

Consensus Workflow

Version 2019-09

Based on <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus>

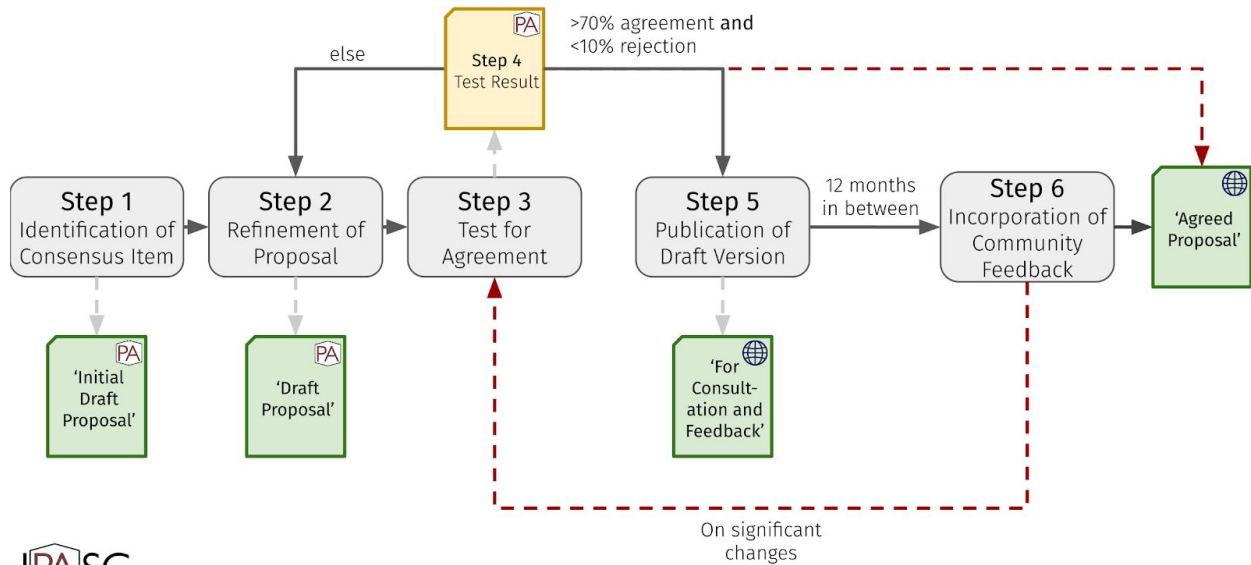


Figure 1: Graphical representation of the IPASC consensus workflow. The individual steps are listed in gray boxes, the agreement test result is represented in yellow, and the different stages of the proposal in question are shown in green. The icon on the top right of the stages show whether the proposal is communicated IPASC internal (IPASC icon) or external (globe icon).

Step 1 - Identification of a consensus item (e.g. question or initial suggestion)

A consensus item can be suggested by any consortium member. Based on the initial suggestion, a draft proposal will be created, either by a theme member or by a member of the consortium leadership team.

Step 2 - Refinement of a proposal

The draft proposal will be available for comment by all consortium members and based on the discussions, a finalized version of the proposal will be created by the theme member or member of the consortium leadership team who drafted the proposal.

Step 3 - Test for agreement

The consortium will have a vote on the proposal. For this vote, the consortium members can choose from the following options:

1. **Agreement:** Full support of the proposal.
2. **Reservation:** A few minor concerns regarding the proposal but in overall agreement.
3. **Standing Aside:** A few major concerns regarding the proposal but no fundamental flaw is identified. When choosing this option, the person is invited to elaborate on the reasons behind the rejection.
4. **Rejection:** A fundamental flaw is identified, and the proposal is therefore rejected. When choosing this option, the person is required to elaborate on the reasons behind the rejection.

The vote will be held using a suitable web-based platform (eg. doodle/survey monkey etc.) and the voting deadline will be set after one week. A reminder to fill out the vote will be sent three days after the vote has been set up.

Step 4 - Test result

Consensus is achieved if all of the following conditions are true:

- There must be <10% that vote **rejection**.
- **And** there must be >70% **agreement**.

The percentages here refer to actual votes received. For a vote to stand at least 50% of consortium members have to cast their vote. For a person to qualify as an author on publications arising from the consensus item, they must have participated in the voting process.

If consensus is not reached, the consortium members will discuss all major concerns and agree on a strategy on how to resolve the identified flaws. The consortium will repeat this method starting with Step 2. This process will continue until an agreement has been reached.

Step 5 - Publication of the Draft Consensus Document

The proposals that were agreed on will be made available by publishing them on the IPASC.science website with a dedicated version number alongside a document with the poll results containing the feedback of everyone who participated in the voting process. The first version of a proposal document will be labelled 'for consultation and feedback' and the input of the overall community is then sought. The Draft Consensus Document will be available for comment by the wider community for up to 12 months after first publication on the website. The time period for the consultation will be defined when the document is first published.

Step 6 - Incorporation of community feedback

Feedback can be provided by contacting the theme member or member of the consortium leadership team who drafted the proposal. During the feedback period, community discussions may be held on the topic of the material contained within the Draft Consensus Document. Following the feedback period, a revised version will be prepared with a new version number, including a discussion of the points raised during the feedback period, if required. The revised version will then re-enter the consensus finding process for Step 3 and Step 4, with the test result at this point being considered a final decision. This final version will be labelled 'agreed proposal' on the website.

Change management for published consensus documents

When internal or external requirements change, 'agreed proposals' might have to be revised/changed. These change requests can be made by anyone by writing the theme leads or the leadership team. In this case, the 'agreed proposal' will be reopened for discussion using the same consensus finding workflow described above. During this time, the current version of the 'agreed proposal' will be labelled as 'under revision' on the website to indicate that a new version is discussed. After consensus is reached again with regard to the new requirements, the consensus documents on the website will be updated with a new version number, elaborating on the changes made in a version history.