Nomcom Desired Expertise

IESG Retreat April 2018
Generic IESG Member Expertise

IESG members are the managers of the IETF standards process. They must understand the way the IETF works, recognise where the organisation needs to evolve, be good at working with other people, be able to inspire and encourage other people to work together as volunteers, and have sound technical judgment about IETF technology and its relationship to technology developed elsewhere.
Generic IESG Member Expertise

Area Directors (ADs) select the Working Group (WG) Chairs, and then work with them to manage IETF WGs. So, IESG members should possess sufficient interpersonal and management skills to manage 15 to 30 part-time people. Most ADs are also responsible for the management of one or more directorates or review teams. The ability to identify good leaders and technical experts, and then recruit them for IETF work and leadership at all levels is important. Although it is not a prerequisite, experience as a WG Chair provides important understanding of that role, and it will help when working with WG Chairs to resolve problems and issues that may arise.
Generic IESG Member Expertise

ADs are also expected to understand where there is a need to change either IETF processes or IETF's overall role as the Internet and the industry around it evolves.

All IESG members should have strong technical knowledge that crosses two or three IETF Areas. An ideal IESG member has made significant technical contributions in more than one IETF Area, preferably authoring documents and/or chairing WGs in more than one IETF Area. Breadth of technical ability and the facility to quickly grasp concepts outside of their strongest areas are more important than specific technical expertise. Experience from a broad range of backgrounds across the entire IESG is desirable.
Generic IESG Member Expertise

An AD need not be the ultimate expert and authority in any technical area. The abilities to manage, to guide and judge consensus, to know who the subject-matter experts are and to seek their advice, and to mentor other IETF participants to take the technical lead is at least as important, if not more important, than their own technical abilities.
Generic IESG Member Expertise

An AD must be able to personally review every Internet-Draft that they sponsor. For other Internet-Drafts an AD needs simply to be satisfied that adequate review has taken place, though many ADs personally review these documents as well. Note that after the 2015 reorganisation of IETF areas and IESG procedures, assignments of ADs to specific working groups are more flexible than before, and can accommodate the expertise available in the IESG as a whole.
Generic IESG Member Expertise

It is very helpful for an IESG member to have a good working knowledge of the IETF document process as well as WG creation and chartering process. This knowledge is most likely to be found in experienced WG Chairs, but may also be found in authors of multiple documents. It is very helpful for an IESG member to have experience attending multiple IETF meetings, creating WG session agendas, supervising WG sessions, and helping to arrange interim WG meetings.
IESG members must have strong oral and written communications skills. They must have a proven track record of leading and contributing to the consensus of diverse groups. They must be able to prioritize their work, and must reliably follow through and finish the important work items in a timely manner.
Generic IESG Member Expertise

An IESG member should be able to guide WGs to follow their charters and nurture new talent to fulfill IETF leadership roles in the future.

Finally, across the IESG there should be at least some ADs that have expertise on specific Internet-scale issues and trends, such as privacy issues or the growth of open source style collaboration.
A few comments on the IESG Role

Though not part of our formal summary of desired expertise, the IESG wanted to make the NomCom aware of the time commitment that serving on the IESG entails. The basic IESG activities can consume a minimum of 15 hours during a typical non-meeting week. Some ADs have been able to combine significant other responsibilities with an AD role, while others put a larger proportion of their hours into AD responsibilities. A personal commitment is critical.

Ability to contribute more time is useful, but if the NomCom should pick a few ADs who can only do 15 hrs/week on a routine basis, the IESG can cope with that.
A few comments on the IESG Role

The time commitment varies by Area and by month, with the most intense periods immediately before and during IETF meetings. ADs during their first year tend to spend more time per week on AD work. Practices vary widely between IESG members, however. Most IESG members also participate in additional IETF leadership activities, further increasing the time commitment for those individuals. While most ADs do not occupy formal liaison positions, they may need to interact with external groups such as other standards development organizations (SDOs), which may require travel. We have also found IESG member attendance at all IETF meetings to be imperative, typically arriving one or two days early. IESG members also attend one, and sometimes two, IESG retreats per year, as well as occasional workshops and interim meetings.
A few comments on the IESG Role

Because of the time and travel commitments, and awkwardly timed conference calls, IESG members have found that good personal motivation and family and sponsor support are important factors in making the role successful for them. These factors should be considered from a long-term perspective, i.e., covering at least the two-year term. (Although IESG members often serve two terms and sometimes more, finding motivation on third or subsequent terms has been reported to be more challenging.)