

Simple PDP Update for the new “normal”

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Summary of the problem (1)

- The Policy Development Working Group (PDWG) discusses about the policy proposals and anyone may participate either in the Resource Policy Discussion mailing list (RPD) and the bi-annual Public Policy Meetings (PPM).
- However, not all RPD participants are able to attend all the PPM, where the Chairs determine whether rough consensus has been achieved, so discrimination could be generated towards those not able to attend, which usually are a much larger group, following the current PDP text (The Chair(s) determine(s) whether rough consensus has been achieved during the Public Policy Meeting).
- With its requirement of face-to-face participation at the PPM, the current PDP might – at least partially – be the cause of the low levels of community participation in the process.

Summary of the problem (2)

- This proposal would simplify the process by not requiring participation at the in-person PPM to achieve consensus – instead, consensus would be determined balancing the mailing list and the forum – and would therefore increase community participation.
- Further to that, considering the pandemic situation and that this may be extended in the time or something similar may happen again in the future, it is made clear that the PPMs can be on-line only Other PPMs (on-line only) could be organized to split the workload.
- The proposal adapts all the timings consequently with the proposed changes, in order to make the process agile, and allow new proposals in a shorter period of time before the meeting (2 weeks). In summary, it requires that the discussion in the mailing list is done by a minimum of 8 weeks, before determining consensus. That time can longer because the need to present the proposal into a meeting.

Summary of the problem (3)

So, there are three possible cases:

- a) A proposal (or a new version) is submitted 8 weeks (or a longer period) before the PPM. Consensus will be determined by the chairs within a maximum of two weeks.
- b) A proposal (or a new version) is submitted less than 8 weeks before the PPM. Consensus will be determined by the chairs within a maximum of two weeks, once the 8 weeks of discussion time in the list ends.
- c) A new version of an existing proposal that has been already presented in a previous PPM, could reach consensus in the list, without the need for a new presentation. This possibility depends on the co-chairs decision, for example, when the reasons for not having reached consensus in the last PPM may have been already addressed by a new version. This new version must have been discussed in the list also during 8 weeks

Addressing the problem

- This simple proposal seeks to eliminate the requirement that states that consensus must only be reached at the PPM, adapt the relevant timings and at the same time, clarifies the definition of “consensus” and “last call”.
- Some of the timings are also adjusted.

Proposed Changes (1)

3.3 The Policy Development Working Group (PDWG)

The Policy Development Working Group (PDWG) discusses about the proposals. Anyone may participate via the Internet or in person. PDWG work is carried out through the Resource Policy Discussion mailing list (rpd@afrrinic.net) and the bi-annual AFRINIC Public Policy Meetings (PPM). Any person, participating either in person or remotely, is considered to be part of the Policy Development Working Group.

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At least 2 PPM will be held per calendar year, which might be on-line only. More PPM could be held on-line only, in order to split the workload across the year, having shorter PPM sessions, facilitating the PDWG to concentrate in a smaller number of proposals.

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Proposed Changes (2)

3.1.1 Definition of “Rough Consensus”

Achieving “rough consensus” does not mean that proposals are voted for and against, nor that the number of “yes's”, “no's” and “abstentions” – or even participants – are counted, but that the proposal has been discussed not only by its author(s) but also by other members of the community, regardless of their number, and that, after a period of discussion, all critical technical objections have been resolved.

In general, this might coincide with a majority of members of the community in favor of the proposal, and with those who are against the proposal basing their objections on technical reasons as opposed to “subjective” reasons. In other words, low participation or participants who disagree for reasons that are not openly explained should not be considered a lack of consensus.

Objections should not be measured by their number, but instead by their nature and quality within the context of a given proposal. For example, a member of the community whose opinion is against a proposal might receive many “emails” of support, yet the Chairs might consider that the opinion has already been addressed and technically refuted during the debate; in this case, the Chairs would ignore those expressions of support against the proposal.

For information purposes, the definition of “consensus” used by the RIRs and the IETF is actually that of “rough consensus”, which allows better clarifying the goal in this context, given that “consensus” (Latin for agreement) might be interpreted as “agreed by all” (unanimity). More specifically, RFC7282, explains that **“Rough consensus is achieved when all issues are addressed, but not necessarily accommodated.”**

Consequently, the use of “consensus” in the PDP, must be interpreted as “rough consensus”..

Proposed Changes (3)

3.4.1 Draft Policy Proposal

During the development of a policy, draft versions of the document are made available for review and comment by publishing them on the AFRINIC website and posting them to the rpd@afnic.net mailing list. Each draft policy is assigned a unique identifier by AFRINIC and the AFRINIC website shall also contain the version history and the status of all proposals.

The draft policy shall be available for review for at least four weeks before the next Public Policy Meeting.

The author(s) shall make the necessary changes to the draft policy according to the feedback received.

The Working Group Chair(s) may request AFRINIC to provide an analysis (technical, financial, legal or other), of the impact of the draft policy proposal.

3.4.1 Draft Policy Proposal and Discussion Timing

During the development of a policy, draft versions of the document are made available for discussion by publishing them on the AFRINIC website and posting them to the rpd@afnic.net list. Each Draft Policy Proposal (DPP) is assigned a unique identifier by AFRINIC and the AFRINIC website shall also contain the version history and the status of all proposals.

For every DPP/version, AFRINIC must publish an impact analysis (IA) in a maximum of 4 weeks and at least 1 week before the PPM. When a complete IA is not possible within that time frame, it should be duly justified in the RPD list and at least a draft version shall be available.

The DPP shall be available for discussion for at least 2 weeks before the next PPM.

The author(s) shall make the necessary changes to the DPP according to the feedback received.

Proposed Changes (4)

A draft policy expires after one calendar year unless it is approved by the AFRINIC Board of Directors as a policy. The timeout period is restarted when the draft policy is replaced by a more recent version of the proposal

A draft policy can be withdrawn by the author(s) by sending a notification to the Resource Policy Discussion mailing list.

A DPP expires after 6 months, unless it is ratified by the AFRINIC Board of Directors as a policy. The timeout period is restarted when the DPP is replaced by a new version. A DPP can be withdrawn by the author(s) by sending a notification to the RPD List.

Any DPP must be discussed on the RPD List a minimum of 8 weeks and maximum, the period of time required so it can be presented in the PPM. Consensus for a DPP can be determined only once it has been presented and discussed in the PPM.

However, if a DPP has been already presented in a PPM, under request of the author(s), the Chairs could decide that a new presentation is not needed if consensus could already be achieved in the RPD List. However, the 8 weeks discussion period in the RPD List is still required.

Proposed Changes (5)

3.4.2 Public Policy Meeting

The draft policy is placed on the agenda of an open public policy meeting. The agenda of the meeting shall be announced on the Resource Policy Discussion mailing list at least two weeks prior to the meeting. No change can be made to a draft policy within one week of the meeting. This is so that a stable version of the draft policy can be considered at the meeting. The Chair(s) determine(s) whether rough consensus has been achieved during the Public Policy Meeting.

The Chair(s) shall publish the minutes of proceedings of the Public Policy Meeting not later than three weeks after the meeting.

3.4.2 Public Policy Meeting and Consensus Determination

Any new DPP must be placed on the agenda of a PPM. The agenda of the meeting shall be announced on the RPD List at least 1 week prior to the meeting. No change can be made to a DPP within 1 week of the meeting. This is so that a stable version of the DPP can be considered at the meeting.

Once the minimum 8 weeks of discussion in the list and a presentation at the PPM (for never presented DPPs) are met, the Chairs have a maximum of 2 weeks to determine whether rough consensus has been achieved (considering both list and meeting).

The Chairs shall publish the minutes of proceedings of the PPM not later than 2 weeks after the meeting.

For every DPP/version that doesn't reach consensus, the Chairs should clearly state the reasons, in order for the authors to be able to work in an improved version.

Proposed Changes (6)

3.4.3 Last Call

A final review of the draft policy is initiated by the Working Group Chair(s) by sending an announcement to the Resource Policy Discussion mailing list.

The Last Call period shall be at least two weeks. The Working Group Chair(s) shall evaluate the feedback received during the Public Policy Meeting during this period and decide whether consensus has been achieved.

3.4.3 Last Call

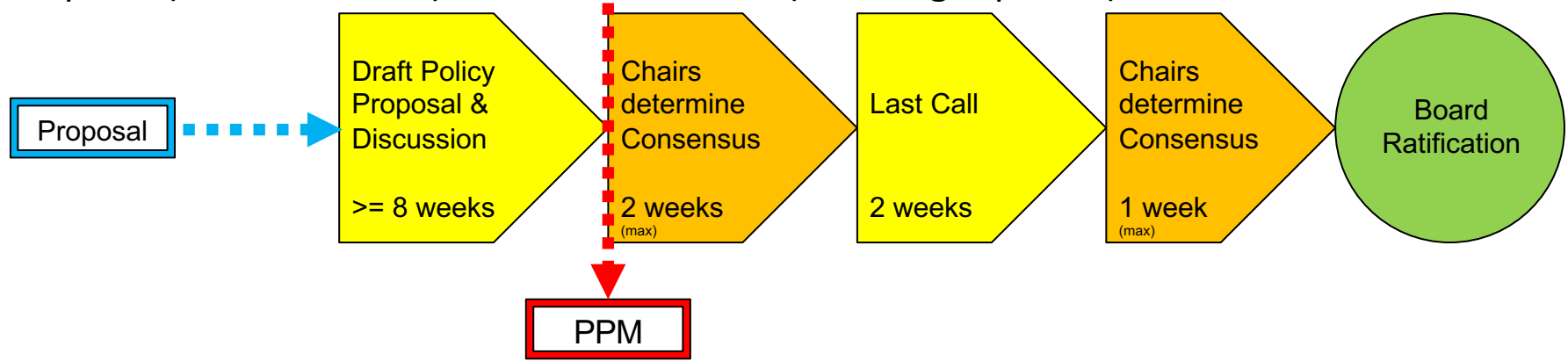
A final discussion of the DPP is initiated by the Working Group Chairs by sending an announcement to the RPD List. The Last Call period shall be 2 weeks.

Within 1 week after the end of the last call, the Working Group Chairs shall confirm whether consensus is maintained.

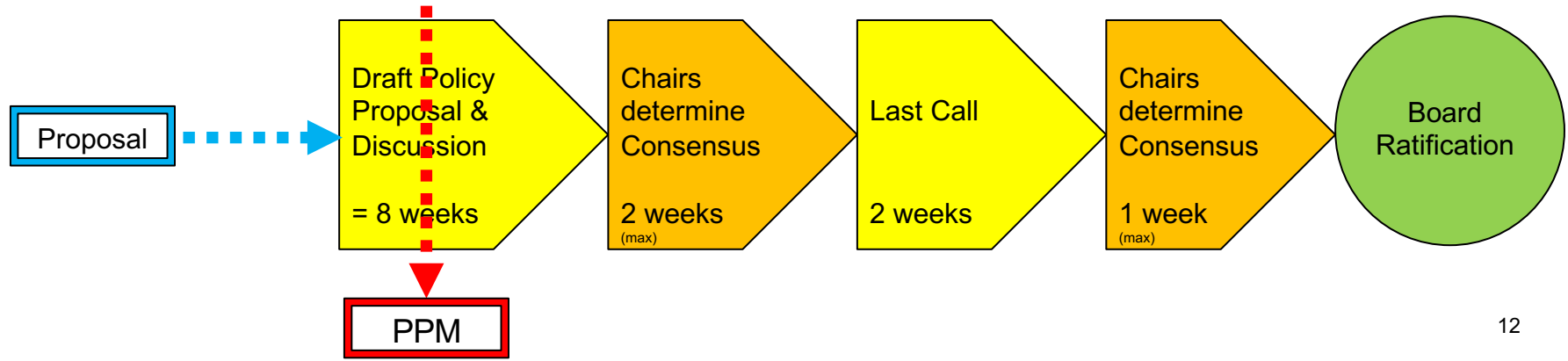
The purpose of the “last call” is to provide the community with a brief and final opportunity to comment on the DPP, especially those who didn’t earlier. Consequently, during this period editorial comments may be submitted and, exceptionally, objections if any aspect is discovered that was not considered in the discussion prior to determining consensus. Any new objections must also be substantiated and must therefore not be based on opinions lacking a technical justification.

How it looks like? (1)

a) Proposal (or new version) submitted 8 weeks (or a longer period) before PPM.

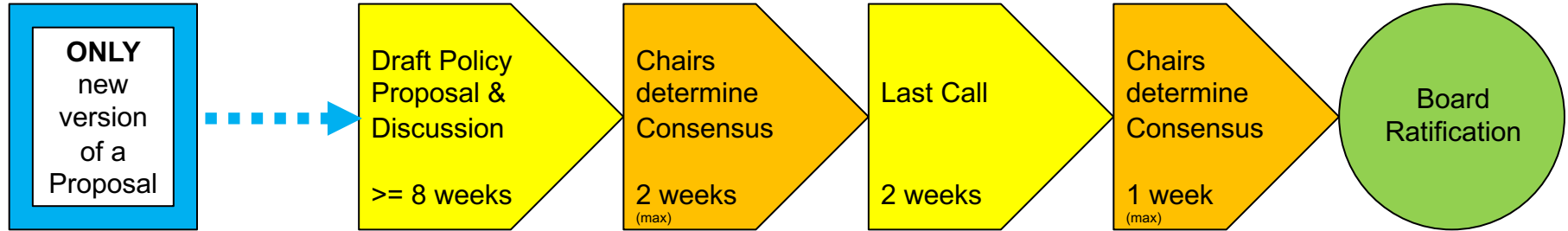


b) Proposal (or new version) submitted less than 8 weeks before PPM.



How it looks like? (2)

c) A new version of an existing proposal, which has been already presented in a previous PPM, if chairs agree, can reach consensus in the list, after 8 weeks discussion.



References

- A similar proposal reached consensus in LACNIC (May 2018), has been implemented and has been used already for several years.
- This version offers improved details considering the previous experience and the Covid-19 situation.

Responses to Impact Analysis (1)

3. AFRINIC Staff Clarification Requests

- “Section 3.3 mentions "At least 2 PPM will be held per calendar year,". The bylaws' Section 11.2 states:- The Board shall call a Public Policy Meeting at least once a year as per requirements defined in the Policy Development Process. Alignment with the Bylaws is recommended.”
 - Section 3.3 of the actual PDP already state "... and the bi-annual AFRINIC Public Policy Meetings", so *already* there is no alignment with the bylaws if you take them as (11.2) "The Board shall call a Public Policy Meeting once a year". However, the 11.2 text is "at least once a year as per requirements defined in the Policy development Process.", which allows more meetings per year and in fact, it clearly say that it is defined in the PDP.

Responses to Impact Analysis (2)

- “Section 3.4.1 mentions "For every DPP/version, AFRINIC must publish an impact analysis (IA) in a maximum of 4 weeks and at least 1 week before the PPM." We request clarification in regard if it means 4 weeks from the date AFRINIC receives the DPP/version.”
 - Yes, all the timing is based on the time of the submission. There is no other possible date, because that is the only "starting" point for any proposal or new version. Even if I think it is clear, I understand that if you still need that to be clarified, it doesn't need a new version, as it is an editorial change that can be done during the presentation or the last call, as we have done in other proposals that reached consensus. For example: "For every DPP/version, AFRINIC must publish an impact analysis (IA) in a maximum of 4 weeks (since submitted) and at least 1 week before the PPM.".

Responses to Impact Analysis (3)

- “Section 3.4.1 mentions “Any new DPP must be placed on the agenda of a PPM.” Please clarify that ‘new DPP’ can be a new proposal or an update of an existing DPP under discussion based on the community’s feedback.”
 - Note that this text is just a “short” of the actual one: “The draft policy is placed on the agenda of an open public policy meeting” vs “Any new DPP must be placed on the agenda of a PPM”.
 - I actually think that if you read that in the context, it is clear that it means a new proposal or a new version, exactly the same as per actual text, but if needed, it is another editorial comment that can be done like “Any new DPP/version ...”.

Responses to Impact Analysis (4)

4. Staff Comments On Areas of Impact

Summary

- “The policy if reaches a consensus as written will be in contradiction of the bylaws in terms of the number of PPMs held by AFRINIC per year.”
 - Clearly this is not a correct interpretation of bylaws and (actual) PDP, unless you understand that there is already a contradiction, and you ignore the "at least" in the bylaws.