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Requiring Support for Appealing to the IESG and IAB
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Abstract

RFC2026 describes the procedure for appealing decisions or process failures to the IESG and the IAB. This document updates RFC2026 and requires that an appellant must first gain support for their appeal before an appeal may be considered by the body it is submitted to.

About This Document

This note is to be removed before publishing as an RFC.

The latest revision of this draft can be found at <https://larseggert.github.io/appeal-support/draft-eggert-appeal-support.html>. Status information for this document may be found at <https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-eggert-appeal-support/>.

Discussion of this document takes place on the PROCON Working Group mailing list (<mailto:procon@ietf.org>), which is archived at <https://mailarchive.ietf.org/arch/browse/procon/>. Subscribe at <https://www.ietf.org/mailman/listinfo/procon/>.

Source for this draft and an issue tracker can be found at <https://github.com/larseggert/appeal-support>.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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1. Introduction

Section 6.5 of [RFC2026] outlines how conflicts in the IETF should be resolved and describes how matters can be resolved by appealing decisions at IESG and IAB level. The appeal mechanism has proven to be an important mechanism for maintaining an open nature of the IETF standards process.

It has been argued that appeals put an asymmetric workload on the bodies that handle the appeal. It has also been argued that the appeals process has been abused to stall forward progress [MontrealPlenary].

Therefore, this document updates [RFC2026] in that an appellant **MUST** gain support for entering the appeals process from at least **three** active IETF participants ("supporters") for an appeal to be considered. This requirement reduces the likelihood that the appeals process will be abused by individuals while still maintaining an open and accessible process for conflict resolution.

Below we describe how this requirement is integrated in the process steps and what makes a supporter qualify.

2. Conventions and Definitions

This document uses the term "supporter". This is a person with an active IETF background (see Section 3). The supporter only supports that the matter at hand should be reviewed by the responsible board -- IESG or IAB. Their support for entering the appeals process should in no way be seen as (non-)support for (the view of) the appellant, but more for the fact that time of the responsible review boards is to be spent on the issue.

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

3. Qualified Supporters

Supporters are intended to have a reasonable IETF experience. They are supposed to be active participants that know the IETF community.

Therefore, qualified supporters **MUST** be NomCom-eligible under the criteria in Section 3 of [RFC9389], where "the day the call for NomCom volunteers is sent" in this context is the day the appeal is raised.

To keep the dispute resolution as open as possible, there are no further requirements on supporters, i.e., Section 4.15 of [RFC8713] does **not** apply to potential supporters. The group of potential supporters hence may include members of the IESG, the IAB, etc.

Qualified supporters **MUST NOT** have supported the same appellant during a previous appeal within the past year. Qualified supporters **MAY** have supported other appellants.

Appellants **MAY** act as a supporter for their own appeal when they meet the above criteria. As a result they can only self-support once.

4. Mechanics

Introducing the requirement for three supporters also introduces some additional mechanics in the process. The two normative changes to the process described in [RFC2026] are that

- * three supporters must have filed their support with the appeal-handling body at most two weeks after the appeal has been received by that body;
- * the appeal-handling body MAY choose to not consider the appeal if there are insufficient qualified supporters.

Note that the appeal-handling body MAY choose to consider an appeal even when there are insufficient qualified supporters.

It is the responsibility of the appellant to find qualified supporters. In order to find qualified supporters, the appellant MAY send a **single** message to **one** public IETF mailing list.

Supporters SHOULD send their supporting messages personally to the appeal-handling body in question and SHOULD NOT proxy their message through the appellant.

If an appellant escalates an appeal from the IESG to the IAB, that escalated appeal MUST find new qualified supporters.

5. Conclusions

The mechanism proposed herein only applies to appeals to the IESG and the IAB. It does not apply to other forms of dispute resolution.

6. Security Considerations

This document specifies neither a protocol nor an operational practice, and as such, it creates no new security considerations.

7. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA actions.

8. References

8.1. Normative References

- [RFC2026] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", BCP 9, RFC 2026, DOI 10.17487/RFC2026, October 1996, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc2026>>.

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- [RFC9389] Duke, M., "Nominating Committee Eligibility", BCP 10, RFC 9389, DOI 10.17487/RFC9389, April 2023, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc9389>>.

8.2. Informative References

- [I-D.kolkman-appeal-support]
Kolkman, O., "Requiring support for appealing to the IESG and IAB", Work in Progress, Internet-Draft, draft-kolkman-appeal-support-00, 12 October 2006, <<https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/html/draft-kolkman-appeal-support-00>>.
- [MontrealPlenary]
"Minutes of the IETF66 Thursday Technical Plenary", 13 July 2019, <<https://www.ietf.org/proceedings/66/plenaryt.html>>.

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