

Baseline Expectations Community Consensus Process

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Introduction

The following process outlines repeatable steps the Community Trust and Assurance Board (CTAB) will use to facilitate community discussion and consensus in support of Baseline Expectations for Trust in Federation. This process is initially described in [Process to Maintain Baseline Expectations by InCommon and its Members](#). The present document defines the community discussion and consensus process at a greater level of detail. It may be updated over time as the community gains experience at answering questions of consensus. Visit the [Baseline Expectations Program page](#) for the latest information.

Principles/Objectives

- Ensure that consensus discussions include participation by those having a substantive position, proposal, or stake in the matter under discussion.
- Ensure that discussions balance level of participation with diversity of participation, ie, don't let one or two voices drown out others.
- Consensus is achieved through a repeatable process that takes the discussion through several stages designed to ensure the outcome is representative and well-thought-out.
- CTAB facilitates or moderates each discussion to ensure the above.

Stages of a Repeatable Process

A list is set up in the InCommon mailing list system called “consensus-TOPIC-discuss” on which such discussions occur. CTAB selects a moderator from their membership for the topic, with other CTAB members, plus identified InCommon “CTAB-support” staff, assisting to guide the discussion towards consensus.

A wiki page is parent to child pages, one per consensus discussion topic, on which the state of the discussion and other notables from it are tracked. CTAB + CTAB-support can edit.

Consensus topics should be processed one at a time, but may be processed in parallel by assignment of different moderators for each consensus topic. Each consensus topic is initiated by CTAB, who determines when each stage is complete and the next commences. They announce these changes of state on the consensus-TOPIC-discuss and InCommon Participants list and update the corresponding wiki page accordingly.

1. Initial Q&A

Publish a position, problem statement, or proposal that will serve to focus this discussion.

- a. This declaration is sent by the selected CTAB topic moderator to inc-participants, with instruction join the discussion list set up for this topic (called “consensus-TOPIC-discuss” here). It is also the first post to the consensus-TOPIC-discuss list.
 - i. This first post contains “Rules of the Road” agreements for community consensus discussions (see below).
 - ii. The discussion list will be openly available without any approval and easy to join.
 - iii. CTAB topic moderator and other CTAB members will actively encourage participation from those with a stake in the matter, and especially new voices or those with known minority positions.
 - iv. This phase should not be shorter than one month.
- b. consensus-TOPIC-discuss is invited to ask questions aimed to clarify the nature of the problem statement or position, including soliciting alternative solutions or positions.
- c. Create new topic child wiki page, set the stage to “Initial Q&A”.
- d. Regular updates are provided by the CTAB topic moderator to inc-participants and the topic wiki, including notable contributions and alternatives.
- e. Communication continues until rough consensus¹ is achieved.
- f. Once rough consensus has been achieved, the moderator notifies the community that this phase will end in two-weeks.
- g. CTAB topic moderator will notify the community three days prior and on the final day to the end of this phase with a summary.

¹ We do not require complete unanimity, but strive to achieve a point where all issues brought forward have been considered and we can continue moving. See [RFC7282](#), "On Consensus and Humming in the IETF."

2. Initial Resolution

CTAB proposes resolution of issues & draft final position.

- a. Post to consensus-TOPIC-discuss
- b. Add draft of final position to wiki page, whose stage is changed to “Initial Resolution Q&A” and notify participants, including a deadline for comments on the draft.

3. Initial Resolution Q&A

- a. Continue to solidify this proposal on the list, tracking notables on wiki page.
- b. Regular updates are provided by the CTAB topic moderator to the InCommon Participants list and the topic wiki.
- c. CTAB topic moderator will notify the community when the comment period has ended.

4. Final Position

CTAB determines final disposition, proposal, action, or other outcome from the discussion. Announced on consensus-TOPIC-discuss and on inc-participants and posted on wiki page, whose state is “Final Position”. Outcomes that elaborate a new interpretation of some aspect of Baseline or other InCommon matter are put through Consultation process to become formally adopted by InCommon.

Rules of the Road for Discussions

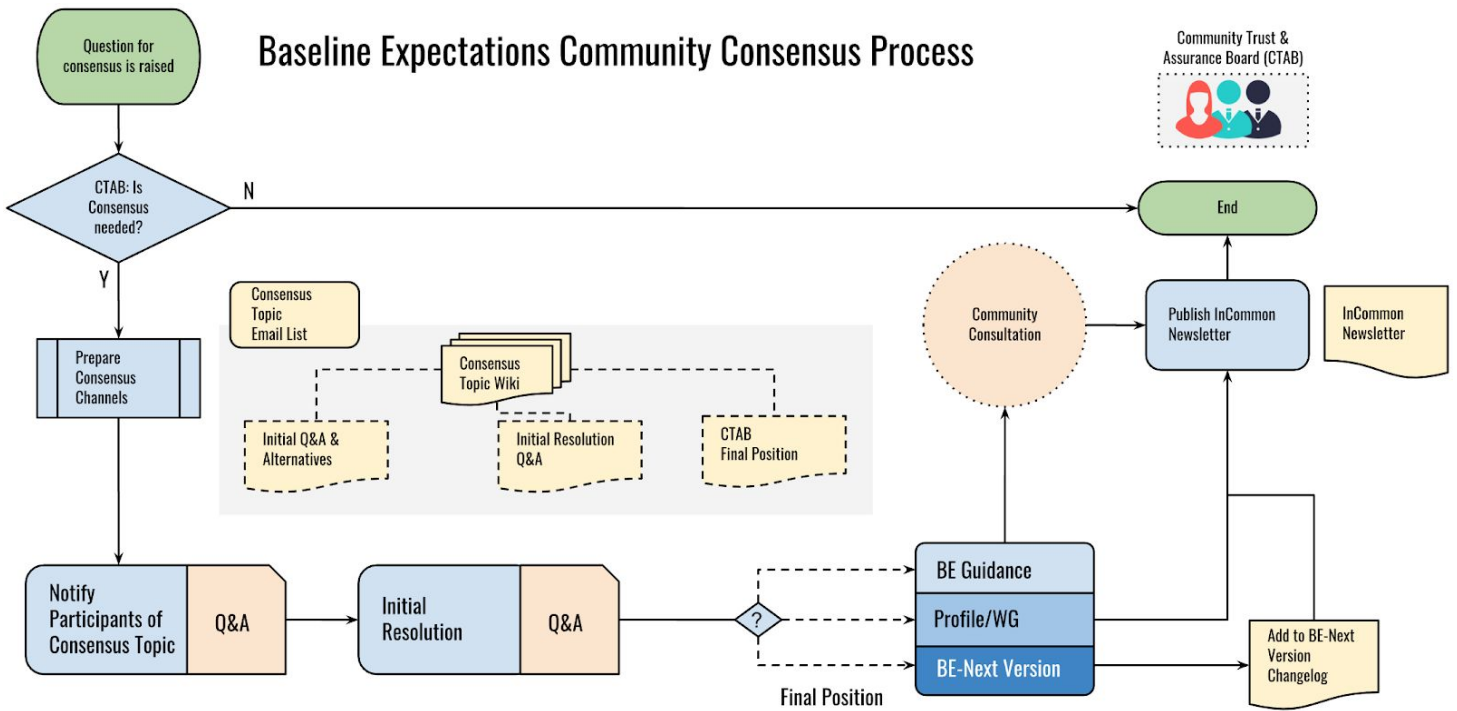
Written to address individuals considering participating in a consensus discussion.

1. The consensus-TOPIC-discuss list is used exclusively for Community Consensus Process discussions. It is moderated by a selected CTAB topic moderator (and other CTAB members) with support by identified InCommon staff. Postings to any other venue are not considered by CTAB in their facilitation of a consensus process.
2. Consensus discussions are guided by CTAB topic moderator through a series of stages (below).
3. Participants are encouraged to keep in mind that the goal is to gather as much meaningful input as possible, and are encouraged to limit themselves to a maximum of three messages during each stage of discussion and minimum of a day between postings to encourage thoughtful discussion from all voices.
4. A reply to another person’s request for clarification of your statements does not count against these limits.

- All interactions/comments submitted should be made in the open with known identity, unless the participant wishes to contact the moderator or CTAB directly to share proprietary information or contribute to the consensus discussion while remaining unidentified. The discussion list will be publicly archived.

Appendices

Appendix A: Diagram of Community Consensus Process



https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/10AQcJQPJCYuFGx38_FVPhXSIFQdUAJGp-7GZTd7ITA/edit?usp=sharing