rationale is that the IETF LLC is accountable for implementation of policies governing the RFC Series)
- A representative of the RPC, named by the RPC (the rationale is that the RPC is responsible for implementation of policies governing the RFC Series)

In addition, the RSAB may include other non-voting members at its discretion; these non-voting members may be ex officio members or liaisons from groups or organizations with which the RSAB deems it necessary to formally collaborate or coordinate.



### 3.1.2.3. Appointment and Removal of Voting Members

The appointing bodies (i.e., IESG, IAB, IRTF Chair, and ISE) shall determine their own processes for appointing RSAB members (note that processes related to the RSCE are described in [Section 5](#)). Each appointing body shall have the power to remove its appointed RSAB member at its discretion at any time. Appointing bodies should ensure that voting members are seated at all times and should fill any vacancies with all due speed, if necessary on a temporary basis.

In the case that the IRTF Chair or ISE is incapacitated or otherwise unable to appoint another person to serve as a delegate, the IAB (as the appointing body for the IRTF Chair and ISE) shall act as the temporary appointing body for those streams and shall appoint a temporary member of the RSAB until the IAB has appointed an IRTF Chair or ISE, who can then act as an RSAB member or appoint a delegate through normal processes.

### 3.1.2.4. Vacancies

In the case of vacancies by voting members, the RSAB shall operate as follows:

- Activities related to implementation of policies already in force shall continue as normal.
- Voting on approval of policy documents produced by the RSWG shall be delayed until the vacancy or vacancies have been filled, up to a maximum of three (3) months. If a further vacancy arises during this three-month period, the delay should be extended by up to another three months. After the delay period expires, the RSAB should continue to process documents as described below. Note that this method of handling vacancies does not apply to a vacancy of the RSCE role; it only applies to vacancies of the stream representatives enumerated in [Section 3.1.2.2](#).

### 3.1.2.5. Chair

The RSAB shall annually choose a chair from among its members using a method of its choosing. If the chair position is vacated during the chair's term, the RSAB chooses a new chair from among its members.

### 3.1.2.6. Mode of Operation

The RSAB is expected to operate via an email discussion list, in-person meetings, teleconferencing systems, and any additional tooling it deems necessary.

The RSAB shall keep a public record of its proceedings, including minutes of all meetings and a record of all decisions. The primary email discussion list used by the RSAB shall be publicly archived, although topics that require confidentiality (e.g., personnel matters) may be omitted from such archives or discussed in private. Similarly, meeting minutes may exclude detailed information about topics discussed under executive session but should note that such topics were discussed.

The RSAB shall announce plans and agendas for their meetings on the RFC Editor website and by email to the RSWG at least a week before such meetings. The meetings shall be open for public attendance, and the RSAB may consider allowing open participation. If the RSAB needs to discuss

a confidential matter in executive session, that part of the meeting shall be private to the RSAB, but it must be noted on the agenda and documented in the minutes with as much detail as confidentiality requirements permit.

The IETF LLC is requested to provide necessary tooling and staff to support RSAB communication, decision processes, and policies.

The IAB is requested to convene the RSAB when it is first formed in order to formalize the IAB's transfer of authority over the RFC Editor Model.

## 3.2. Process

This section specifies the RFC Series Policy Definition Process, which shall be followed in producing all Editorial Stream RFCs.

### 3.2.1. Intent

The intent is to provide an open forum by which policies related to the RFC Series are defined and evolved. The general expectation is that all interested parties will participate in the RSWG and that only under extreme circumstances should RSAB members need to hold CONCERN positions (as described in [Section 3.2.2](#)).

Because policy issues can be difficult and contentious, RSWG participants and RSAB members are strongly encouraged to work together in a spirit of good faith and mutual understanding to achieve rough consensus (see [\[RFC2418\]](#)). In particular, RSWG members are encouraged to take RSAB concerns seriously, and RSAB members are encouraged to clearly express their concerns early in the process and to be responsive to the community. All parties are encouraged to respect the value of each stream and the long-term health and viability of the RFC Series.

This process is intended to be one of continuous consultation. RSAB members should consult with their constituent stakeholders (e.g., authors, editors, tool developers, and consumers of RFCs) on an ongoing basis, so that when the time comes to consider the approval of a proposal, there should be no surprises. Appointing bodies are expected to establish whatever processes they deem appropriate to facilitate this goal.

### 3.2.2. Workflow

The following process shall be used to formulate or modify policies related to the RFC Series:

1. An individual or set of individuals generates a proposal in the form of an Internet-Draft (which must be submitted in full conformance with the provisions of [\[BCP78\]](#) and [\[BCP79\]](#)) and asks the RSWG to adopt the proposal as a working group item.
2. The RSWG may adopt the proposal as a working group item if the chairs determine (by following working group procedures for rough consensus) that there is sufficient interest in the proposal; this is similar to the way a working group of the IETF would operate (see [\[RFC2418\]](#)).
3. The RSWG shall then further discuss and develop the proposal. All participants, but especially RSAB members, should pay special attention to any aspects of the proposal that have the

potential to significantly modify long-standing policies or historical characteristics of the RFC Series as described in [Section 7](#). Members of the RSAB are expected to participate as individuals in all discussions relating to RSWG proposals. This should help to ensure that they are fully aware of proposals early in the RFC Series Policy Definition Process. It should also help to ensure that RSAB members will raise any issues or concerns during the development of the proposal and not wait until the RSAB review period. The RSWG Chairs are also expected to participate as individuals.

4. At some point, if the RSWG Chairs believe there may be rough consensus for the proposal to advance, they will issue a Last Call for comments within the working group.
5. After a comment period of suitable length, the RSWG Chairs will determine whether rough consensus for the proposal exists (taking their own feedback as individuals into account along with feedback from other participants). If comments have been received and substantial changes have been made, additional Last Calls may be necessary. Once the chairs determine that consensus has been reached, they shall announce their determination on the RSWG email discussion list and forward the document to the RSAB.
6. Once consensus is established in the RSWG, the RSAB shall issue a community call for comments as further described in [Section 3.2.3](#). If substantial comments are received in response to the community call for comments, the RSAB may return the proposal to the RSWG to consider those comments and make revisions to address the feedback received. In parallel with the community call for comments, the RSAB itself shall also consider the proposal.
7. If the scope of the revisions made in the previous step is substantial, an additional community call for comments should be issued by the RSAB, and the feedback received should be considered by the RSWG.
8. Once the RSWG Chairs confirm that concerns received during the community call(s) for comments have been addressed, they shall inform the RSAB that the document is ready for balloting by the RSAB.
9. Within a reasonable period of time, the RSAB will poll its members for their positions on the proposal. Positions may be as follows:
  - YES: the proposal should be approved
  - CONCERN: the proposal raises substantial concerns that must be addressed
  - RECUSE: the person holding the position has a conflict of interest

Any RSAB member holding a CONCERN position must explain their concern to the community in detail. Nevertheless, the RSWG might not be able to come to consensus on modifications that will address the RSAB member's concern.

There are three reasons why an RSAB member may file a position of CONCERN:

- The RSAB member believes that the proposal represents a serious problem for one or more of the individual streams.
- The RSAB member believes that the proposal would cause serious harm to the overall RFC Series, including harm to the long-term health and viability of the Series.

- The RSAB member believes, based on the results of the community call(s) for comments ([Section 3.2.3](#)), that rough consensus to advance the proposal is lacking.

Because RSAB members are expected to participate in the discussions within the RSWG and to raise any concerns and issues during those discussions, most CONCERN positions should not come as a surprise to the RSWG. Notwithstanding, late CONCERN positions are always possible if issues are identified during RSAB review or the community call(s) for comments.

10. If a CONCERN exists, discussion will take place within the RSWG. Again, all RSAB members are expected to participate. If substantial changes are made in order to address CONCERN positions, an additional community call for comments might be needed.
11. A proposal without any CONCERN positions is approved.
12. If, after a suitable period of time, any CONCERN positions remain, a vote of the RSAB is taken. If at least three voting members vote YES, the proposal is approved.
13. If the proposal is not approved, it is returned to the RSWG. The RSWG can then consider making further changes.
14. If the proposal is approved, a notification is sent to the community, and the document enters the queue for publication as an RFC within the Editorial Stream.
15. Policies may take effect immediately upon approval by the RSAB and before publication of the relevant RFC, unless they are delayed while the IETF LLC resolves pending resource or contract issues.

### 3.2.3. Community Calls for Comment

The RSAB is responsible for initiating and managing community calls for comments on proposals that have gained consensus within the RSWG. The RSAB should actively seek a wide range of input. The RSAB seeks such input by, at a minimum, sending a notice to the [rfc-interest@rfc-editor.org](mailto:rfc-interest@rfc-editor.org) email discussion list or to its successor or future equivalent. RSAB members should also send a notice to the communities they directly represent (e.g., the IETF and IRTF). Notices are also to be made available and archived on the RFC Editor website. In addition, other communication channels can be established for notices (e.g., via an RSS feed or by posting to social media venues).

In cases where a proposal has the potential to significantly modify long-standing policies or historical characteristics of the RFC Series as described in [Section 7](#), the RSAB should take extra care to reach out to a very wide range of communities that make use of RFCs (as described in [Section 3.1.1.2](#)) since such communities might not be actively engaged in the RSWG directly. The RSAB should work with the stream approving bodies and the IETF LLC to identify and establish contacts in such communities, assisted by the RSCE in particular.

The RSAB should maintain a public list of communities that are contacted during calls for comments.

A notice of a community call for comments contains the following:

- A subject line beginning with 'Call for Comments:'
- A clear, concise summary of the proposal

- A URL pointing to the Internet-Draft that defines the proposal
- Any explanations or questions for the community that the RSAB deems necessary (using their usual decision-making procedures)
- Clear instructions on how to provide public comments
- A deadline for comments

A comment period will last not less than two weeks and should be longer if wide outreach is required. Comments will be publicly archived on the RFC Editor website.

The RSAB is responsible for considering comments received during a community call for comments. If RSAB members conclude that such comments raise important issues that need to be addressed, they should do so by discussing those issues within the RSWG or (if the issues meet the criteria specified in [Step 9](#) of [Section 3.2.2](#)) lodging a position of CONCERN during RSAB balloting.

#### **3.2.4. Appeals**

Appeals of RSWG Chair decisions shall be made to the RSAB. Decisions of the RSWG Chairs can be appealed only on grounds of failure to follow the correct process. Appeals should be made within thirty (30) days of any action or, in the case of failure to act, of notice having been given to the RSWG Chairs. The RSAB will then decide if the process was followed and will direct the RSWG Chairs as to what procedural actions are required.

Decisions of the RSAB can be appealed on grounds of failure to follow the correct process. In addition, if the RSAB makes a decision in order to resolve a disagreement between authors and the RPC (as described in [Section 4.4](#)), appeals can be filed on the basis that the RSAB misinterpreted an approved policy. Aside from these two cases, disagreements about the conduct of the RSAB are not subject to appeal. Appeals of RSAB decisions shall be made to the IAB and should be made within thirty (30) days of public notice of the relevant RSAB decision (typically, when minutes are posted). The IAB shall decide whether a process failure occurred and what (if any) corrective action should take place.

#### **3.2.5. Anti-Harassment Policy**

The [IETF anti-harassment policy](#) also applies to the RSWG and RSAB, which strive to create and maintain an environment in which people of many different backgrounds are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. Participants are expected to behave according to professional standards and to demonstrate appropriate workplace behavior. For further information about these policies, see [[RFC7154](#)], [[RFC7776](#)], and [[RFC8716](#)].

#### **3.2.6. RFC Boilerplates**

RFC boilerplates (see [[RFC7841](#)]) are part of the RFC Style Guide, as defined in [Section 4.2](#). New or modified boilerplates considered under version 3 of the RFC Editor Model must be approved by the following parties, each of which has a separate area of responsibility with respect to boilerplates:

- The applicable stream, which approves that the boilerplate meets its needs

- The RSAB, which approves that the boilerplate is not in conflict with the boilerplate used in the other streams
- The RPC, which approves that the language of the boilerplate is consistent with the RFC Style Guide
- The IETF Trust, which approves that the boilerplate correctly states the Trust's position regarding rights and ownership

## 4. Policy Implementation

### 4.1. Roles and Processes

Publication of RFCs is handled by the RFC Production Center (RPC).

A few general considerations apply:

- The general roles and responsibilities of the RPC are defined by RFCs published in the Editorial Stream (i.e., not directly by the RSWG, RSAB, or RSCE), by existing RFCs that apply to the RPC and have not yet been superseded by Editorial Stream RFCs, and by the requisite contracts.
- The RPC is advised by the RSCE and RSAB, and it has a duty to consult with them under specific circumstances, such as those relating to disagreements between authors and the RPC as described in [Section 4.4](#).
- The RPC is overseen by the IETF LLC to ensure that it performs in accordance with contracts in place.

All matters of budget, timetable, and impact on its performance targets are between the RPC and IETF LLC.

The RPC shall regularly provide reports to the IETF LLC, RSAB, RSWG, and broader community regarding its activities and any key risks or issues affecting it.

In the event that the RPC is required to make a decision without consultation that would normally deserve consultation, or makes a decision against the advice of the RSAB, the RPC must notify the RSAB.

This document does not specify the exact relationship between the IETF LLC and the RPC; for example, the work of the RPC could be performed by a separate corporate entity under contract to the IETF LLC, it could be performed by employees of the IETF LLC, or the IETF LLC could engage with independent contractors for some or all aspects of such work. The exact relationship is a matter for the IETF LLC to determine.

The IETF LLC is responsible for the method and management of the engagement of the RPC. Therefore, the IETF LLC has authority over negotiating performance targets for the RPC and also has responsibility for ensuring that those targets are met. Such performance targets are set based on the RPC's publication load and additional efforts required to implement policies specified in Editorial Stream RFCs, in existing RFCs that apply to the RPC and have not yet been superseded by

Editorial Stream RFCs, and in the requisite contracts. The IETF LLC may consult with the community regarding these targets. The IETF LLC is empowered to appoint a manager or to convene a committee to complete these activities.

If individuals or groups within the community have concerns about the performance of the RPC, they can request that the matter be investigated by the IETF LLC Board, the IETF Executive Director, or a point of contact designated by the IETF LLC Board. Even if the IETF LLC opts to delegate this activity, concerns should be raised with the IETF LLC. The IETF LLC is ultimately answerable to the community via the mechanisms outlined in [\[RFC8711\]](#).

## 4.2. Working Practices

In the absence of a high-level policy documented in an RFC or in the interest of specifying the detail of its implementation of such policies, the RPC can document working practices regarding the editorial preparation, final publication, and dissemination of RFCs. Examples include:

- Maintenance of a style guide that defines editorial standards for RFCs; specifically, the RFC Style Guide consists of [\[RFC7322\]](#) and the other documents and resources listed at [\[STYLEGUIDE\]](#).
- Instructions regarding the file formats that are accepted as input to the editing and publication process.
- Guidelines regarding the final structure and layout of published documents. In the context of the XML vocabulary [\[RFC7991\]](#), such guidelines could include clarifications regarding the preferred XML elements and attributes used to capture the semantic content of RFCs.

## 4.3. RPC Responsibilities

The core responsibility of the RPC is the implementation of RFC Series policies through publication of RFCs (including the dimensions of document quality, timeliness of publication, and accessibility of results), while taking into account issues raised by the community through the RSWG and by the stream approving bodies. More specifically, the RPC's responsibilities at the time of writing include the following:

1. Editing documents originating from all RFC streams to ensure that they are consistent with the editorial standards specified in the RFC Style Guide.
2. Creating and preserving records of edits performed on documents.
3. Identifying where editorial changes might have technical impact and seeking necessary clarification.
4. Establishing the publication readiness of each document through communication with the authors, IANA, or stream-specific contacts, supplemented if needed by the RSAB and RSCE.
5. Creating and preserving records of dialogue with document authors.
6. Requesting advice from the RSAB and RSCE as needed.
7. Providing suggestions to the RSAB and RSCE as needed.

8. Participating within the RSWG in the creation of new Editorial Stream RFCs that impact the RPC, specifically with respect to any challenges the RPC might foresee with regard to implementation of proposed policies.
9. Identifying topics and issues while processing documents or carrying out other responsibilities on this list for which they lack sufficient expertise, and identifying and conferring with relevant experts as needed.
10. Providing reports to the community on its performance and plans.
11. Consulting with the community on its plans.
12. Negotiating its specific plans and resources with the IETF LLC.
13. Providing sufficient resources to support reviews of RPC performance by the IETF LLC.
14. Coordinating with IANA to ensure that RFCs accurately document registration processes and assigned values for IANA registries.
15. Assigning RFC numbers.
16. Liaising with stream approving bodies and other representatives of the streams as needed.
17. Publishing RFCs, which includes:
  - posting copies to the RFC Editor site both individually and in collections
  - depositing copies with external archives
  - creating catalogs and catalog entries
  - announcing the publication to interested parties
18. Providing online access to RFCs.
19. Providing an online system to facilitate the submission, management, and display of errata to RFCs.
20. Maintaining the RFC Editor website.
21. Providing for the backup of RFCs.
22. Ensuring the storage and preservation of records.
23. Authenticating RFCs for legal proceedings.

#### **4.4. Resolution of Disagreements between Authors and the RPC**

During the process of editorial preparation and publication, disagreements can arise between the authors of an RFC-to-be and the RPC. Where an existing policy clearly applies, typically such disagreements are handled in a straightforward manner through direct consultation between the authors and the RPC, sometimes in collaboration with stream-specific contacts.

However, if it is unclear whether an existing policy applies or if it is unclear how to interpret an existing policy, the parties may need to consult with additional individuals or bodies (e.g., RSAB, IESG, IRSG, or stream approving bodies) to help achieve a resolution. The following points are intended to provide more specific guidance.

- If there is a conflict with a policy for a particular stream, to help achieve a resolution, the RPC should consult with the relevant stream approving body (such as the IESG or IRSG) and other representatives of the relevant stream as appropriate.



- If there is a conflict with a cross-stream policy, the RPC should consult with the RSAB to achieve a resolution.
- The disagreement might raise a new issue that is not covered by an existing policy or that cannot be resolved through consultation between the RPC and other relevant individuals and bodies, as described above. In this case, the RSAB is responsible for (a) resolving the disagreement in a timely manner if necessary so that the relevant stream document(s) can be published before a new policy is defined and (b) bringing the issue to the RSWG so that a new policy can be defined.

#### **4.5. Point of Contact**

From time to time, individuals or organizations external to the IETF and the broader RFC Series community may have questions about the RFC Series. Such inquiries should be directed to the [rfc-editor@rfc-editor.org](mailto:rfc-editor@rfc-editor.org) email alias or to its successor or future equivalent and then handled by the appropriate bodies (e.g., RSAB and RPC) or individuals (e.g., RSWG Chairs and RSCE).

#### **4.6. Administrative Implementation**

The exact implementation of the administrative and contractual activities described here are a responsibility of the IETF LLC. This section provides general guidance regarding several aspects of such activities.

##### **4.6.1. Vendor Selection for the RPC**

Vendor selection is done in cooperation with the streams and under the final authority of the IETF LLC.

The IETF LLC develops the work definition (the Statement of Work) for the RPC and manages the vendor-selection process. The work definition is created within the IETF LLC budget and takes into account the RPC responsibilities (as described in [Section 4.3](#)), the needs of the streams, and community input.

The process to select and contract for the RPC and other RFC-related services is as follows:

- The IETF LLC establishes the contract process, including the steps necessary to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) when necessary, the timing, and the contracting procedures.
- The IETF LLC establishes a selection committee, which will consist of the IETF Executive Director and other members selected by the IETF LLC in consultation with the stream approving bodies. The committee shall select a chair from among its members.
- The selection committee selects the vendor, subject to the successful negotiation of a contract approved by the IETF LLC. In the event that a contract cannot be signed, the matter shall be referred to the selection committee for further action.

##### **4.6.2. Budget**

Most expenses discussed in this document are not new expenses. They have been and remain part of the IETF LLC budget.

The RFC Series portion of the IETF LLC budget shall include funding to support the RSCE, the RFC Production Center, and the Independent Stream.

The IETF LLC has the responsibility to approve the total RFC Editor budget (and the authority to deny it). All relevant parties must work within the IETF LLC budgetary process.

## 5. RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE)

The RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE) is a senior technical publishing professional who will apply their deep knowledge of technical publishing processes to the RFC Series.

The primary responsibilities of the RSCE are as follows:

- Serve as a voting member on the RSAB
- Identify problems with the RFC publication process and opportunities for improvement
- Provide expert advice within the RSWG regarding policy proposals
- Provide expert advice to the RPC and IETF LLC

Matters on which the RSCE might provide guidance could include the following (see also [Section 4](#) of [[RFC8729](#)]):

- Editing, processing, and publication of RFCs
- Publication formats for the RFC Series
- Changes to the RFC Style Guide
- Series-wide guidelines regarding document content and quality
- Web presence for the RFC Series
- Copyright matters related to the RFC Series
- Archiving, indexing, and accessibility of RFCs

The IETF LLC is responsible for the method and management of the engagement of the RSCE, including selection, evaluation, and the timely filling of any vacancy. Therefore, whether the RSCE role is structured as a contractual or employee relationship is a matter for the IETF LLC to determine.

### 5.1. RSCE Selection

Responsibility for making a recommendation to the IETF LLC regarding the RSCE role will lie with a selection committee. The IETF LLC should propose an initial slate of members for this committee, making sure to include community members with diverse perspectives, and consult with the stream representatives regarding the final membership of the committee. In making its recommendation for the role of RSCE, the selection committee will take into account the definition of the role as well as any other information that the committee deems necessary or helpful in making its decision. The IETF LLC is responsible for contracting or employment of the RSCE.

## 5.2. RSCE Performance Evaluation

Periodically, the IETF LLC will evaluate the performance of the RSCE, including a call for confidential input from the community. The IETF LLC will produce a draft evaluation of the RSCE's performance for review by RSAB members (other than the RSCE), who will provide feedback to the IETF LLC.

## 5.3. Temporary RSCE Appointment

In the case that the currently appointed RSCE is expected to be unavailable for an extended period, the IETF LLC may appoint a Temporary RSCE through whatever recruitment process it considers appropriate. A Temporary RSCE acts as the RSCE in all aspects during their term of appointment.

## 5.4. Conflict of Interest

The RSCE is expected to avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest or judgment in performing their role. To ensure this, the RSCE will be subject to a conflict-of-interest policy established by the IETF LLC.

The RPC service provider may contract services from the RSCE service provider, and vice versa, including services provided to the IETF LLC. All contracts between the two must be disclosed to the IETF LLC. Where those services are related to services provided to the IETF LLC, IETF LLC policies shall apply, including publication of relevant parts of the contract.

## 6. Editorial Stream

This document creates the Editorial Stream as a separate space for publication of policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and related information regarding the RFC Series as a whole.

The Editorial Stream shall be used only to specify and update policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and related information regarding the RFC Series as a whole; no other use of the Editorial Stream is authorized by this memo, and no other streams are so authorized. This policy may be changed only by agreement of the IAB, IESG, and IETF LLC.

All documents produced by the RSWG and approved by the RSAB shall be published as RFCs in the Editorial Stream with a status of Informational. (Note that the Editorial Stream is not authorized to publish RFCs that are Standards Track or Best Current Practice, since such RFCs are reserved for the IETF Stream [RFC8729].) Notwithstanding the status of Informational, it should be understood that documents published in the Editorial Stream define policies for the RFC Series as a whole.

The requirements and process for creating any additional RFC streams are outside the scope of this document.

## 6.1. Procedures Request of the IETF Trust

The IAB requests that the IETF Trust and its Trustees assist in meeting the goals and procedures set forth in this document.

The Trustees are requested to publicly confirm their willingness and ability to accept responsibility for the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for the Editorial Stream.

Specifically, the Trustees are asked to develop the necessary boilerplate to enable the suitable marking of documents so that the IETF Trust receives the rights as specified in [BCP78]. These procedures need to also allow authors to indicate either no rights to make derivative works or, preferentially, the right to make unlimited derivative works from the documents. It is left to the Trust to specify exactly how this shall be clearly indicated in each document.

## 6.2. Patent and Trademark Rules for the Editorial Stream

As specified above, contributors of documents for the Editorial Stream are expected to use the IETF Internet-Draft process, complying therein with the rules specified in [BCP9]. This includes the disclosure of patent and trademark issues that are known, or can be reasonably expected to be known, to the contributor.

Disclosure of license terms for patents is also requested, as specified in [BCP79]. The Editorial Stream has chosen to use the [IETF's IPR disclosure mechanism](#) for this purpose. The IAB would prefer that the most liberal terms possible be made available for Editorial Stream documents. Terms that do not require fees or licensing are preferable. Non-discriminatory terms are strongly preferred over those that discriminate among users. However, although disclosure is required and the RSWG and the RSAB may consider disclosures and terms in making a decision as to whether to submit a document for publication, there are no specific requirements on the licensing terms for intellectual property related to Editorial Stream publication.

## 6.3. Editorial Stream Boilerplate

This document specifies the following text for the "Status of This Memo" section of RFCs published in the Editorial Stream. Any changes to this boilerplate must be made through the RFC Series Policy Definition Process specified in [Section 3](#) of this document.

Because all Editorial Stream RFCs have a status of Informational, the first paragraph of the "Status of This Memo" section shall be as specified in [Appendix A.2.1](#) of [RFC7841].

The second paragraph of the "Status of This Memo" section shall be as follows:

This document is a product of the RFC Series Policy Definition Process. It represents the consensus of the RFC Series Working Group approved by the RFC Series Approval Board. Such documents are not candidates for any level of Internet Standard; see Section 2 of RFC 7841.

The third paragraph of the "Status of This Memo" section shall be as specified in [Section 3.5](#) of [RFC7841].

## 7. Historical Properties of the RFC Series

This section lists some of the properties that have been historically regarded as important to the RFC Series. Proposals that affect these properties are possible within the processes defined in this document. As described in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, proposals that might have a detrimental effect on these properties should receive heightened scrutiny during RSWG discussion and RSAB review. The purpose of this scrutiny is to ensure that all changes are deliberate and that the consequences of a proposal, as far as they can be identified, have been carefully considered.

### 7.1. Availability

Documents in the RFC Series have been available for many decades, with no restrictions on access or distribution.

### 7.2. Accessibility

RFC Series documents have been published in a format that was intended to be as accessible as possible to people with disabilities, e.g., people with impaired sight.

### 7.3. Language

All existing RFC Series documents have been published in English. However, since the beginning of the RFC Series, documents have been published under terms that explicitly allow translation into languages other than English without asking for permission.

### 7.4. Diversity

The RFC Series has included many types of documents including standards for the Internet, procedural and informational documents, thought experiments, speculative ideas, research papers, histories, humor, and even eulogies.

### 7.5. Quality

RFC Series documents have been reviewed for subject matter quality and edited by professionals with a goal of ensuring that documents are clear, consistent, and readable [RFC7322].

### 7.6. Stability

Once published, RFC Series documents are not changed.

### 7.7. Longevity

RFC Series documents have been published in a form intended to be comprehensible to humans for decades or longer.

## 8. Updates to This Document

Updates, amendments, and refinements to this document can be produced using the process documented herein but shall be published and operative only after (a) obtaining the agreement of the IAB and the IESG and (b) ensuring that the IETF LLC has no objections regarding its ability to implement any proposed changes.

## 9. Changes from Version 2 of the RFC Editor Model

The processes and organizational models for publication of RFCs have changed significantly over the years. Most recently, in 2009, [RFC5620] defined the RFC Editor Model (Version 1), and in 2012, [RFC6635] defined the RFC Editor Model (Version 2), which was then modified slightly in 2020 by [RFC8728].

However, the community experienced several problems with versions 1 and 2, including a lack of transparency, a lack of avenues for community input into policy definition, and unclear lines of authority and responsibility.

To address these problems, in 2020, the IAB formed the RFC Editor Future Development Program to conduct a community discussion and consensus process for the further evolution of the RFC Editor Model. Under the auspices of this Program, the community considered changes that would increase transparency and community input regarding the definition of policies for the RFC Series as a whole, while at the same time ensuring the continuity of the RFC Series, maintaining the quality and timely publication of RFCs, ensuring document accessibility, and clarifying lines of authority and responsibility.

This document is the result of discussion within the Program and describes version 3 of the RFC Editor Model while remaining consistent with [RFC8729].

The following sections describe the changes from version 2 in more detail.

### 9.1. RFC Editor Function

Several responsibilities previously assigned to the RFC Editor or, more precisely, the RFC Editor function, are now performed by the RSWG, RSAB, RPC, RSCE, and IETF LLC (alone or in combination). These include various aspects of strategic leadership (Section 2.1.1 of [RFC8728]), representation of the RFC Series (Section 2.1.2 of [RFC8728]), development of RFC production and publication (Section 2.1.3 of [RFC8728]), development of the RFC Series (Section 2.1.4 of [RFC8728]), operational oversight (Section 3.3 of [RFC8729]), policy oversight (Section 3.4 of [RFC8729]), the editing, processing, and publication of documents (Section 4.2 of [RFC8729]), and development and maintenance of guidelines and rules that apply to the RFC Series (Section 4.4 of [RFC8729]). Among other things, this changes the dependency on the RFC Series Editor (RSE) included in Section 2.2 of [RFC8730] with regard to "coordinating work and conforming to general RFC Series policies as specified by the IAB and RSE." In addition, various details regarding these responsibilities have been modified to accord with the framework defined in this document.

## 9.2. RFC Series Editor

Implied by the changes outlined in the previous section, the responsibilities of the RFC Series Editor (RSE) as a person or role (contrasted with the overall RFC Editor function) are now split or shared among the RSWG, RSAB, RSCE, RPC, and IETF LLC (alone or in combination). More specifically, the responsibilities of the RFC Series Consulting Editor (RSCE) under version 3 of the RFC Editor Model differ in many ways from the responsibilities of the RFC Series Editor under version 2 of the RFC Editor Model. In general, references in existing documents to the RSE can be taken as referring to the RFC Editor function as described herein but should not be taken as referring to the RSCE.

## 9.3. RFC Publisher

In practice, the RFC Production Center (RPC) and RFC Publisher roles have been performed by the same entity, and this practice is expected to continue; therefore, this document dispenses with the distinction between these roles and refers only to the RPC.

## 9.4. IAB

Under earlier versions of the RFC Editor Model, the IAB was responsible for oversight of the RFC Series and acted as a body for final conflict resolution regarding the RFC Series. The IAB's authority in these matters is described in the IAB Charter ([RFC2850], as updated by [RFC9283]). Under version 2 of the RFC Editor Model, the IAB delegated some of its authority to the RFC Series Oversight Committee (see [Section 9.5](#)). Under version 3 of the RFC Editor Model, authority for policy definition resides with the RSWG as an independent venue for work by members of the community (with approval of policy proposals being the responsibility of the RSAB, which represents the streams and includes the RSCE), whereas authority for policy implementation resides with the IETF LLC.

## 9.5. RFC Series Oversight Committee (RSOC)

In practice, the relationships and lines of authority and responsibility between the IAB, RSOC, and RSE have proved unwieldy and somewhat opaque. To overcome some of these issues, this document dispenses with the RSOC. References to the RSOC in documents such as [RFC8730] are obsolete because this document disbands the RSOC.

## 9.6. RFC Series Advisory Group (RSAG)

Version 1 of the RFC Editor Model [RFC5620] specified the existence of the RFC Series Advisory Group (RSAG), which was no longer specified in version 2 of the RFC Editor Model. For the avoidance of doubt, this document affirms that the RSAG has been disbanded. (The RSAG is not to be confused with the RFC Series Approval Board (RSAB), which this document establishes.)

## 9.7. Editorial Stream

This document creates the Editorial Stream in addition to the streams already described in [RFC8729].

## 10. Security Considerations

The same security considerations as those in [RFC8729] apply. The processes for the publication of documents must prevent the introduction of unapproved changes. Because multiple entities described in this document (most especially the RPC) participate in maintenance of the index of publications, sufficient security must be in place to prevent these published documents from being changed by external parties. The archive of RFC documents, any source documents needed to recreate the RFC documents, and any associated original documents (such as lists of errata, tools, and, for some early items, originals that are not machine-readable) need to be secured against data storage failure.

The IETF LLC (along with any other contracting or contracted entities) should take these security considerations into account during the implementation and enforcement of any relevant contracts.

## 11. IANA Considerations

The RPC is responsible for coordinating with the IANA to ensure that RFCs accurately document registration processes and assigned values for IANA registries.

The IETF LLC facilitates management of the relationship between the RPC and IANA.

This document does not create a new registry nor does it register any values in existing registries, and no IANA action is required.

## 12. References

### 12.1. Normative References

[BCP9] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", BCP 9, RFC 2026, October 1996.

Dusseault, L. and R. Sparks, "Guidance on Interoperation and Implementation Reports for Advancement to Draft Standard", BCP 9, RFC 5657, September 2009.

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Kolkman, O., Bradner, S., and S. Turner, "Characterization of Proposed Standards", BCP 9, RFC 7127, January 2014.

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Halpern, J., Ed. and E. Rescorla, Ed., "IETF Stream Documents Require IETF Rough Consensus", BCP 9, RFC 8789, June 2020.

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**[BCP78]** Bradner, S., Ed. and J. Contreras, Ed., "Rights Contributors Provide to the IETF Trust", BCP 78, RFC 5378, November 2008.

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**[RFC7841]** Halpern, J., Ed., Daigle, L., Ed., and O. Kolkman, Ed., "RFC Streams, Headers, and Boilerplates", RFC 7841, DOI 10.17487/RFC7841, May 2016, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7841>>.

**[RFC8716]** Resnick, P. and A. Farrel, "Update to the IETF Anti-Harassment Procedures for the Replacement of the IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) with the IETF Administration LLC", BCP 25, RFC 8716, DOI 10.17487/RFC8716, February 2020, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8716>>.

**[RFC8729]** Housley, R., Ed. and L. Daigle, Ed., "The RFC Series and RFC Editor", RFC 8729, DOI 10.17487/RFC8729, February 2020, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8729>>.

**[RFC8730]** Brownlee, N., Ed. and B. Hinden, Ed., "Independent Submission Editor Model", RFC 8730, DOI 10.17487/RFC8730, February 2020, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8730>>.

## 12.2. Informative References

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- [RFC2850] Internet Architecture Board and B. Carpenter, Ed., "Charter of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB)", BCP 39, RFC 2850, DOI 10.17487/RFC2850, May 2000, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2850>>.
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- [RFC8711] Haberman, B., Hall, J., and J. Livingood, "Structure of the IETF Administrative Support Activity, Version 2.0", BCP 101, RFC 8711, DOI 10.17487/RFC8711, February 2020, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8711>>.
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Internet Architecture Board members at the time this document was approved for publication were:

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