

# Proposal: Removing AG Specific Decision Policy

## Current Text of Upcoming Charter

### 8. Decision Policy

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This group will seek to make decisions through consensus and due process, per the [W3C Process Document \(Section 5.2.1, Consensus\)](#). Typically, an editor or other participant makes an initial proposal, which is then refined in discussion with members of the group and other reviewers, and consensus emerges with little formal voting being required.

However, if a decision is necessary for timely progress and consensus is not achieved after careful consideration of the range of views presented, the Chairs may call for a group vote and record a decision along with any objections.

#### **\*\*Current text we are proposing changing\*\***

The Working Group maintains specific procedures to establish and measure consensus and address objections in the [AG Working Group Decision Policy](#).

Note: The AG WG has maintained a supplemental decision policy to support the review needed for decisions that can impact regulatory content. A recent update preserves this for stable content while reducing procedural requirements for content that is still under development. The scope of this charter combines maintenance of the mature WCAG 2.x with innovation of WCAG 3. Because of this complex scope, the WG chairs view the decision policy changes as essential to WG success. The updated decision policy should be reviewed together with this draft charter.

#### **\*\*End of Current Content we propose changing\*\***

This charter is written in accordance with the [W3C Process Document \(Section 5.2.3, Deciding by Vote\)](#) and includes no voting procedures beyond what the Process Document requires.

## Proposed Update to Upcoming Charter Text

### 8. Decision Policy

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This group will seek to make decisions through consensus and due process, per the [W3C Process Document \(Section 5.2.1, Consensus\)](#). Typically, an editor or other participant makes

an initial proposal, which is then refined in discussion with members of the group and other reviewers, and consensus emerges with little formal voting being required.

However, if a decision is necessary for timely progress and consensus is not achieved after careful consideration of the range of views presented, the Chairs may call for a group vote and record a decision along with any objections.

#### **\*\*Beginning of Proposed Content\*\***

To afford asynchronous decisions and organizational deliberation, any resolution for normative text (including publication decisions) taken in a face-to-face meeting or teleconference will be considered provisional. A call for consensus (CfC) will be issued for all resolutions (for example, via email, GitHub issue or web-based survey), with a response period from 5 to 10 working days, depending on the chair's evaluation of the group consensus on the issue. If no objections are raised by the end of the response period, the resolution will be considered to have consensus as a resolution of the Working Group.

All decisions made by the group should be considered resolved unless and until new information becomes available or unless reopened at the discretion of the Chairs or the Director.

#### **\*\*End of Proposed Content\*\***

This charter is written in accordance with the [W3C Process Document \(Section 5.2.3, Deciding by Vote\)](#) and includes no voting procedures beyond what the Process Document requires.

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## Concept Comparison

Chair comments are highlighted in light yellow. Direct quotes from documents are in quotes with no highlight.

| Current Charter & AG Decision Policy                                 | Revised Charter & W3C Policy  |
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| Maturity Levels incorporated directly in charter via decision policy | AG can continue to use the maturity levels but they are not part of the charter |
| Difference in approach by maturity level                             | No difference in approach by maturity level                                     |

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| <p><b>Mature</b><br/> “<u>Consensus</u> is not a vote. Consensus indicates that a substantial number of individuals in the group support a proposal.”</p>   | <p><b>“Consensus:</b><br/> A substantial number of individuals in the set support the decision and there is no sustained objection from anybody in the set. Individuals in the set <i>MAY</i> abstain. Abstention is either an explicit expression of no opinion or silence by an individual in the set.”</p>   |
| <p><b>Mature</b><br/> “The Working Group strives for unanimous agreement. However, at times unanimity is not possible, and for the sake of continuing to work on important topics the group must arrive at a consensus decision and move forward.”</p> <p><b>Not yet mature</b><br/> “The Working Group strives to reach broad consensus only. Instead of objections, outstanding questions and concerns are captured as editors notes. These questions and concerns must be addressed before the content is sent for wide public review, though smaller, targeted releases may occur.”</p> | <p>“Where <u>unanimity</u> is not possible, a group <i>SHOULD</i> strive to make <u>consensus</u> decisions where there is significant support and few abstentions.”</p>  |
| <p>“In the course of establishing consensus it is critical that all participants have the opportunity to express their views for consideration so that all relevant information can be used in arriving at the conclusion.”</p>   | <p>“To promote consensus, the W3C process requires Chairs to ensure that groups consider all legitimate views and objections, and endeavor to resolve them, whether these views and objections are expressed by the active participants of the group or by others (e.g., another W3C group, a group in another organization, or the general public).”</p> |
| <p>AG has not documented minimum thresholds of active support.</p> <p><b>Mature</b><br/> “The exact number of working group participants supporting a Call for Consensus and any objections are not the only factors in the decision. Although</p>  | <p>“The Process Document does not require a particular percentage of eligible participants to agree to a motion in order for a decision to be made. To avoid decisions where there is widespread apathy, (i.e., little support and many abstentions), groups <i>SHOULD</i> set minimum thresholds of active support before a</p>                          |

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| <p>significant support from the active membership is always desirable, consensus means working through objections until they are resolved either through amending the decision or in rare cases overriding the objection as laid out in <u>Managing Dissent</u>. “</p> <p><b>Not yet mature</b><br/> “The group moves forward once all questions and concerns are captured, most members agree, and the Chairs agree that the content is worth pursuing.”</p>  | <p>decision can be recorded. The appropriate percentage <i>MAY</i> vary depending on the size of the group and the nature of the decision. A charter <i>MAY</i> include threshold requirements for consensus decisions. For instance, a charter might require a supermajority of eligible participants (i.e., some established percentage above 50%) to support certain types of consensus decisions.”</p>  |
| <p><b>Mature</b></p> <p>“Objections must have a clear rationale based on the technical merit or with reference to the agreed scope of the work.”</p>   | <p>“A <u>Formal Objection</u> <i>MUST</i> include a summary of the issue (whether technical or procedural), the decision being appealed, and the rationale for the objection. It <i>SHOULD</i> cite technical arguments and propose changes that would remove the <u>Formal Objection</u>; these proposals <i>MAY</i> be vague or incomplete. <u>Formal Objections</u> that do not provide substantive arguments or rationale are unlikely to receive serious consideration. Counter-arguments, rationales, and decisions <i>SHOULD</i> also be recorded.”</p>                                |
| <p>“During discussion on a topic, participants are welcome to raise objections freely to help ensure that all available information can be considered and contribute to the best possible decision. However, when the Chairs issue a Call for Consensus, objections should not be raised unless the individual has strong technical reasons that the decision is the wrong one in spite of discussion, and the individual cannot accept the decision. Compromise on points that the individual considers suboptimal but can accept is an essential part of group decisions that must meet various requirements.</p> <p>1. Discussion on a topic proceeds</p> | <p>“Note: Chairs have substantial flexibility in how they obtain and assess consensus among their groups. Unless otherwise constrained by charter, they may use modes including but not limited to explicit calls for consensus, polls of participants, “lazy consensus” in which lack of objection after sufficient notice is taken as assent; or they may also delegate and empower a document editor to assess consensus on their behalf, whether in general or for specific pre-determined circumstances (e.g. in non-controversial situations, for specific types of issues, etc.).”</p> |

until the Chairs believe that all points of view have been expressed and the group has considered the variety of information presented. Depending on the topic, this discussion may take a couple of days or a couple of weeks, or more.

1. Discussion can take place in any recognized channel of the Working Group including email on the AG mailing list, comment threads for GitHub issues or pull requests, or on Working Group calls.
2. When the Chairs believe that the group is ready to come to a decision they will propose a resolution for a vote using the Call for Consensus process. Optionally, a “final call” email can be used to prepare the group for the upcoming CFC and capture any outstanding comments. After the CFC, the decision is recorded as a resolution.”

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“If the decision affects mature normative text, Chairs will then announce a Call for Consensus by email to the Working Group's mailing list. The Call must remain open for a minimum of two working days.

1. The Call is open to responses from all group members.
2. The Call will be for a single topic, will clearly indicate that it is a Call for Consensus, and will contain pointers to the relevant discussion. This may include links to GitHub

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| <p>issues or pull requests, AG surveys, email threads, or meeting minutes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A resolution recorded in a WG teleconference may precede a Call for Consensus, but it does not replace the official Call for Consensus.</li> <li>4. Issues that are regarded as editorial by the Chairs do not require a Working Group decision in order for the Chairs to address, and thus do not require a Call for Consensus. If there is disagreement by participants on whether something is editorial this can be brought to the attention of the Chairs either privately or in the context of the wider group.”</li> </ol> |  |
| <p>“The Call must remain open for a minimum of 4 working days. If a CFC is re-started, it can be closed after 2 additional business days, or the original 4 working days (whichever is longer).”</p>  | <p>The timeframe below is based on other charters that use the standard decision policy wording.</p> <p>“A call for consensus (CfC) will be issued for all resolutions (for example, via email, GitHub issue or web-based survey), with a response period from 5 to 10 working days, depending on the chair's evaluation of the group consensus on the issue.”</p> |
| <p>AG has not included a quorum in our decision policy.</p>   | <p>“By default, the set of individuals eligible to participate in a decision is the set of group participants. The Process Document does not require a quorum for decisions (i.e., the minimal number of eligible participants required to be present</p>  |

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|   | before the Chair can call a question). A charter <i>MAY</i> include a quorum requirement for consensus decisions.”  |
| <p>“If an objection is considered serious enough to warrant additional review before a deliverable advances to the next formal stage, a formal objection may be filed. A formal objection should be raised as a public response to the Call for Consensus to advance to the next stage, using the words “formal objection” for clarity. Chairs and staff will work to address the issue Recording and Reporting Formal Objections.”</p>   | <p>“Note: A <u>Formal Objection</u> always indicates a sustained objection, but isn’t necessary to express it (except in the context of formal <u>AC Reviews</u>). Disagreement with a proposed decision, however, does not always rise to the level of sustained objection, as individuals could be willing to accept a decision while expressing disagreement.”</p>   |
| <p>Final determination of consensus remains with the chair is part of the existing process. We include additional details.</p> <p>“Evaluating the Call for Consensus.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If no objections are received by the deadline, the draft decision becomes a formal decision of the Working Group.</li> <li>2. If objections are received but the Chairs believe the objections have already been considered as far as is possible and reasonable, and the reviewers providing the objections can accept the decision, the draft decision becomes a formal decision of the Working Group.</li> <li>3. If objections are received that the Chairs believe present substantive new information or if the Chairs believe there is not a clear consensus in the Working</li> </ol> | <p>“If questions or disagreements arise, the final determination of consensus remains with the chair.”</p> <p>...</p> <p>“In some cases, even after careful consideration of all points of view, a group might find itself unable to reach consensus. The <u>Chair</u> <i>MAY</i> record a decision where there is <u>dissent</u> so that the group can make progress (for example, to produce a deliverable in a timely manner). Dissenters cannot stop a group’s work simply by saying that they cannot live with a decision. When the Chair believes that the Group has duly considered the legitimate concerns of dissenters as far as is possible and reasonable, the group <i>SHOULD</i> move on.</p> <p>Groups <i>SHOULD</i> favor proposals that create the weakest objections. This is preferred over proposals that are supported by a large majority but that cause strong objections from a few people. As part of making a decision where there is <u>dissent</u>,</p> |

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| <p>Group, they will reopen the discussion, as detailed in <u>section 3.3.4 of the Process Document (Reopening a Decision When Presented With New Information)</u>.</p> <p>4. If working group member(s) continue to disagree and the Chairs do not believe it presents substantive new information, or it does not meet the criteria established for adding new normative content, the Chairs may decide the draft decision becomes a formal decision of the Working Group despite the objection.”</p> | <p>the <u>Chair</u> is expected to be aware of which participants work for the same (or <u>related</u>) Member organizations and weigh their input accordingly.”</p> |
| <p>Taskforces are currently required to have their own decision policy. They can use the default W3C policy, AG policy or their own custom policy.</p>   | <p>Taskforces would still be required to have their own decision policy. They could use the default W3C policy or their own custom policy.</p>                       |
| <p><b>Current Charter &amp; AG Decision Policy</b></p>   | <p><b>Revised Charter &amp; W3C Policy</b></p>   |