EOS BallotCraft Guide

Best Practices for Writing EOS Binding Referendum Proposals

V 2.0

Contents

Introduction

> "This Constitution and its subordinate documents shall not be amended except by a vote of the token holders with no less than 15% vote participation among tokens and no fewer than 10% more Yes than No votes, sustained for 30 continuous days within a 120 day period." Article XI - Amending (EOS Interim Constitution v1)

Generally speaking, the EOS community has come to call this process of constitutionally related changes the "Referendum Process". It is the process by which a potential change to the Constitution or one of its subordinate documents is carried out by the EOS community.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to give token holders a suggested set of best-practices to follow to ensure a **referendum** is posted and executed in a way that is recognized as legitimate and valid by members of the EOS community and especially by the Block Producers who will act on the results.

> **REFERENDUM:** The mechanism by which an actionable and binding referendum question is proposed to the EOS community of token holders.

Scope

The scope of this document is limited to include only initiatives that require Block Producers to execute the results. It does not apply to other uses or applications of the EOSIO.FORUM tool. **The set of best practices found herein only pertain to community members who are intending to submit a referendum.** It offers no guidance to portal designers, Block Producers, or voters.

The best practices in this document are also strictly limited to consider only the tools and technological solutions that presently exist

The EOS Referendum Process

Generally speaking, a successfully executed Referendum follows the following workflow:

Step 1. Identify Potential Change	→	Step 2. Conduct Non-binding Petition	→	Step 3. Conduct Binding Referendum	→	Step 4. BP Verification	→	Step 5. BP Execution
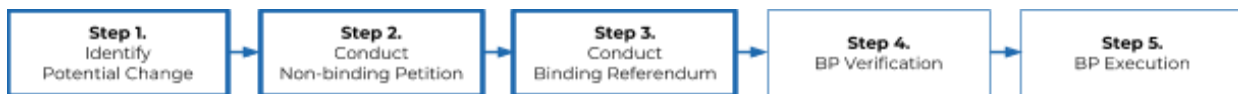
This document addresses the first 3 steps in the above process.

Step 1: Identify Potential Change

Core to the EOS culture is community involvement. Anyone who has access to an EOS account are encouraged to actively engage themselves in the multitude of communication channels, social media, discussion platforms, and various sub-communities scattered throughout the internet.

As you engage, you may identify opportunities to change the EOS ecosystem for the better. Since not every ecosystem change requires a change to the EOS protocol or accounts, not every potential change is suitable for the Referendum process and therefore not a valid initiative.

Not every potential change is suitable for the Referendum Process.

Valid initiatives include problems whose solutions may fall into one of three general categories.

1. **Hard code changes:** These are changes to functional code that Block Producers are running to maintain the network. Referenda falling under this category aim to change the way the software works and will require ample testing on a testnet before implementation. Potential changes that fall into this category include allocation of community funds, or changes to inflation.
2. **Soft code changes:** EOS was launched with an interim constitution and other subordinate documents that include several subjective clauses not enforced or maintained by code. While changes to these documents do not change the actual software (thus do not require testing), they may have significant implications for the network. Potential changes that fall into this category include changes to the constitution or one of its subordinate documents, or the addition or amendment of Ricardian clauses and contracts to system accounts.
3. **Account changes:** These are changes to the status of existing, or as of yet non-existing accounts. Referenda falling under this category aim to require Block Producers to execute their 15/21 executive power to delete, freeze, activate, create or otherwise alter a given account on the network.

Step 2: Conduct Non-binding Poll (Optional)

Prior to conducting a **Binding Referendum**, we recommend a on-chain, **Non-binding Poll** be performed. The purpose of **Non-binding Poll** is to raise community awareness regarding a potential change, measure support, coordinate with other potential changes, and encourage community dialogue regarding the problems the initiative is seeking to solve. A **Non-binding Poll**, will always provide insights regarding your assumptions. However, it should be noted that conducting one is entirely optional and NOT a required step in the EOS Referendum Process.

2.1. Recruit Others

Those interested in pursuing a potential change should generate public support and find advocates for their change by using a **Non-binding Poll** process. It has been observed in other direct-democracy regimes that the execution of an effective public support campaign has often had a greater impact on the outcome of a vote than the structure of the given referendum wording.

2.2. Submit an On-Chain, Non-binding Poll

The purpose of a **Non-binding Poll** is to judge the appetite for change within the community. It is an important part of the overall EOS Referendum Process as it provides a clear signal regarding the popular support for a potential change. The goal is to see which ideas are popular and therefore are worth your effort to pursue. Since a **Non-binding Poll** isn't subject to any vote limits and thresholds as a **Binding Referendum**, it should be looked to as the primary means to build momentum around an initiative.

2.2.1. Draft the Non-binding Poll Question

Given the current suite of tools available to the EOS community, a well written **Non-binding Poll** includes a single question that :

- Is clear;
- Is not biased;
- Addresses appetite for change without presenting a solution;
- Can be answered with solely a yes/no vote;
- Is structured so that a NO vote maintains the status quo; and,
- Is a text string less than 1024 bytes in length

Consider the following examples:

- **Good Example:** Should the current EOS Constitution be replaced?
  - This example is clear, unbiased, doesn't present a solution, can be answered solely with a yes/no, and is structured so that NO = Status Quo.
- **Bad Example:** Should we retain the current EOS Constitution?
  - This example, while it is clear, unbiased, and limits itself to yes/no answers, it is structured so that YES = Status Quo. This can lead to voter confusion.
- **Bad Example:** Should the Constitution V2 replace the current Constitution?
  - This example, while it is clear, it does not measure general appetite for change as there will be voters who recognize the need for change but do not agree with this particular solution.

2.2.2. Submit the Non-binding Poll

Step 1: Choose a Portal

Many online portals have been created by EOS community stakeholders. It is not within the scope of this document to endorse any given portal. However, we do recommend vetting portals by investigating the following:

1. Ensure the portal or wallet is created and maintained by a reputable organization.
2. Ensure the portal or wallet has a the ability to allow token holders to post referenda.
3. If it is a web based portal, ensure it does not directly ask for your private keys.
4. Ensure that it allows you to key or select the proposal "Type".
5. Ensure that it allows you to key or select the proposal "Expiration Date" and "Expiration Time".

Step 2: Acquire Sufficient RAM

While the portals provide a bridge through which you can interact with the blockchain, the smart contract that drives the EOS Referendum Process consumes the RAM of the account posting the **Non-binding Poll** or **Binding Referendum**.   The RAM will be consumed until 72 hours after the poll or referendum has Expired and been Cleared.

Step 3: Complete the Fields

- **Proposal Name:** Give your **Non-binding Poll** a unique name (max 12 characters, a-z and 1-5 only)
    - Ex. "mypoll99"
- **Title:** Input the question you drafted in step **2.2.1 Draft the Non-binding Poll Question.** This field only allows 1024 bytes, which is roughly 1024 characters of latin based languages. Other languages with more complicated glyphs may require fewer characters (as low as 512 characters). Many portals provide automatic translation of the title. We recommend keeping the title strictly in the Language of Record.
    - Ex. "Should the current EOS Constitution be replaced?"
- **Content:** Content is required. This field allows up to 10Kb (roughly 10,000 latin characters), of markdown formatted content.
    - We recommend using a markdown editor to draft the content in markdown format.
    - We recommend restating the **Non-binding Poll** question in the content field.
    - If you will provide any other translations, include them in this field as well.
    - If you will provide any other translations, identify which one is the Language of Record.
    - Close the Content section by disclosing the primary pollers' names and contact information: Ex.
        "#Non-Binding Poll
        ##Languages
        ###Language of Record:: English
        Should the current EOS Constitution be replaced?
        ###Español - Spanish
        ¿Debería reemplazarse la actual Constitución de EOS?
        ###한국어 - Korean
        현재의 EOS 헌법을 교체해야합니까?
        ##Primary Pollers
        Joe Smith, fake@email.com, Account: gdhelsicndyt
        Jane Doe, fake2@email.com, Account: gzjdidlsyekd"
    - **NOTE:** Not all voting portals display the content field.

- **Type:** As of the writing of this guide, few portals are prepared to handle yes/no/abstain type polls. Until more portals switch to the new standard, we encourage pollers to:
  - For Yes/No polls, key "poll-yn-v1"
  - For Yes/No/Abstain polls, key "poll-yna-v1"
- **Expiration Time/Days till expiry:** Depending on the portal you use, you will need to either identify total days or a date. We recommend 120 days. You will retain the ability to force expire your proposal prior to that time.

2.3. Engage with Portals

Navigate to the various voting portals to ensure that they are displaying your **Non-binding Poll**. If your **Non-binding Poll** fails to appear as expected, contact the portal admins for clarification. Note that each portal is independently operated and are free to censor, restrict, filter, or promote any referenda they choose.

2.4. Engage with the Community

In addition to ensuring your **Non-binding Poll** is visible to as many voters as possible, the real value in the petition process is to empower the community to engage in conversation.

We recommend the community use https://eos-forum.org/#/referendum to discuss the initiative addressed by the **Non-binding Poll** and make the decisions necessary to move forward with your next step.

2.5. Make a Binding Referendum Go/No-Go Decision

After engaging with the community, viewing the results of your **Non-binding Poll**, and considering the needs of the EOS mainnet, you may decide to proceed with a **Binding Referendum.**

There is no objective standard to decide if one should make the decision to proceed with a Binding Referendum. We anticipate that reaching the vote thresholds necessary for a Binding Referendum to pass will be difficult.

One of the primary purposes of the **Non-binding Poll** is to provide change advocates with information they need regarding the popularity of a given potential change. Some portals provide high level analysis of voting results over time to help decide if pushing forward with a Binding Referendum is worth the effort.

We greatly discourage the submission of a **Binding Referendum** that has little likelihood of success.

2.6. Expire and Clear the Non-binding Poll

Your **Non-binding Poll** will automatically expire once the Expiration Date (Identified in 2.2.2. - Step 3) has passed. Use your portal of choice to manually EXPIRE your **Non-binding Poll** if you choose to end polling prior to the expiration date.

Neither of these actions, however, release the RAM. Most portals include the ability to CLEAR a poll. Your consumed RAM will be returned to your account 72 hours after clearing the contract.

Step 3: Conduct Binding Referendum

3.1. Design a Solution and Consult with Block Producers

There are two primary criteria for a Binding Referendum to be valid.

1. A correctly created **Binding Referendum** cannot force a third party to develop a solution. Rather, a **Binding Referendum** is the means by which the community can signal to Block Producers to implement a solution that has already been developed.
2. A correctly created **Binding Referendum** must be actionable by Block Producers. If it is NOT actionable by Block Producers, the Binding Referendum process should NOT be used.

Block Producers serve as a protector of last-resort for the integrity of the network. As you develop the assets (documents, code, files, etc.) that constitute your proposed solution, consult with several Block Producers to ensure you are not overlooking anything in your approach. Block Producers have been known to refrain from taking certain actions if they believe such an action will harm or destabilize the chain. By consulting with Block Producers, you increase the likelihood that they will support your **Binding Referendum** and champion its implementation upon passage.

> **It is the responsibility of the submitters to develop and test any new code, draft the documents, and write the contracts prior to submitting a Referendum.**

3.2. Submit an On-Chain Binding Referendum

3.2.1. Identify The Language of Record

While we encourage anyone submitting a referendum to the community to translate the content into as many languages as they deem appropriate (most common is Chinese, Korean, and English), we recommend identifying a **Language of Record** for the **Binding Referendum**.

Identifying a **Language of Record** is useful in the event of errors in translation and/or disputes arising from nuances of translation. The content of the referendum should include a statement that the content in the **Language of Record** is the only content that should be considered in the event of dispute.

Depending on the length of the BInding Referendum question and content you may need to provide external links to the translations.

3.2.2 Collect all Supporting Documentation

All supporting documentation and code should be compiled and published for the community to review.

- **Code** should be published for public review. We recommend using GitHub and including the hash of the commit to be considered for **Binding Referendum** in the supporting documentation.
- **Supporting documentation** should be published on an immutable, uncensorable format. We recommend using https://eos-forum.org or https://steemit.com.
- **Arguments & Rebuttals[1]*** should be published on an immutable, uncensorable format. We recommend using https://eos-forum.org or https://steemit.com
  - Arguments in Support - Explicitly detail the primary arguments in support of the referendum.
  - Rebuttals - Explicitly provide rebuttals to each of the primary arguments in support.
  - Arguments Against- Explicitly detail the primary arguments against the referendum.

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[1] No need to summarize and provide external links to Arguments & Rebuttals if total content of the Binding Referendum does not exceed 10,000 latin characters (10 KB).

○ Rebuttals - Explicitly provide rebuttals to each of the primary arguments against.
- **An Official Discussion Forum** should be identified as the central location for the community to engage in discussions about the referendum. We recommend using https://eos-forum.org/#/referendum, https://steemit.com, or Telegram.

3.2.3. Draft The Binding Referendum Question

Given the current suite of tools available to the EOS community, a well written referendum question includes a single question that :

- Is clear;
- Is not biased;
- Can be answered with solely a yes/no vote;
- Is structured so that a NO vote is the status quo; and,
- Is less than 1024 characters

Consider the following examples:

- **Good Example:** Should the Constitution V2 replace the current Constitution?
  - This example is clear, unbiased, can be answered solely with a yes/no, and is structured so that NO = Status Quo.
- **Bad Example:** Should we retain the current EOS Constitution?
  - This example, while it is clear, unbiased, and limits itself to yes/no answers, it is structured so that YES = Status Quo. This can lead to voter confusion.

3.2.3. Draft the Binding Referendum Content

The smart contract that controls the Binding Referendum allows up to up to 10Kb (roughly 10,000 latin characters), of markdown formatted content. We recommend using a markdown editor to draft the content in markdown format. We recommend structuring the content for any given BInding Referendum as follows:

- **Question:** State the Binding Referendum question.
- **Language of Record:** Explicitly declare which language is to be used to interpret this referendum.
- **Proposers:** Provide the names and contact information of the individuals who are acting as the proposer. These people will act as a liaison between the community at large and the block producers.
- **Description of Referendum:** Briefly describe problem and the solution that this referendum is proposing.
- **Interpretive Statement:** Explicitly describe the changes that are expected to will occur if the Binding Referendum passes. This should include a timeline of events.
- **Block Producer Instructions:** Explicitly detail the actions that Block Producers are expected to perform if the Binding Referendum passes.. This should include a series of step-by-step high-level processes and a reasonable timeline for each actions.
- **Summary of Arguments & Rebuttals[2]:** Provide a summary of the primary arguments that have been raised against and in support of the Binding Referendum. Include summaries of the rebuttals.
- **Links to Detailed Arguments & Rebuttals[3]:**   Provide a link to the detailed Arguments & Rebuttals content published in step 3.2.2.
- **Non-Binding Poll Results:** If you conducted one or more Non-binding Polls related to this referendum summarize results. Provide links if applicable.

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[2] No need to summarize and provide external links to Arguments & Rebuttals if total content of the Binding Referendum does not exceed 10,000 latin characters (10 KB).
[3] No need to summarize and provide external links to Arguments & Rebuttals if total content of the Binding Referendum does not exceed 10,000 latin characters (10 KB).

- **Supporting Documentation:** Provide links to all Supporting Documentation published in step 3.2.2.
- **Code:** Provide links to all related Code published in step 3.2.2.
- **Code Commit Hash:** Provide the hash of the most recent GitHub commit published in step 3.2.2.
- **Ricardian Contracts:** Provide links to all related Ricardian Contracts published in step 3.2.2.
- **Ricardian Commit Hash:** Provide the hash of the most recent GitHub commit published in step 3.2.2.
- **Code Test Testimony:** Provide a detailed testimony of all code tests, including block references.
- **Official Discussion Forum:** Provide a link to the forum set up in step 3.2.2.
- **Alternate Translations:** If this referendum content exceeds 10KB, you should provide links to the alternate translations of this content here. We recommend using https://eos-forum.org or https://steemit.com

3.2.4. Submit the Binding Referendum

Step 1: Choose a Portal

Many online portals have been created by EOS community stakeholders. It is not within the scope of this document to endorse any given portal. However, we do recommend vetting portals by investigating the following:

1. Ensure the portal or wallet is created and maintained by a reputable organization.
2. Ensure the portal or wallet has a the ability to allow token holders to post referenda.
3. If it is a web based portal, ensure it does not directly ask for your private keys.
4. Ensure that it allows you to key or select the proposal "Type".
5. Ensure that it allows you to key or select the proposal "Expiration Date" and "Expiration Time".

Step 2: Acquire Sufficient RAM

While the portals provide a bridge through which you can interact with the blockchain, the smart contract that drives the EOS Referendum Process consumes the RAM of the account posting the **Non-binding Poll** or **Binding Referendum**.   The RAM will be consumed until 72 hours after the poll or referendum has Expired and been Cleared.

Step 3: Complete the Fields

- **Proposal Name:** Give your **Binding Referendum** a unique name (max 12 characters, a-z and 1-5 only)
    Ex. "myreferendum"
- **Title:** Input **the question** you drafted in step **3.2.3 Draft the Binding Referendum Question.** This field only allows 1024 bytes, which is roughly 1024 characters of latin based languages. Other languages with more complicated glyphs may require fewer characters (as low as 512 characters). Many portals provide automatic translation of the title. We recommend keeping the title strictly in the Language of Record..
    Ex. "Should the Constitution V2 replace the current Constitution?"

- **Content:** Use the **content** drafted in step **3.2.3 Draft the Binding Referendum Question**. This field allows up to 10Kb (roughly 10,000 latin characters), of markdown formatted content.
    - We recommend using a markdown editor to draft the content in markdown format.
- **Type:**
    - **Key** "referendum-v1"
- **Expiration Time/Days till expiry:** Depending on the portal you use, you will need to either identify total days or a date. We recommend **120** days.

3.3. Engage with Portals

Navigate to the various voting portals to ensure that they are displaying your **Binding Referendum.** If your **Binding Referendum** fails to appear as expected, contact the portal admins for clarification. Note that each portal is independently operated and are free to censor, restrict, filter, or promote any referenda they choose.

3.4. Engage with the Community

Use the forum identified in step 3.2.2. to discuss the Referendum with the EOS community members.

3.5. Expire and Clear the Binding Referendum

Your **Binding Referendum** will automatically expire once the Expiration Date (Identified in 3.2.4. - Step 3) has passed. Use your portal of choice to manually EXPIRE your **Binding Referendum** if you choose to end voting prior to the expiration date.

Neither of these actions, however, release the RAM. Most portals include the ability to CLEAR a poll. Your consumed RAM will be returned to your account 72 hours after clearing the contract.

Sample Template for Binding Referendum

Proposal Name:

constitution

Title:

Should the Constitution V2 replace the current Constitution?

Content:

Question

Restate tate the Binding Referendum question as provided in the Title field.

Language of Record

Explicitly declare which language is to be used to interpret this referendum.

Proposers

Provide the names and contact information of the individuals who are acting as the proposer. These people will act as a liaison between the community at large and the block producers.

Description of Referendum

Briefly describe problem and the solution that this referendum is proposing.

Interpretive Statement

Explicitly describe the changes that are expected to will occur if the Binding Referendum passes. This should include a timeline of events.

Block Producer Instructions

Explicitly detail the actions that Block Producers are expected to perform if the Binding Referendum passes.. This should include a series of step-by-step high-level processes and a reasonable timeline for each actions.

Summary of Arguments & Rebuttals

Provide a summary of the primary arguments that have been raised against and in support of the Binding Referendum. Include summaries of the rebuttals.

Links to Detailed Arguments & Rebuttals

Provide a link to the detailed Arguments & Rebuttals content published in step 3.2.2.

Non-Binding Poll Results

If you conducted one or more Non-binding Polls related to this referendum summarize results. Provide links if applicable.

Supporting Documentation

Provide links to all Supporting Documentation published in step 3.2.2.

Code

Provide links to all related Code published in step 3.2.2.

Code Commit Hash

Provide the hash of the most recent GitHub commit published in step 3.2.2.

Ricardian Contracts

Provide links to all related Ricardian Contracts published in step 3.2.2.

Ricardian Commit Hash

Provide the hash of the most recent GitHub commit published in step 3.2.2.

Code Test Testimony

Provide a detailed testimony of all code tests, including block references.

Official Discussion Forum

Provide a link to the forum set up in step 3.2.2.

Alternate Translations

If this referendum content exceeds 10KB, you should provide links to the alternate translations of this content here. We recommend using https://eos-forum.org or https://steemit.com

Type:

referendum-v1

Expiration Date:

120 days from date of submission.

Lexicon

- **Binding Referendum** - The process by which an actionable and Binding Referendum question is proposed to the EOS community and verifiably approved or rejected..
- **Binding Referendum Question** - The text of the question that is being presented to the community AND are actionable by Block Producers. If it is NOT actionable by Block Producers it is NOT a valid referendum question.
- **Language of Record** - The language identified in the Referendum to be used to interpret the Referendum in the case of dispute or translation errors.
- **Non-Binding Poll** - The process by which a **Non-binding Poll** question is proposed to the EOS community.
- **Non-Binding Poll Question** - The text of the question that is being presented to the community AND is NOT actionable by Block Producers. The purpose of a **Non-Binding Poll** is to to test appetite for change, and weight support for the various options.

Suggestions

1. This document constitutes a suggested best practice for token holders submitting a Binding Referendum. We suggest a similar document be created with suggested best practices for the following parties related to Binding Referenda:
    a. Block Producers
    b. Portals
    c. Voters
2. We suggest that the portals adopt support for forum post type "poll-yna-1".
3. We suggest that the constitution be changed to address the voter turnout gaming issue. As it currently stands, a proposal that has garnered a turnout of 14.9999999999% of token holders and 100% YES can be defeated if the last voter possessing single EOS simply refuses to vote. This structure encourages those who are against a proposition to refrain from voting, rather than voting NO.
4. We suggest that eosio.forum contract be expanded, portal support be adopted, and the constitution to be amended:
    a. To enable Abstention voting (yes/no/abstain) on the Referendum
    b. To enable Approval voting format (mark all that apply) on the Referendum
    c. To link the two above in linked-ballot voting on a Referendum

This gives all voters the ability to address if a change should occur AND which option is preferred given a change approval.

> Example:
> Question 1: Should the EOS Constitution be changed?
>> Option 1: Yes
>> Option 2: No
> ` Option 3: Abstain
> Question 2: If the EOS Constitution were to change, which options do you prefer? (Mark all that apply)
>> Option 1: Constitution A
>> Option 2: Constitution B
>> Option 3: Constitution C
>> Option 4: Constitution D

Contributors

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