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Authors: O. Kolkman, Ed. J. Halpern, Ed. R. Hinden, Ed.
Internet Society Ericsson Check Point Software

RFC 8728

RFC Editor Model (Version 2)

Abstract

The RFC Editor model described in this document divides the responsibilities for the RFC Series into three functions: the RFC Series Editor, the RFC Production Center, and the RFC Publisher. Internet Architecture Board (IAB) oversight via the RFC Series Oversight Committee (RSOC) is described, as is the relationship between the IETF Administration Limited Liability Company and the RSOC. This document reflects the experience gained with "RFC Editor Model (Version 1)", documented in RFC 5620; and obsoletes RFC 6635 to replace all references to the IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA) and related structures with those defined by the IASA 2.0 Model.

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/rfc8728>.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. The RFC Editor Function
2. RFC Editor Model
 - 2.1. RFC Series Editor
 - 2.1.1. Strategic Leadership and Management of the Publication and Production Functions
 - 2.1.2. Representation of the RFC Series
 - 2.1.2.1. Representation to the IETF
 - 2.1.2.2. External Representation
 - 2.1.3. Development of RFC Production and Publication
 - 2.1.4. Development of the RFC Series
 - 2.1.5. Workload
 - 2.1.6. Qualifications
 - 2.1.7. Conflict of Interest
 - 2.2. RFC Production Center
 - 2.3. RFC Publisher
3. Committees
 - 3.1. RFC Series Oversight Committee (RSOC)
 - 3.1.1. RSOC Composition
4. Administrative Implementation
 - 4.1. Vendor Selection for the Production and Publisher Functions
 - 4.2. Budget
 - 4.3. Disagreements among Entities Related to the RFC Editor
 - 4.4. Issues with Contractual Impact
5. IANA Considerations
6. Security Considerations

[7. References](#)

[7.1. Normative References](#)

[7.2. Informative References](#)

[IAB Members at the Time of Approval](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Authors' Addresses](#)

1. Introduction

This document reflects the experience gained with "RFC Editor Model (Version 1)", documented in [RFC5620], and updates the RFC Editor Model (Version 2) to be aligned with the new IASA 2.0 Model [RFC8711] that creates the IETF Administration Limited Liability Company (IETF LLC) managed by a board of directors (IETF LLC Board). As part of the IASA 2.0 Model, the IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) is eliminated, and its oversight and advising functions transferred to the new IETF LLC. This document obsoletes [RFC6635] to replace all references to the IASA and related structures with those defined by the IASA 2.0 Model.

The IAB, on behalf of the Internet technical community, is concerned with ensuring the continuity of the RFC Series, orderly RFC Editor succession, RFC quality, and RFC document accessibility. The IAB is also sensitive to the concerns of the IETF LLC about providing the necessary services in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

The previous RFC Editor model [RFC5620] was first approved by the IAB in October 2008, and our understanding of the model has evolved with our experience since. During the implementation of version 1 of the model [RFC5620], it was quickly realized that the role of the RFC Series Editor (RSE) and the oversight responsibilities needed to be structured differently. In order to gain experience with "running code", a transitional RSE was hired who analyzed the managerial environment and provided recommendations. This was followed by the appointment of an acting RSE, who ably managed the series while work was undertaken to select and hire a permanent RSE. This version of the model is based on the recommendations of both temporary RFC Series Editors and the extensive discussion in the IETF community, on the rfc-interest list, and within the IAB.

This document, and the resulting structures, will be modified as needed through normal procedures. The RSE, and the IAB, through the RFC Series Oversight Committee (see [Section 3.1](#)), will continue to monitor discussions within the community about potential adjustments to the RFC Editor model and recognize that the process described in this document may need to be adjusted to align with any changes that result from such discussions; hence, the version number in the title.

The IAB maintains its responsibilities as defined in [RFC2850].

1.1. The RFC Editor Function

The RFC Series is described in [RFC8729]. Its Section 3.1 defines "RFC Editor":

Originally, there was a single person acting as editor of the RFC Series (the RFC Editor). The task has grown, and the work now requires the organized activity of several experts, so there are RFC Editors, or an RFC Editor organization. In time, there may be multiple organizations working together to undertake the work required by the RFC Series. For simplicity's sake, and without attempting to predict how the role might be subdivided among them, this document refers to this collection of experts and organizations as the "RFC Editor".

The RFC Editor is an expert technical editor and series editor, acting to support the mission of the RFC Series. As such, the RFC Editor is the implementer handling the editorial management of the RFC Series, in accordance with the defined processes. In addition, the RFC Editor is expected to be the expert and prime mover in discussions about policies for editing, publishing, and archiving RFCs.

RFC 8729 does not explore the internal organization of the RFC Editor. However, RFC 8729 envisions changes in the RFC Editor organizational structure. There have been several iterations on efforts to improve and clarify this structure. These have been led by the IAB, in consultation with the community and many leadership bodies within the community. This first resulted in the publication of [RFC5620] and then in further discussions leading to the publication of [RFC6635]. Some of the details on this evolution can be found below. In undertaking this evolution, the IAB considered changes that increase flexibility and operational support options, provide for the orderly succession of the RFC Editor, and ensure the continuity of the RFC Series, while maintaining RFC quality, maintaining timely processing, ensuring document accessibility, reducing costs, and increasing cost transparency. The model set forth below describes the internal organization of the RFC Editor, while remaining consistent with RFC 8729.

Note that RFC 8729 uses the term "RFC Editor function" or "RFC Editor" as the collective set of responsibilities for which this memo provides a model for internal organization. This memo defines the term "RFC Series Editor" or "Series Editor" for one of the organizational components.

2. RFC Editor Model

The RFC Editor model divides the responsibilities for the RFC Series into the following components:

- RFC Series Editor (RSE)
- RFC Production Center
- RFC Publisher

The structure and relationship of the components of the RFC Series production and process is schematically represented by Figure 1. The picture does not depict oversight and escalation relations. It does include the streams and their managers (which are not part of the RFC Series Editor, the RFC Production Center, or Publisher facilities) in order to more fully show the context in which the RFC Series Editor operates.

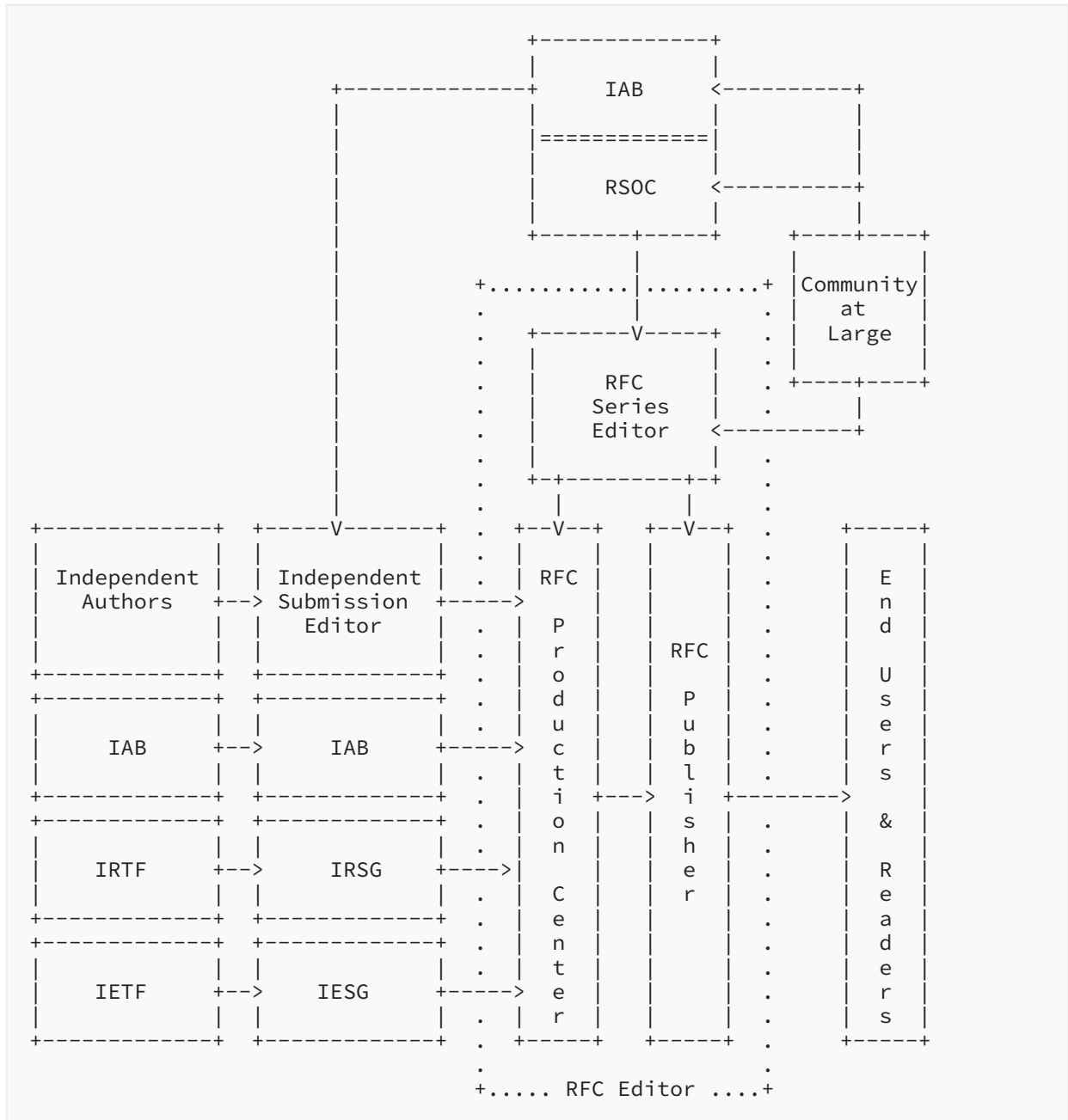


Figure 1: Structure of RFC Series Production and Process

In this model, documents are produced and approved through multiple document streams. The stream manager for each stream is responsible for the content of that stream. The four streams that now exist are described in [RFC8729]. The RFC Editor function is responsible for the packaging and distribution of the documents. As such, documents from these streams are edited and processed by the Production Center and published by the Publisher. The RFC Series Editor will exercise strategic leadership and management over the activities of the RFC Publisher and the RFC Production Center (both of which can be seen as back-office functions) and will be the entity that:

- Represents the RFC Series and the RFC Editor function within the IETF and externally.
- Leads the community in the design of improvements to the RFC Series.
- Is responsible for planning and seeing to the execution of improvements in the RFC Editor production and access processes.
- Is responsible for the content of the rfc-editor.org web site, which is operated and maintained by the RFC Publisher.
- Is responsible for developing consensus versions of vision and policy documents. These documents will be reviewed by the RFC Series Oversight Committee (Section 3.1) and subject to its approval before final publication.

These responsibilities are defined below, although the specific work items under them are a matter for the actual employment contract and its Statement of Work (SOW).

The IAB maintain its chartered responsibility as defined in [RFC2850]. More details on the oversight by the IAB via the RFC Series Oversight Committee (RSOC) can be found in Section 3.1. For example, the RSE does not have the direct authority to hire or fire RFC Editor contractors or personnel.

2.1. RFC Series Editor

The RFC Series Editor is the individual with overall responsibility for the quality, continuity, and evolution of the RFC Series.

The RSE is appointed by the IAB, but formally hired by the IETF LLC. The IAB delegates the direct oversight over the RSE to the RSOC, which it appoints.

The RSE is expected to cooperate closely with the IETF LLC and the stream managers.

2.1.1. Strategic Leadership and Management of the Publication and Production Functions

With respect to the RFC Publisher and Production Center functions, the RSE provides input to the IETF LLC budget, SOWs, and manages vendor selection processes. The RSE performs annual reviews of the RFC Production Center and Publisher function, which are then provided to the RSOC, the IETF LLC, and the community. Normally, private financial details would not be included in a public version unless the IETF LLC concludes it is necessary to make such information public.

The RSE is responsible for the performance of the RFC Production Center and Publisher. The RSE is responsible for issues that go beyond the RFC Production Center or Publisher functions, such as cross-stream coordination of priorities. Issues that require changes to the budget or contracts shall be brought to the attention of the IETF LLC by the RSE.

The RSE is also responsible for creating documentation and structures that will allow for continuity of the RFC Series in the face of changes in contracts and personnel.

Vendor selection for the RFC Production Center and Publisher functions is done in cooperation with the streams and under final authority of the IETF LLC. Details on this process can be found in [Section 4.1](#).

2.1.2. Representation of the RFC Series

The RSE is the primary representative of the RFC Series. This representation is important both internally, relative to the IETF, and externally.

2.1.2.1. Representation to the IETF

The RSE is the primary point of contact to the IETF on matters relating to the RFC Series in general, or policy matters relating to specific documents. Issues of practical details in the processing of specific documents are generally worked through directly with the RFC Production Center staff.

This includes providing suitable reports to the community at large, providing email contact for policy questions and inputs, and enabling and participating in suitable on-line forums for discussion of issues related to the RFC Series.

Due to the history and nature of the interaction between the RSE and the IETF, certain principles, described in the following subsections, must be understood and adhered to by the RSE in his or her interactions with the community. These apply to the representation function, as well as to the leadership the RSE provides for production and series development.

2.1.2.1.1. Volunteerism

The vast majority of Internet technical community work is led, initiated, and done by community volunteers, including oversight, policy making, and direct production of, for example, many software tools. The RSE, while not a volunteer, is dependent upon these volunteer participants. Also, the spirit of the community is heavily focused on and draws from these volunteers. As such, the RSE needs to support the vitality and effectiveness of volunteer participation.

2.1.2.1.2. Policy Authority

All decisions are to be made in the overall interest of the broader Internet community. The RSE is responsible for identifying materially concerned interest groups within the Internet community and reaching out to them. Those interest groups include at least the IETF community, the IRTF community, the network research community, and the network operations community. Other interest groups might also be materially interested.

The RSE must consult with the community on policy issues. The RSE works with the community to achieve policy that meets the overall quality, continuity, and evolution goals the RSE is charged with meeting. As described in [Section 3.1](#), the RSE reports the results of such interactions to the RSOC, including a description of the outreach efforts and the specific recommendations on policy. This enables the RSOC to provide the oversight the IAB is required to apply, as well as to confirm that the Internet community has been properly consulted and considered in making policy.

2.1.2.2. External Representation

From time to time, individuals or organizations external to the IETF need a contact person to talk to about the RFC Series. The RSE, or the RSE's designate, serves this role.

Over time, the RSE should determine what, if any, means should be employed to increase end-user awareness of the series, to reinforce the stature of the series, and to provide the contact point for outside parties seeking information on the series or the Editor.

2.1.3. Development of RFC Production and Publication

Closely related to providing strategic leadership and management to the RFC Production Center and Publisher functions is the need to develop and improve those functions. The RSE is responsible for ensuring that such ongoing development takes place.

This effort must include the dimensions of document quality, timeliness of production, and accessibility of results. It must also specifically take into account issues raised by the IETF community, including all the streams feeding into the RFC Editor function.

2.1.4. Development of the RFC Series

In order to develop the RFC Series, the RSE is expected to develop a relationship with the Internet technical community. The Editor is expected to engage with the Internet technical community in a process of articulating and refining a vision for the series and its continuous evolution. The RSE is also expected to engage other users of the RFC Series, in particular, the consumers of these documents, such as those people who use them to specify products, write code, test behaviors, or other related activities.

Concretely:

The RSE is responsible for the coordination of discussion on series evolution among the series' stream participants and the broader Internet technical community.

In time, the RSE is expected to develop and refine a vision for the RFC Series, including examining:

- The RFC Series, as it continues to evolve. The RSE is expected to take a broad view and look for the best ways to evolve the series for the benefit of the entire Internet community. As such, the RSE may even consider evolution beyond the historical 'by engineers for engineers' emphasis; and
- Its publication-technical environment, by looking at whether it should be slowly changing in terms of publishing and archiving techniques -- particularly to better serve the

communities that produce and depend on the RFC Series. For example, all of those communities have been slowly changing to include a significant population of multi-lingual individuals or non-native speakers of English. Another example is that some of these constituencies also have shifted to include significant groups whose primary focus is on the constraints and consequences of network engineering, rather than a primary interest in the engineering issues themselves.

For this type of responsibility, the RSE cooperates closely with the community, and operates under oversight of the RSOC: thus, ultimately, under oversight of the IAB.

2.1.5. Workload

On average, the job is expected to take half of a full-time equivalent position (FTE, thus approximately 20 hrs per week), with the workload per week nearing full time during IETF weeks. In addition, the job is expected to take more than 20 hours per week in the first few months of the engagement and when involved in special projects.

2.1.6. Qualifications

The RFC Series Editor is a senior technology professional. The following qualifications are desired:

1. Strategic leadership and management experience fulfilling the requirements outlined in this document, the many aspects of this role, and the coordination of the overall RFC Editor process.
2. Good understanding of the English language and technical terminology related to the Internet.
3. Good communication skills.
4. Experience with editorial processes.
5. Ability to develop strong understanding of the IETF and RFC process.
6. Independent worker.
7. Willingness to, and availability for, travel.
8. The ability to work effectively in a multi-actor and matrixed environment with divided authority and responsibility similar to that described in this document.
9. Experience with and ability to participate in, and manage, activities by email and teleconferences, not just face-to-face interactions.
10. Demonstrated experience in strategic planning and the management of entire operations.
11. Experience as an RFC author.

2.1.7. Conflict of Interest

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

2.2. RFC Production Center

The RFC Production Center function is performed by a paid contractor, and the contractor's responsibilities include the following:

1. Editing inputs from all RFC streams to comply with the RFC Style Manual, under the direction of the RSE;
2. Creating records of edits performed on documents;
3. Identifying where editorial changes might have technical impact and seeking necessary clarification;
4. Engaging in dialog with authors, document shepherds, IANA, and/or stream-dependent contacts when clarification is needed;
5. Creating records of dialog with document authors;
6. Requesting advice from the RFC Series Editor as needed;
7. Providing suggestions to the RFC Series Editor as needed;
8. Providing sufficient resources to support reviews of RFC Publisher performance by the RFC Series Editor and external reviews of the RFC Editor function initiated by the IAB or IETF LLC;
9. Coordinating with IANA to ensure correct documentation of IANA-performed protocol registry actions;
10. Assigning RFC numbers;
11. Establishing publication readiness of each document through communication with the authors, document shepherds, IANA, and/or stream-dependent contacts, and, if needed, with the RFC Series Editor;
12. Forwarding documents that are ready for publication to the RFC Publisher;
13. Forwarding records of edits and author dialog to the RFC Publisher so these can be preserved;
14. Liaising with the streams as needed.

All these activities will be done under the general direction, but not day-to-day management, of the RSE and need some level of coordination with various submission streams and the RSE.

The RFC Production Center contractor is to be selected through an IETF LLC Request for Proposal (RFP) process as described in [Section 4.1](#).

2.3. RFC Publisher

The RFC Publisher responsibilities include the following:

1. Announcing and providing on-line access to RFCs.
2. Providing an on-line system to submit RFC Errata.
3. Providing on-line access to approved RFC Errata.
4. Providing backups.

5. Providing storage and preservation of records.
6. Authenticating RFCs for legal proceedings.

All these activities will be done under the general direction, but not day-to-day management, of the RSE and need some level of coordination with various submission streams and the RSE.

The RFC Publisher contractor is to be selected through an IETF LLC RFP process as described in [Section 4.1](#).

3. Committees

3.1. RFC Series Oversight Committee (RSOC)

The IAB is responsible for the oversight of the RFC Series and acts as a body for final conflict resolution, including the process described in [Section 4.3](#).

In order to provide continuity over periods longer than the NomCom appointment cycle [[RFC8713](#)] and assure that oversight includes suitable subject matter expertise, the IAB will establish a group that implements oversight for the IAB, the RFC Series Oversight Committee (RSOC).

The RSOC will act with authority delegated from the IAB: in general, it will be the RSOC that will approve consensus policy and vision documents as developed by the RSE in collaboration with the community. While it is expected that the IAB will exercise due diligence in its supervision of the RSOC, the RSOC should be allowed the latitude to do its job without undue interference from the IAB. Therefore, it is expected that the IAB will accord RSOC reports and recommendations the benefit of the doubt.

For all decisions that affect the RSE individually (e.g., hiring and firing), the RSOC prepares recommendations for the IAB. The final recommendation to the IETF LLC is the responsibility of the IAB, after discussion with RSOC on the recommendations. For instance the RSOC would do the following:

- perform annual reviews of the RSE and report the result of these reviews to the IAB.
- manage RSE candidate selection and advise the IAB on candidate appointment (in other words, select the RSE subject to IAB approval).

RSOC members are expected to recognize potential conflicts of interest and behave accordingly.

For the actual recruitment and selection of the RSE, the RSOC will propose a budget for the search process. It will work with the IETF LLC to refine that budget and develop remuneration criteria and an employment agreement or contracting plans, as appropriate.

The RSOC will be responsible for ensuring that the RFC Series is run in a transparent and accountable manner.

The RSOC shall develop and publish its own rules of order.

The initial RSOC was charged with designing and executing a solicitation, search, and selection process for the first actual (not transitional or "acting") RSE appointment. That process involved iteration on this and related documents and evaluation of various strategies and options. During the creation of what became [RFC6635], it was expected that the RSOC would describe the process it ultimately selected to the community. The RSOC did involve the community in interim considerations when that was likely to be of value. Following completion of the selection process, the RSOC will determine the best way to share information learned and experience gained with the community and determine how to best preserve that information for future use.

3.1.1. RSOC Composition

The RSOC will operate under the authority of the IAB, with the IAB retaining final responsibility. The IAB will delegate authority and responsibility to the RSOC as appropriate and as RSOC and RSE relationships evolve. The RSOC will include people who are not current IAB members. Currently, this is aligned with the IAB program structure. The IAB will designate the membership of the RSOC with the following goals: preserving effective stability; keeping it small enough to be effective, and keeping it large enough to provide general Internet community expertise, specific IETF expertise, publication expertise, and stream expertise. Members serve at the pleasure of the IAB and are expected to bring a balance between short- and long-term perspectives. Specific input about, and recommendations of, members will be sought from the streams, the IETF LLC, and the RSE.

In addition to the members from outside of the IAB appointed to the RSOC, IAB members may participate as full members of the RSOC. Under most circumstances, there will be a specific individual IAB member appointed by the IAB as the program lead, who will be a full member of the RSOC. This member's role is distinct from any RSOC-internal organizational roles, such as would be created by the RSOC choosing to appoint a chair from among its members. Other IAB members may choose to be full members of the RSOC, with the consent of the IAB. This consent is primarily concerned with avoiding overpopulating the RSOC and providing it with relatively stable membership, which will work best if it is not too large a committee.

The IETF LLC will appoint an individual to serve as its liaison to the RSOC. The RSE and the IETF LLC Liaison will serve as non-voting ex officio members of the RSOC. Either or both can be excluded from its discussions if necessary.

4. Administrative Implementation

The exact implementation of the administrative and contractual activities described here are a responsibility of the IETF Administration Limited Liability Company [RFC8711] in cooperation with the RFC Series Editor. The authority structure is described in [Figure 2](#).

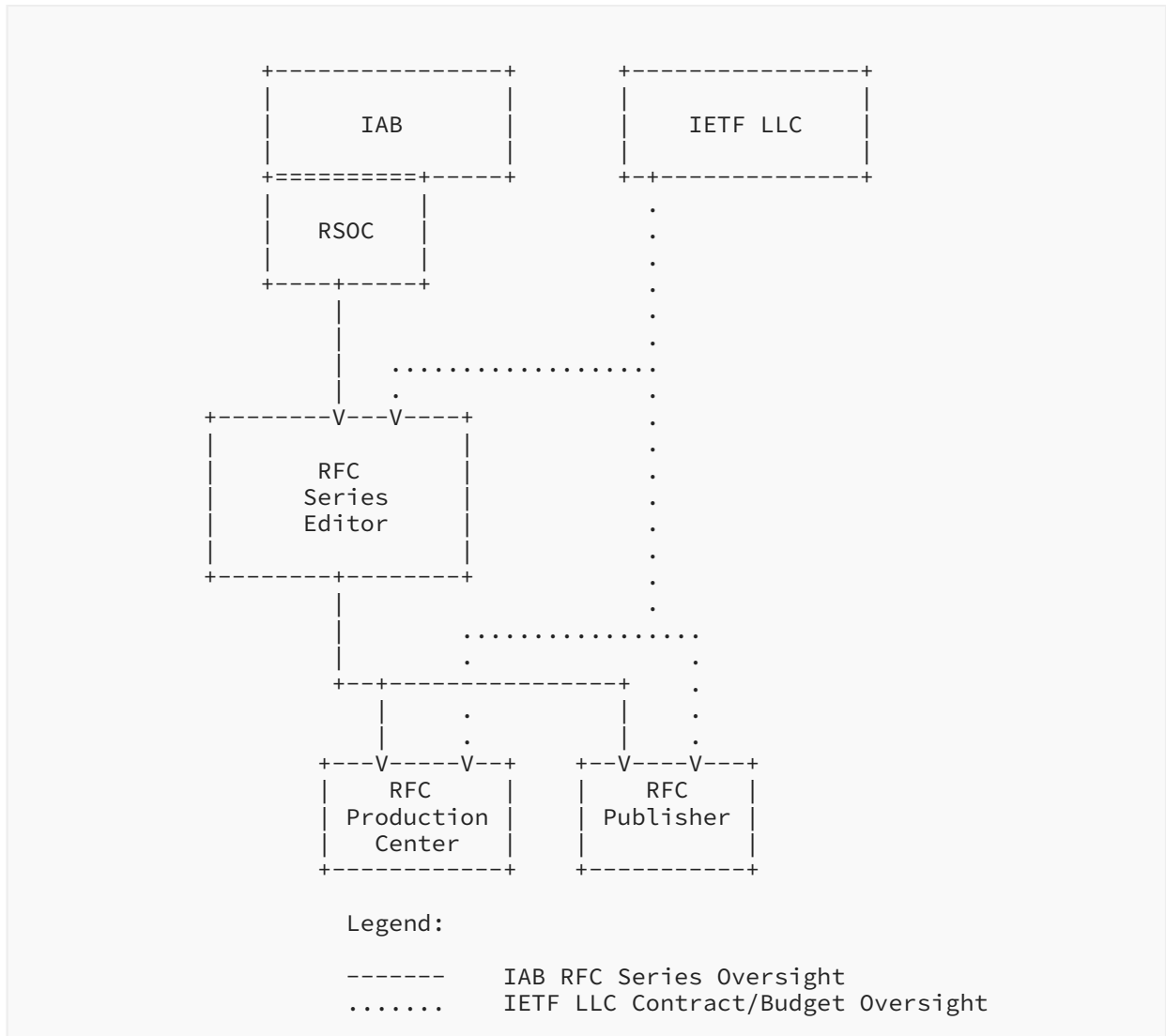


Figure 2: Authority Structure of the RFC Series

4.1. Vendor Selection for the Production and Publisher Functions

As stated earlier, vendor selection is done in cooperation with the streams and under the final authority of the IETF LLC.

The RSE owns and develops the work definition (the SOW) and participates in the IETF LLC vendor selection process. The work definition is created within the IETF LLC budget and takes into account the stream managers and community input.

The process to select and contract for an RFC Production Center, RFC Publisher, and other RFC-related services, is as follows:

- The IETF LLC establishes the contract process, including the steps necessary to issue an RFP when necessary, the timing, and the contracting procedures.

- The IETF LLC establishes the Selection Committee, which will consist of the RSE, the IETF LLC Executive Director, and other members selected by the RSOC and the IETF LLC. The Committee shall be chaired by the RSE.
- 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 reached, the matter shall be referred to the Selection Committee for further action.
- The Selection Committee may select an RFC Publisher either through the IETF LLC RFP process or, at the Committee's option, the Committee may select the IETF Secretariat to provide RFC Publisher services, subject to negotiations in accordance with the IETF LLC procedures.

4.2. Budget

The expenses discussed in this document are not new expenses. They have been and remain part of the IETF Administration Limited Liability Company [[RFC8711](#)] budget.

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

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

The RSE is responsible for managing the RFC Editor function to operate within those budgets. If production needs change, the RSE is responsible for working with the Production Center, and where appropriate, other RFC Editor component institutions, relevant streams, and/or the RSOC to determine what the correct response should be. If they agree that a budgetary change is needed, that decision needs to be taken to the IETF LLC.

4.3. Disagreements among Entities Related to the RFC Editor

The RFC Series Editor and the RFC Production Center and Publisher facilities work with the various streams to produce RFCs. Disagreements may arise between these entities during the execution of the RFC Editor operations. In particular, different streams may disagree with each other, or disagree with the RFC Editor function. Potentially, even the RSOC or the IETF LLC could find themselves in disagreement with some aspect of the RFC Editor operations. Note that disagreements between an author and the RFC Production Center are not cross-entity issues, and they are to be resolved by the RSE, in accordance with the rest of this document.

If such cross-entity disagreements arise, the community would generally hope that they can be resolved politely and directly. However, this is not always possible. At that point, any relevant party would first formally request a review and reconsideration of the decision. If the party still disagrees after the reconsideration, that party may ask the RSE to decide or, especially if the RSE is involved, the party may ask the IAB Chair (for a technical or procedural matter) to mediate or appoint a mediator to aid in the discussions, although he or she not is obligated to do so. All parties should work informally and in good faith to reach a mutually agreeable conclusion. As noted below, any such issues that involve contractual matters must be brought to the attention of

the IETF LLC. If the IAB Chair is asked to assist in resolving the matter, the Chair may ask for advice or seek assistance from anyone the Chair deems helpful. The Chair may also alert any appropriate individuals or organizations to the existence of the issue.

If such a conclusion is not possible through the above less formal processes, then the matter must be registered with the RFC Series Oversight Committee. The RSOC may choose to offer advice to the RSE or more general advice to the parties involved and may ask the RSE to defer a decision until it formulates its advice. However, if a timely decision cannot be reached through discussion, mediation, and mutual agreement, the RSE is expected to make whatever decisions are needed to ensure the smooth operation of the RFC Editor function; those decisions are final.

The RSE may make final decisions unilaterally only to assure the functioning of the process, and only while there is an evaluation of current policies to determine whether they are appropriately implemented in the decision or need adjustment. In particular, it should be noted that final decisions about the technical content of individual documents are the exclusive responsibility of the stream approvers from which those documents originate, as shown in the illustration in [Figure 1](#).

If informal agreements cannot be reached, then formal RSOC review and decision making may be required. If so, the RSE must present the issues involved to the community so that the community is aware of the situation. The RSE will then report the issue to the RSOC for formal resolution by the RSOC with confirmation by the IAB in its oversight capacity.

IAB and community discussion of any patterns of disputes are expected to inform future changes to RFC Series policies, including possible updates to this document.

4.4. Issues with Contractual Impact

If a disagreement or decision has immediate or future contractual consequences, it falls under [\[RFC8711\]](#). If this happens, the RSE must identify the issue and provide advice to the IETF LLC. Additionally, if the RSOC has also developed advice, it should forward that advice to the IETF LLC.

The IETF LLC must notify the RSOC and IAB regarding the action it concludes is required to resolve the issue based on its applicable procedures and provisions in the relevant contracts.

5. IANA Considerations

This document defines several functions within the overall RFC Editor structure, and it places the responsibility for coordination of registry value assignments with the RFC Production Center. The IETF LLC will facilitate the establishment of the relationship between the RFC Production Center 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.

6. 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. Since the RFC Editor maintains 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 any kind of data storage failure.

The IETF LLC should take these security considerations into account during the implementation and enforcement of the RFC Editor component contracts.

7. References

7.1. Normative References

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IAB Members at the Time of Approval

Internet Architecture Board Members at the time this document was approved for publication were:

Jari Arkko

Alissa Cooper

Stephen Farrell

Wes Hardaker

Ted Hardie

Christian Huitema

Zhenbin Li

Erik Nordmark

Mark Nottingham

Melinda Shore

Jeff Tantsura

Martin Thomson

Brian Trammell

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Bob Hinden served as document editor for this RFC to align it with the IASA 2.0 structure.

Authors' Addresses

Olaf Kolkman (EDITOR)

Internet Society

Email: kolkman@isoc.org

Joel M. Halpern (EDITOR)

Ericsson

Email: joel.halpern@ericsson.com

Robert M. Hinden (EDITOR)

Check Point Software

959 Skyway Road

San Carlos, CA 94070

United States of America

Email: bob.hinden@gmail.com