

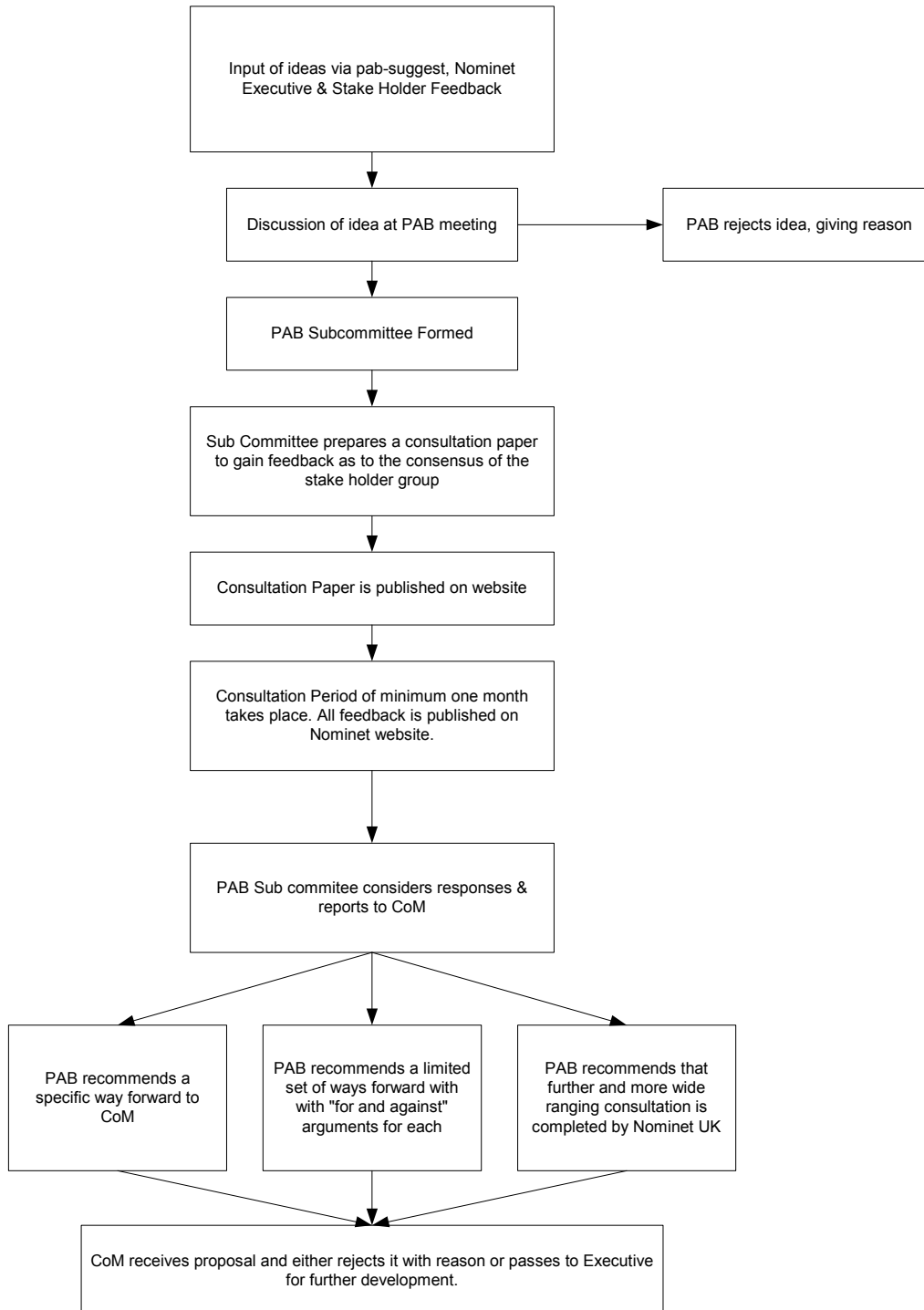
PAB Communication & Consultation

Introduction

Nominet's Policy Advisory Board (PAB) is the primary vehicle for receiving feedback and suggestions from the Membership and other stakeholders, processing them and referring agreed policy proposals to the Nominet Council of Management (CoM). As a result it is important that the PAB has an effective mechanism for consulting with Nominet stakeholder community.

PAB Consultation Process

The following diagram outlines the process of PAB consultation:



Submission of documents to the PAB

Once a document author considers that his document is ready for consideration by the PAB the author shall submit the document to the PAB Secretariat who will publish it as per the document publishing guidelines. Documents being presented to a PAB meeting must be published no less than two weeks in advance of the PAB meeting.

Publication of PAB documents

All PAB papers must be published for a period of two weeks prior to the PAB meeting at which they will be presented. PAB papers must be submitted to the PAB Secretariat, following which Nominet UK shall publish the paper on the Nominet website. Nominet UK shall also announce the publication of the paper, both in the “news” area of the website and via the NOM-ANNOUNCE mailing list. The announcement shall include an abstract of the paper(s) being published.

Subcommittee Procedure

Issues arise at PAB meetings that will take a disproportionate amount of time to address in a full meeting of the PAB. They may also only be of interest to a subset of members of the PAB. Such issues, unless urgent, should be referred to a subcommittee.

A subcommittee has no formal role and it will always report directly to the PAB (rather than reporting back to Nominet directly).

A subcommittee shall always be formed in order consider an issue in more detail with a view to providing the PAB with a set of “policy principles” which it believes encapsulate a desirable way forward. A subcommittee should not attempt to draft legal texts, as the CoM will do this following a PAB recommendation.

Subcommittee Chairs should, preferably within a month of the PAB meeting, convene a subcommittee meeting to discuss their topic.

As many meetings as required may be held, following which a paper should be drafted for consultation. However, the subcommittee should aim to publish an initial report or consultation paper within one month of its formation.

The PAB shall invite submissions to the Paper for a period of one month, after which the subcommittee Chair will consider the responses and, if necessary, reconvene the subcommittee to produce an updated position paper. If the subcommittee requires, this process of consultation may be repeated.

The subcommittee will then present their position paper to the PAB. Whilst there is a wide range of possible outcomes from a subcommittee, it is likely that the subcommittee will recommend either:

- A specific way forward, with justification; or
- A limited set of ways forward, with “for and against” arguments for each; or
- A request that further and more wide ranging consultation is completed by Nominet UK, perhaps targeting particular stake holder groups which are not easily accessible by subcommittee members.

In drafting their recommendations and in considering them, both the subcommittee and the PAB will be aware of the level of consultation that has taken place. If the PAB considers that the level of was insufficient to determine the view of the stakeholder community then an interim recommendation should be made and a further round of consultation should be sought.

Consultation Procedure

Both the PAB and its subcommittees may initiate consultation exercises. The purpose of such an exercise is to determine, as widely as possible, the various views of the stakeholder communities likely to be impacted by a potential PAB recommendation.

Where the PAB feels that wider consultation is required, it may recommend to the CoM that a wider ranging and more formal consultation exercise is required.

The PAB, or one of its subcommittees may undertake consultation. In order to start this process a white paper shall be published as per the document publishing guidelines.

In launching a consultation exercise, the consultation document author (in consultation with the PAB Chair) should identify the important stakeholder groups and encourage their PAB representative to specifically target them.

The consultation paper shall include the date when the consultation period starts and ends (which shall be at least 30 days later¹). Consultation papers shall be structured (so that relevant points can be easily referred to) and where possible they should ask specific questions rather than inviting general comments.

PAB members are also encouraged to garner input via “in person” discussion forums, typically at a Nominet AGM, members meeting and other appropriate forums.

Following the completion of a consultation exercise the PAB secretariat should produce a summary of the feedback. This should also be published on the Nominet website. The consultation paper author should also incorporate comments and then submit a final draft of his paper to the PAB as per the normal procedure.

Consultative Feedback

The PAB receives feedback from stakeholders, in response to consultation exercises via its pab-feedback@nominet.org.uk email address. The PAB shall presume that all messages submitted have implied permission of publication.

When a message arrives at this mailbox, or is submitted to the Chair of a subcommittee it shall be placed on the Nominet Website in a “consultation feedback” area, which should include:

- The date, author (who’s email address should be obfuscated) and topic of the suggestion.
- The detail of the suggestion.
- A list of persons who submit similar or supporting suggestions.
- A note as to how the feedback was incorporated into the position paper.

All consultation feedback shall be archived in this format, but that prior to its publication, the Nominet Executive or Subcommittee Chair should work with the author to ensure the feedback is suitably presented.

PAB Suggestions

The PAB receives suggestions from stakeholders via its pab-suggest@nominet.org.uk email address. When a message arrives at this mailbox it shall be placed on the Nominet Website in a “submitted suggestions” area, which should include:

¹ Consultation Paper Authors should ensure they have sufficient time between the end of the consultation period and the two-week PAB deadline to consider the results of any feedback exercise.

- The date, author (who's email address should be obfuscated) and topic of the suggestion.
- The detail of the suggestion.
- A list of persons who submit similar or supporting suggestions.
- A target date as to when the issue will be, or was considered by the PAB.
- The PAB's response to the issue.
- What the PAB resolved to do following its consideration of the issue.

All pab-suggest emails should be archived in this format, but that prior to their publication, the Nominet Executive should work with the author to ensure their suggestion is suitably presented.

Note that if an email is sent to pab-suggest which is more a question about Nominet rather than a policy suggestion, then the response should still be noted on the website.

It should be noted that, in order to be properly considered, emails to pab-suggest should be received more than two weeks prior to the next PAB meeting. Emails received after this deadline will normally be deferred to the next meeting.

Meeting Reports

The PAB shall publish a report of its meeting within two weeks. The report shall be to record the proceedings of the meeting and in particular:

- Record the rationale behind a topic being referred to the PAB.
- Record the key points of the PAB's discussion the topic.
- Record, in detail, the PAB's recommendation for that issue.

The meeting report will be prepared by the Secretariat within three working days of the PAB meeting. The PAB will then be invited to comment for a period of five working days, following which the secretariat shall, in consultation with the PAB Chair, publish the meeting report on the Nominet website, as per the guidelines for the publication of PAB documents, within two working days.

In drafting the PAB meeting report the secretariat shall be careful to capture the detailed points of a recommendation and the rationale behind it. This is important as PAB meeting reports are used by the CoM as reference at board meetings. In order to assist the secretariat in this difficult task the Chair shall:

- Appoint a "summarizer" who shall, at regular intervals, summarize the decision points achieved so far into a form of words for the Secretariat to record. The summarizer shall be a person who is familiar with the issues and whom regularly attends PAB meetings.
- Prior to agreeing a recommendation, propose the exact form of words that captures the recommendation for the Secretariat to record.

It is also important that, as well as clearly stating the PAB's recommendation for each agenda item; the meeting report should identify the party responsible for the "next step" as an action item.