A Guide for New RIPE Working Group Chairs

RIPE Working Group (WG) Chairs take on a range of responsibilities to ensure that the goals and charters of their working groups are met. As well as leading WG sessions at RIPE Meetings, they also find content for those sessions, manage and moderate WG mailing lists, manage progress on WG action items, and guide policy development.

This document is intended as a quick guide covering the main information and resources that new WG chairs need as they take on their role. While specific practices vary between WGs, the following gives you an overview of what is expected of you as a chair.

Note that the information relating to RIPE Meetings assumes that these are face-to-face meetings. Virtual meetings can be slightly different. As always, do not hesitate to contact the RIPE NCC if you have any questions.

Working groups may also choose to hold online sessions between RIPE Meetings, in keeping with the guidelines for interim sessions.

RIPE WG Chair Job Description
List of active WGs
WG Chair Biographies
RIPE WG Chair Collective - Definition and Tasks

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1. Building WG agendas for RIPE Meetings

RIPE Meeting WG sessions provide an opportunity for working groups to discuss pressing topics and share important developments in their field. Chairs are responsible for the agenda of their WGs.

- The first task is to actively recruit speakers. Reach out to people contributing to the community on topics relevant to your WG. Put out a call for presentations on your mailing list.

  You'll have access to the PC submission system. If you spot a presentation that would be suitable for your WG session, contact the RIPE Working Group Chair Representative to let them know.

- Remember that product marketing talks are strongly discouraged at RIPE Meetings!

- Once you and your fellow co-chairs have built an agenda, send it to meeting@ripe.net, ideally at least 2-3 weeks before the RIPE Meeting (though last minute changes and additions are fine). It's useful to share the agenda on your mailing list prior to the meeting.

The RIPE Programme Committee (find out who's acting as RIPE Working Group Chair Representative.)

2. Chairing WG sessions

At least one chair from each WG is expected to attend the RIPE Meeting to run the WG session. Chairing these sessions is all about encouraging active participation.

- Make sure you and your fellow co-chairs are in the room at least 15 minutes before the session.

- Divide up chairing duties among co-chairs – for example, one of you could manage timekeeping while the other introduces speakers and handles the Q&As.

- Before the session starts, make sure presenters are in the room and ready to present. Ask them how to pronounce their names if in doubt.

- RIPE NCC staff will be there to act as scribes, relay questions from remote participants, and provide technical support throughout the session. Ask them if you have any special requests or need help.

- Check in with the tech team about the microphone setup (for both chairs and presenters).

- Open the session – introduce yourself and your fellow chairs; welcome attendees; thank the scribe; approve the minutes from your last session; go over the agenda; cover any other administrative issues.

- Introduce each speaker and invite them to the stage. Encourage attendees to rate presentations!

- Observe the audience. Try to get a feeling whether attendees are interested in a topic or bored – are they reading emails and playing games, or listening very closely to what the speaker has to say? Understanding the community is an important part of the chair's role.

  Good timekeeping is essential. Sessions should only run into the breaks if absolutely necessary, and it's not uncommon for the RIPE Chair to end a session that has run too far into the break. If the presentation slot is 30 minutes, this includes the Q&A at the end. Make sure it's clear to everyone that you are timing the whole session.

- Do make use of the laminated cards "10min", "5min", "STOP", to signal remaining time to the speaker.

- Once the Q&A starts, ask if there are questions from the audience and remind people to state their name and affiliation before speaking. There may be multiple microphones in the audience, so watch the queues to see whose turn it is. Don't let the Q&A go over time, this is not fair to the next presenter.

- If you want to state your own opinion on a discussion, take your chair "hat" off by clearly stating that this is your personal opinion.

Once the session ends, wrap up by thanking all speakers and attendees. After the RIPE Meeting, the scribe will send the draft minutes from the session for you and your fellow co-chairs to review and approve. Once you confirm they are approved, the RIPE NCC will publish them on the website. They will publish the draft minutes within a few weeks of the email if there is no response.

3. RIPE Meetings

As well as chairing your WG session, there are plenty of other things you'll be doing during and around RIPE Meetings.

- Attend the RIPE WG Chairs meeting. The RIPE WG Chair Collective meets at RIPE Meetings to discuss issues that bear on WG operations and RIPE Meetings/the RIPE community in general (see past agendas and meeting summaries).

- Remember to get involved! Get to know attendees by attending the newcomers' reception and taking part in social events. As a representative for your WG, the community wants to get to know you!

RIPE Meeting Code of Conduct
RIPE Working Group Chair Collective

4. Policy Development Process (PDP)

Guiding the PDP for policies relevant to your WG is an essential part of being a WG chair. New proposals are sent to WG chairs. Once you and your fellow co-chairs confirm a proposal should go ahead, the RIPE NCC will publish it as a current policy proposal. As WG chairs, you'll then:

- Set the period for the Discussion Phase (four weeks minimum)

- After Discussion Phase, decide if proposal goes to Review Phase or gets withdrawn

- After Review Phase, decide if rough consensus has been reached:

  o If no, decide whether to return proposal to previous phase or withdraw it

  o If yes, issue last call for comments on mailing lists to start Concluding Phase

- After Concluding Phase, decide if consensus has been reached:
    - If no, decide whether to return proposal to a previous phase or withdraw it
    - If yes, declare consensus! The RIPE NCC will announce and, if needed, implement the policy

Throughout the process, you'll need to stay up to date on all discussion regarding the proposal on the mailing list. It's also the responsibility of the WG Chairs to make sure WG members are kept informed of relevant milestones. The RIPE NCC, and in particular the Policy Officer (PO), are there to help. The PO will often be the person who brings new proposals to the attention of your WG.

RIPE Policy Development Process (RIPE Document)
RIPE Policy Development pages on ripe.net
Current Policy Proposals

5. Mailing lists

Each WG has a dedicated mailing list that is open to anybody. Outside of RIPE Meetings, most of your WG's activities take place right here. As well as keeping an eye on discussion around policies, you'll be responsible for much of the management and moderation of the list. As WG chair, you have the authority to moderate or ban disruptive community members if you decide this is necessary. There is a separate mailing list that is just for the chairs of your WG, and people will use this to contact you directly.

You will also be subscribed to the mailing list for the WG Chair Collective (wg-chairs@ripe.net). This has all RIPE WG Chairs, along with the RIPE Chair/Vice Chair and some RIPE NCC staff. If you have any questions, feel free to ask your fellow chairs for help or advice on this list.

All mailing lists are maintained by the RIPE NCC. If a technical issue comes to your attention, do not hesitate to contact webmaster@ripe.net.

Useful Links:

RIPE Mailing Lists
RIPE Mailing List Code of Conduct
Mailing List Guidelines for RIPE Working Group Chairs
Guidelines for Interim RIPE Working Group Sessions