

Approval Process of Out-going Liaison Statements

IAB call April 20, 2022 - Mirja Kühlewind

Background: IAB discussion on Aug 11, 2022

<https://www.iab.org/documents/minutes/minutes-2021/iab-minutes-2021-08-11/>

Warren Kumari mentioned the current **process may need changing to make sure outgoing liaisons were approved by the appropriate party.**

Cullen Jennings noted that in the past, area directors and working group chairs needed to know what to do with liaisons, and not all understood the process.

Mirja Kühlewind said the process should be supported by the tools, and clarification to the process should **include an approval step so a wider group of people are aware of the liaisons** before they are sent to other SDOs.

Robert Sparks said he would work on the tooling once the IAB had a clear idea of what process they wanted.

Background: Tooling

- LS management tool in the datatracker
<https://datatracker.ietf.org/liaison/add/outgoing/>
- Mirja started a note with multiple tooling change requests:
<https://notes.ietf.org/liaison-tool-requests?view>
 - Today we only want to discuss the first two points on the approval process!

- Tool today has a box to “circumvent” approval step
 - 67 of 657 LSs send from a WG requested explicit approval

From

Groups

* quic - QUIC

From contact*

Lucas Pardue <lucaspardue.24.7@gmail.com>

Response contacts

Matt Joras <matt.joras@gmail.com>, Lucas

Where to send a response

Obtained prior approval

Background: Approval process in the datatracker today

- ADs, IETF Chair, and IAB chair don't need approval but can only send LSs "From" their area/groups, the IETF/IESG, or the IAB respectively
- WG chairs can only send LS "From" their group and need approval by AD
- liaison managers can only send LS "To" their SDO and need a approval by AD, IETF chair, or IAB chair depending on the "From" field

- In summary, approval requests are usually send to the responsible AD
 - or IETF/IAB chair (if LS is sent by liaison manager and "From" the IETF or IAB)
- statements@ietf.org is always in cc of approval mails
- Everybody with access to the approval link can effectively approve

- Current the IAB liaison coordinators have no role in the approval process and are not cc'ed on the approval mails (but are cc'ed on the actual LS)

Background: RFC4052 - Approval and Transmission of Liaison Statements

<https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/html/rfc4052#section-4>

LS on behalf of an **IETF WG**

- WG chair(s) create a statement based on appropriate discussions to ensure working group consensus
- The chair(s) must have generated or must agree with LS
- Chair must advise the AD(s) that LS has been sent by copying the appropriate ADs on the message

-> Mirja's summary: Required **wg consensus and chairs approval**; AD is only cc'ed -> no (pre-)approval by AD needed?

LS on behalf of an **IETF Area**

- AD(s) must have generated or must agree with the sending of the LS
- If the liaison statement is not sent by the ADs, their agreement must be obtained in advance & confirmed by copying the ADs on the message

-> Mirja's summary: **approval by AD**

LS on behalf of the **IETF as a whole**

- IETF Chair must have generated or must agree with the sending of the liaison statement
- If the liaison statement is not sent by the IETF Chair, agreement must be obtained in advance & confirmed by copying the IETF Chair on the message

-> Mirja's summary: **approval by IETF Chair**

LS generated by the **IAB**

- IAB Chair must have generated or must agree with the sending of the liaison statement
- If the liaison statement is not sent by the IAB Chair, agreement must be obtained in advance & confirmed by copying the IAB Chair on the message

-> Mirja's summary: **IAB Chair approval**

Background: RFC4052 - Liaison manager responsibilities

<https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/html/rfc4052#section-2.2>: Liaison Manager

- **An important function of the liaison manager is to ensure that communication is maintained, productive, and timely.** [...] If a communication from a peer organization is addressed to an inappropriate party, such as being sent to the WG but not copying the Area Director (AD) or being sent to the wrong WG, the liaison manager will help redirect or otherwise augment the communication.

<https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/html/rfc4052#section-3>: Summary of IETF Liaison Manager Responsibilities

- Oversee delivery of liaison statements addressed to the IETF, ensuring that they reach the appropriate destination within the IETF, and **ensure that relevant responses from the IETF are created and sent in a timely fashion.**

Proposed, slightly simplified Approach

Approach: All LSs need explicit approval

- That means remove current check-box
- Still add check-box to make sure chairs are aware who need to be informed: wg consensus, AD/liasion manager
- Rough principle: role that enters LS determines approval; To and From field determine who is cc'ed

Restrictions

- Chair/Dir leads can only enter LSs from their working group(s)/dir
- Liaison managers can only enter LSs to their liaising organization
- All IESG members, IAB chair, and Liaison coordinators can enter LSs without restrictions

Approval/Confirmation

- AD approves LSs by wg/dir (entered by chairs/dir leads or liaison managers); liaison managers and liaison coordinator, wg chairs/dir leads are cc'ed
- IETF chair approves LS entered by ADs; IESG and liaison coordinator and potentially liaison manager & wg chairs are cc'ed
- IETF chair/IAB chair approve for each other; IESG/IAB and potentially liaison manager & wg chairs are cc'ed
- IAB chair approves LSs enter by liaison coordinators and liaison managers (if From is not a wg/dir); IAB/IESG and potentially liaison manager & wg chairs is cc'ed

Tooling change requests in detail

Now:

- Remove pre-approval tick box and add new tick-boxes that just do not allow submission if not ticked
 - Need to inform chairs and liaison managers (and ADs)
- Add more people and always liaison-coordination@iab.org to all approval mails
- Smaller changes of “To” and “From” restrictions
 - Remove “From” restrictions for IETF/IAB chair
 - This was already problematic recently
 - Give liaison coordinators right to create LSs
- Require to be logged in with role to approve rather than just sharing a link

Later:

- Change to who needs to approval and always require approval

Proposal for new approval process

- All out-going LSs need explicit approval
 - A LS is never send out directly; instead a mail to request approval is sent; only if approval is obtained the LS is sent to final recipients
 - Pro: 4-eyes principles and more awareness (also of approvers that are not require to be directly cc'ed to the LS itself)
 - Con: Could cause delays but usually LSs are not that urgent or there could still be an overwrite by e.g. liaison coordinator or IAB/IETF chair
- Other questions
 - Should IAB liaison coordinators be able to approve all LSs (in emergency case)? Maybe also IAB chair or IETF chair?
 - Is approval by one person (either AD or IETF/IAB chair) sufficient or do we need in addition also approval by someone from the IAB (or the liaison manager on behalf of IAB)?
 - Do we need to send LSs from area or the IESG (rather than the IETF as a whole)?

More detailed proposed process

General Considerations

1. Approval chain does only depend on role (not really on “To” and “From” field)
 - however, rights are still restricted who can send LS where and for whom (or not?)
2. Liaison coordinator is always cc’ed on all approval requests
 - Liaison coordinator could be required or allow to approve (?), or just be informed
3. New requirement: liaison managers should also approve all LSs to their SDO(s)

Approval rights (if IAB should be in the loop):

WG chairs

- can only enter LSs for their wg
- need approval by AD **and liaison manager** (if exists) or IAB liaison coordinator

Liaison managers

- can enter LSs for WGs, area, or whole IETF (?)
 - **but should not be able to send a LS in the name of the IAB**
- can only enter LSs to “their” SDO
- need approval by AD/IETF chair and liaison coordinator

AD

- can enter LSs for their wg, area, **or whole IETF (?)**
- need approval by IETF chair and liaison manager (if exists) or IAB liaison coordinator

IETF or IAB chair

- have **no restrictions (?) but**
- **need approval** by liaison manager (if exists) and/or liaison coordinator (or each other?)

Simplified Approach

Restrictions

- Chair can only enter LSs from their working group
- Liaison managers can only enter LSs to their liaising organization
- All IAB/IESG members can enter LSs without restrictions

Approval

- Approval remains as described in RFC4052 but is not checked by the tool

Confirmation

- New confirmation step in the tool by liaison manager (if exists) or liaison coordinator (IAB chair?)
- All approvers are cc'ed (e.g. chairs, ADs, IESG, or IAB)
- Goal: all LSs are reviewed by another person which is also responsible to check if approval was granted
 - Having this mandatory confirmation step and a short time delay that makes it possible for people to intervene before a LSs is actually sent allows to be less restrictive in the tool about who can enter which liaisons (-> simplification)